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BYRON AND SHELLEY'S LITERARY
RELATIONSHIP,
AN INVESTIGATION

by
Mary Alice Hembree

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ABSTRACT

BYRON AND SHELLEY'S LITERARY RELATIONSHIP, AN INVESTIGATION

by

Mary Alice Hembree

Adviser: George M. Ridenour

This study takes the works of Byron and Shelley in chronological order, reading them for evidence of literary influence in either direction. To establish each poet's predispositions, it begins with the works that both men produced prior to meeting in 1816. These works provide evidence that many of the "influences" urged in previous studies are spurious, particularly in the case of Shelley's alleged effects on Byron's works. Byron had considerably more influence on Shelley's poetry than did Shelley on Byron's. This material suggests that there was considerably less "philosophical" influence than one might expect.

The works of 1816, the year when the poets first met, provides little evidence of influence in either direction, although Shelley later demonstrates the effect of Byron's 1816 poetry. From Byron's contemporaries onward, biographers have asserted that Shelley's enthusiasm for Wordsworth's poetry had a profound influence on the poetry that Byron

produced during the first summer that he knew Shelley. This study presents evidence that Byron already knew Wordsworth's poetry, that there is little actual change in his poetry during this period, and furthermore that Shelley's opinion of Wordsworth at this time, like Byron's, was mixed.

In 1818-19 Byron's influence on Shelley was at its peak. Several works by Shelley react to a Byronic stance and present an alternative view; the most notable examples are Julian and Maddalo and Prometheus Unbound. Even when he argued most directly with Byron, Shelley's main goal was not to defeat the rival philosophical position. Ever the skeptic, through his poetry Shelley acknowledged that human knowledge of such absolutes was imperfect, and he recognized that Byron's beliefs were possibly true. Shelley argued, however, that his own, more optimistic, position was more productive for human life.

After Shelley saw Byron in Italy he began experimenting with a new, conversational style, more akin to Byron's previous work than his own. This study argues that Byron's example helped wean Shelley from a more pompous, eighteenth-century type of diction.

From the first Shelley admired Don Juan greatly, and yet his own works seldom reflect its influence. Peter Bell the Third is virtually the only complete work that attempts a similar effect. Several drafts do show that he tried to use the style again, but by the time that Shelley completed the

works, their styles changed so radically that Don Juan's effect disappears (Epipsychidion is an example of this).

During the last two years of his life Shelley continued to echo Byron in his poetry, but the poems reflect little influence of the models. Instead of using Byron as a source for structure, style, or stance, Shelley mines him for the occasional felicitous phrase. Ultimately, Byron probably influenced Shelley most strongly by providing an example of informal but gentlemanly diction in contemporary poetry. With this model before him, Shelley could develop his own voice, as it appears in the works of his last years.

An appendix looks at Shelley's influence on Byron. In general, the poetic influence that flowed in this direction was slight.

For Phillip

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Many persons have helped me at some point, but I owe special thanks to Professor George M. Ridenour for his helpful suggestions, and for making himself available to me whenever necessary, including during his academic leave. I am also grateful to Professors Coleman Parsons and Marshall Suther for their careful reading of the draft and for their helpful suggestions.

Charles Robinson's book, Shelley and Byron. The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight, came out while I was making final revisions. Consequently, I refer to his dissertation throughout rather than to this study. His study would not have changed any of the opinions that I state, although I do wish that I had had his thoughts about Shelley's attempts to challenge Byron as a poet before me earlier.

EDITIONS USED

Unless otherwise stated in the text, I have used the following editions of Byron and Shelley through this study: R. H. Stoddard's edition of Byron's poetry, R. E. Prothero's edition of Byron's letters, T. G. Steffan's edition of Don Juan, F. L. Jones' edition of Shelley's letters, and R. Inqpen and W. E. Peck's edition of Shelley's poetry.

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Chapter I. INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1816 two young, notorious British gentlemen arrived in Geneva, Switzerland. First to appear was the son of a Sussex M.P., known perhaps as the author of a few radical political pamphlets, but far better known for his private life. Abandoning his wife and family, he brought with him two young women, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (later his wife) and another member of the Godwin household, Claire Clairmont. In addition to the pamphlets, Shelley was also the author of a number of lyrics, a "philosophical poem" named Queen Mab, and a work about a Poet's frustrated quest; however, the scandalized British tourists in Geneva were not likely to have known his poetry. A short time later, a famous British lord arrived alone. The author of two cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and several best-selling Oriental tales fled the social ostracism that resulted when his young wife took their infant and left him, applying for a separation on grounds that never became public knowledge.

Before leaving London, Claire Clairmont had arranged to meet Byron in Switzerland, and shortly after his arrival there she introduced him to Shelley. The young men immediately liked one another, and they spent a considerable portion of the summer together. Their companionship had a number of results.¹ Superficially, it meant that the British tourists

2.

who turned their telescopes on the famous, club-footed nobleman now observed Shelley as well. It meant that annoying rumors would go to London that the two men participated in a "league of incest" with the two women who accompanied Shelley. Byron's liaison with Claire Clairmont would result in a child, Allegra, who later complicated the Shelley household considerably, and who was responsible for Byron and Shelley's 1818 reunion in Italy. In the course of their acquaintance, by the tally in Charles E. Robinson's dissertation, they "spent over two hundred and fifty days in each other's company during these six years, exchanged fifty letters, and read and reacted to all of each other's major works."² The events have provided source-material for generations of biographers of either poet, as well as a number who focus primarily on the two poets' relationship.

There were numerous reasons why the two became friendly so rapidly. Of course, there were the obvious biographical facts: both were gentlemen, and both left England partly because of domestic scandals. In addition, both men held liberal but aristocratic political views in an era of reaction. Both poets were interested in some of the same questions about life and the significance of an individual human being. Mary's journals testify that both men also loved a good argument, and that Byron and Shelley spent many hours during the summer of 1816 in heated, if friendly, debate.

Understandably, biographers and critics who study these two men have found this period irresistible. There is

considerable evidence that the poets met frequently. They visited Rousseau country together, as Byron introduced Shelley to La nouvelle Héloïse. Taking the suggestion from Byron himself, numerous biographers and critics notice a new, temporary, Wordsworthian flavor in Byron's 1816 poetry (especially Canto III of Childe Harold); this they attribute to Shelley's influence. Several biographers go beyond this to suggest that during this summer Shelley exposed Byron to an impressive list of new authors and philosophical ideas. They suggest that Shelley is responsible for the new depth in Byron's work. At the same time, they tend to assume that Byron had comparatively little influence on Shelley.

I feel that these assumptions are questionable for 1816. Between 1818 and 1822, most of the influence definitely flowed in the opposite direction. Before I can make a case for my own arguments, I must first treat some of both Byron and Shelley's early works, for they contain considerable evidence that certain "changes" never occurred but were rather aspects of the poets' works from an early date. Only by measuring true changes against this stability can the true poetic influences emerge.

Byron's early works

Many critics treat Beppo and Don Juan as deviations from Byron's early poetry.³ They allege that the genius which moves these later poems is different in kind as well as in

degree from the spirit which produced Byron's previous work. While I agree that his late works are superior in many ways, I feel that the attitudes in Byron's work are more homogeneous than these critics imply. Since I believe that some of Byron's consistencies strongly influenced Shelley, I would like to isolate certain important elements in Byron's work before discussing the two poets together.

Throughout Byron's poetic career, it seems to me, he expressed the same complex of attitudes toward life. As Karl Kroeber summarizes it, Byron's development resulted more from an increase in mastery than from a "mellowing" of his attitudes. Kroeber says, "The history of Byron's later poetic development was to consist of his search for a means of uniting the fervid emotionalism which animates the lyrics of Hours of Idleness with the spirit of sardonic satire which English Bards and Scotch Reviewers expresses" (Romantic Narrative Art, p. 135). This statement oversimplifies, but it expresses Byron's basic dilemma. While some lyrics written for Hours express the spirit of English Bards, and while Byron worked on Childe Harold and Don Juan simultaneously, he did need to develop a congenial mode before he could fully express his complex attitude toward life. Both this attitude and the forms in which he states it affected Shelley's poetic development profoundly.

As George M. Ridenour describes Byron's habit of mind, "Byron's imagination was 'antithetical.' Out of honesty,

wit, and perversity, he liked to set up oppositions." (in Frederick W. Milled and Harold Bloom, Eds., From Sensibility to Romanticism, p. 455). For this reason he moved from one possibility to its opposite within a single work (e.g., in Childe Harold he alternately lauds the lasting creations of the human mind and describes man's works as transitory and therefore insignificant). Because Byron was aware that human observation supported either conclusion, he retained both as possibilities. Shelley was also honest, but while he would not set up a definite conclusion unless he could accept it, his imagination preferred a more unitary approach.

When the poets met in 1816, Byron's attitudes were substantially what they were in 1822 when Shelley died. However, although Byron was a famous poet when Claire Clairmont introduced him to Shelley, most of his significant work lay before him. The works which first made him famous no longer seem fresh because their formula has become too familiar to us. As Bloom might observe, Byron's successors have "so stationed the precursor in one's own work, that particular passages in his work seem to be not presages of one's own advent, but rather to be indebted to one's own achievement, and even (necessarily) to be lessened by one's greater splendor" (The Anxiety of Influence, p. 141).

Although it may seem tedious to a civilization brought up on psychological truisms, doubtless one of the freshest elements in Byron's early poetry was the direct way in which

he reacted to his own mortality. To oversimplify: with declining belief in Christianity, death, evil, and injustice became more difficult for European man to deal with, because he no longer could wait for an afterlife to make things right. Eighteenth-century poetry is replete with elegaic stanzas, odes, and paeans to Nature's wisdom which deal with this subject, usually treating it as a generalized philosophical problem and assuming that all men will react to mortality in the same way and that the universe and humanity have a benign relationship. The Romantics, including Byron, gave the problem a new slant, portraying solitaries who had to solve their problems in a personal manner, because previous assumptions of a benign universe had proved inadequate responses to their experiences of evil. Of course, all of the Romantic poets owed debts to their preromantic ancestors. Shelley, more than the others, chose to introduce himself as a poet with works which hailed back to the previous century in being abstract, philosophical, and didactic. Byron, more than most Romantics, relied on conventions of perspective, landscape, ruins, and history which the preromantic artists and writers used extensively. But, unlike these preromantics, Byron deals with the problems as they affect an individual. Consequently, his work becomes more psychological and less didactic (rarely does he exhort us, ", man,. . ." and tell how we should think).

Byron's protagonists acquired further interest because, from the first, readers considered them extensions of his own personality.⁴ His heroes told Byron's readers that one of the most flamboyant characters in their colorful age was preoccupied with his own insignificance---he must die, whether he would or not, which clearly meant that he was subject to a higher power. Was this power good? Byron's instinct clearly gave his conventional readers the same, unorthodox answer through most of his poetic career: No, not as far as man is concerned. Bloom summarizes this helpless relationship in another way: "What haunts Byron is the specter of meaninglessness, of pointless absurdity" (The Visionary Company, pp. 264-65). This specter is clearly present in Byron's early poetry as well as the late. The same demon threatened Shelley, who objected to it in Byron's poetry and attempted to control it in his own.

The problems which cluster around human insignificance are central to major ways in which Byron influenced Shelley. Although both men were fairly realistic in their evaluations of individuals, they differed in their expectations about life in general. At the time of their meeting, Byron could be called a cynic, Shelley an idealist (the traditional approach)---but only if we accept the fact that Shelley was idealistic merely in hoping/believing that mankind could be better than it was. Both men admitted that contemporary

society had fallen on evil days and that the likelihood of rapid amelioration was dim. As time passes, Shelley reluctantly focuses more on a Byronic view of mankind's state and less on the optimistic possibility of change.

While Byron dwells on man's insignificance, he does not accept it tamely. To borrow one of Byron's own phrases from Jerome J. McGann, man is fiery dust, something lofty trapped maliciously in mortal clay. A number of critics feel that Byron discovered this wretched fact in Childe Harold and transcended it by the time that he wrote Don Juan. I feel that he remained consistent through his life, which I hope to demonstrate later. Byron's later poetry must wait, but now I would like to show that this attitude was indeed a significant element in Byron's early poetry. Whether due to his early sexual experience as Leslie A. Marchand suggests or his Calvinist upbringing as others intimate, or to something else, Byron seems to have felt from an early age that he was one of the damned. His protagonists are in a similar state. Byron repeatedly asks where the fault for this lies, and he usually comes up with the same ambiguous answer: I am to blame (I guess), because I did something which damned me; but I acted only because my better qualities forced me to. Who gave me my better qualities? Who put me in the situation to which I reacted? The actions of his longer works repeatedly focus on situations which indirectly pose and answer such

questions. The answers are consistent. Will he or nill he, Byron seems to present man as a cosmic misfit.

Let us begin by looking at Byron's work prior to 1816 that expresses this complex of attitudes. Subsequent chapters will attempt to demonstrate that he held similar views through his life, and that his expression of these views affected Shelley's verse.

At the time Byron and Shelley met, Byron had produced a significant body of poetry that focused on a protagonist who was out of harmony with the universe. Yet, in a typically Byronic fashion, he organized his poems around various possible responses to this situation rather than limiting himself to only one solution. In the early lyric "When I roved. . ." the apprentice poet recognizes that humans change while nature remains the same:

Yet the day may arrive when the mountains once more
Shall rise to my sight in their mantles of snow;
But while these soar above me, unchang'd as before,
Will Mary be there to receive me?---ah, no!

In Lara, II, i, he restates the same discovery in a way closer to a central theme in Childe Harold and the war cantos of Don Juan:

Night wanes---the vapours round the mountains curl'd
Melt into morn, and Light awakes the world.
Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near to little, but his last;
But mighty Nature bounds as from her birth,
.
And fit thy clay to fertilise the soil,
(II, i)

Byron advises his readers. Harold broods over his

insignificance as, in the tradition of late eighteenth-century landscape art, he lounges in the foreground of either a splendid natural scene or before a decaying ruin.⁵ Much of Childe Harold seems to demand an illustrator who gives perspective to the scene by including the Childe draped in a cloak somewhere in the foreground. As in much landscape painting, his figure seems insignificant against the scale of the background. The caption to either print or verse often could be: "Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied;/ Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide!" (I, xxiii). And yet Byron is not simple enough merely to accept this attitude and build his complete poem around it. The poem exists because Byron cannot dismiss the individual, even though recognizing that each man will die.

There are several possible reactions to discovering human mortality and nature's relative immortality; Byron tries out most of them. Significantly, he seems least convinced by the positive responses, combining acceptance of God's will as good and faith in a better after-life. He even questions less sweeping assertions that the universe is fundamentally benign. If one can read these lines of 1807 "straight," without imagining that the poet feels either reproachful or rebellious, they are almost the only instance in Byron's work of such conventional piety:

Father of Light! to Thee I call,
My soul is dark within:
Thou, who canst mark the sparrow's fall,

Avert the death of sin.
Thou, who canst guide the wandering star,
Who calm'st the elemental war,
Whose mantle is yon boundless sky,
My thoughts, my words, my crimes forgive;
And, since I soon must cease to live,
Instruct me how to die.

("The Adieu. Written under the Impression that the
Author Would soon Die." juvenilia)

When Byron's works test such alternatives, he seems unable to present them as if he believed in them; he makes an evaluation as ambivalent as this one of Count Lara:

But haughty still and loth himself to blame,
He call'd on Nature's self to share the shame.
And charged all faults upon the fleshly form
She gave to clog the soul and feast the worm;
Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will.
(I, xviii)

While the lines definitely suggest that Lara erred in blaming Nature rather than himself, the other possibility remains; and the development of this and Byron's other narratives leaves the distinct impression that the protagonist was not totally responsible for his doom. In this passage, it seems, Byron is trying to have it both ways. He suggests that Lara is to blame for his own faults, and yet he undercuts this judgment by implying that Nature is indeed malicious and bears at least part of the blame for the count's faults (She "clogs the soul"). In an earlier poem Byron states this even more directly: "The fault was Nature's fault, not thine, / Which made thee fickle as thou art"⁶ ("To a Youthful Friend," 1808).

At other, more optimistic, moments Byron asserts that the exceptional individual can indeed transcend Nature's limitations. This is a major theme in Childe Harold, where Byron repeatedly asserts that art and heroism can outlive individuals. Contemplating Greece's mouldering ruins, he moralizes: "But yet how lovely in thine age of woe/. . . . So perish all in turn, save well-recorded Worth" (II, lxxxv). But, typically, Byron soon questions such faith. The following passage in The Siege of Corinth shows a representative Byronic development. It begins with the glories of war, with Fame ready to immortalize heroic deeds, but quickly moves to a field of scavengers and decaying corpses:

There is something of pride in the perilous hour,
Whate'er be the shape in which death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour's eye on daring deeds!
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead,
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,
All rejoicing in his decay. (II, xvii)

This double recognition persists through Byron's works. His portrayal of Juan at the Siege of Ismael contains the same elements, although Byron juxtaposes more skillfully in the later work, where he also sets individual heroism against the ravages of war. Admittedly, the later passage contains an element absent here---humor. But such bitter humor, about the waste of human life in war, underlines the horror of the

siege more than it makes us laugh. Byron cannot dismiss the inconvenient fact for the seamless philosophy. Greece's ruins are indeed lovely, and heroism in battle is a moving sight. And yet, in their different ways, both heroes' bodies and marble columns decay. Man cannot live forever through his accomplishments, be they martial or artistic. If anything that Byron presents is immortal, it is Nature's cycle; and Byron consistently portrays man as a misfit in this realm. As Earl R. Wasserman's Shelley: A Critical Reading demonstrates, Shelley also presents contradictory possibilities. However, typically, he treated one alternative at a time; a Count Cenci dominates one poem, Prometheus another. Byron moves from one alternative to another within a single work.

This intimation that man is a misfit in the natural world colors much of Byron's poetry. He does not optimistically take it as evidence that man will ultimately belong to a higher realm; unlike Shelley, Byron's chief concern is almost always the here and now of an individual's life. He refuses to speculate unduly on the nature of any higher powers; rather, he focuses on a human perspective. Canto II of Childe Harold begins with stanzas that dwell at length on man's wretched state:

Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
 Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built
on reeds.

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eye to heaven---
 Is't not enough, unhappy thing! to know
 Thou art? . . . (II, iii-iv)

The Oriental tales contain breathtakingly lovely landscapes, into which man intrudes as a blemish; he fails to harmonize. For instance, The Giaour begins with an edenic description of Mediterranean islands. The first man to enter the scene is the pirate. Byron observes:

Strange---that where Nature loved to trace,
As if for Gods, a dwelling-place,
And every charm and grace hath mix'd
Within the paradise she fix'd,
There man, enamour'd of distress,
Should mar it into wilderness.

(ll. 46-51)

In short, something is radically wrong with man, and whatever his problem is, it causes him to harm everything that he touches. The Giaour's tale follows the description, and it also contrasts human savagery and natural beauty. However, Byron is not simplistic about Nature's goodness. The shipwreck scene in Don Juan is only one of the strongest of many scenes in which he portrays nature as brutal and alien to the interests of man. In The Giaour Byron prefers to focus on man rather than nature. As if his introduction has not made his point that man is out of harmony with the world around him, he ironically exploits this later in the poem. Hassan's mother awaits him in a deliberately edenic setting, where she expects him to claim his bride. We readers have just read an account of an ambush filled with treachery and blood, and we know that Hassan lies dead. A survivor of the ambush shortly jars the peaceful scene, repeating the device at the poem's beginning. Again Byron

turns heaven into hell for the earthly participants, while reminding us how lovely things could be if only man's acts could harmonize with Nature's beauty.

Clearly man as misfit is a favored theme which will recur through Byron's later poetry. Where it is absent, the absence is due to its inappropriateness. For instance, its cosmic scope would be an intrusion in The Vision of Judgment and the more social settings of Don Juan. Instead of offering philosophical speculations in his verse, Byron generally offers us evidence of how man acts in the world. If we accept his data as valid, it becomes difficult to brush aside his suggestion that something is awry. But Byron's poetry is really more psychological than philosophical, and we miss a major point if we philosophize too long. Byron preferred to focus on a protagonist who embodied man's problems in an exceptional way. The poems play with the issue of who is to blame for the hero's unhappy plight. But the real issue, what holds our interest through the poem, is the question of how the individual sinner will live once he is damned to live on after destroying his one chance for happiness. In some later works (e.g., Cain, Marino Faliero) the focus is rather on events leading up to the choice, and on how the protagonist cannot continue to live happily after he recognizes certain things about himself. At this point another question occurs: Under such conditions, is life worth living?

Byron's poems underscore how bitter the hero's condition is by emphasizing the brevity of his happiness---purchased for a moment at the price of life-long suffering. Byron seems to have had a strong identification with this type of irrevocable loss from an early age. In the poems published as Hours of Idleness (1807) and other early work, he senses that his pleasures are transient, even that they may have already disappeared. Thus, "On a Distant View of the Village and School of Harrow on the Hill" begins:

Ye scenes of my childhood, whose loved recollection
 Embitters the present, compared with the past;
Where science first dawn'd on the powers of reflection,
 And friendships were form'd, too romantic to last. . .

Or, more akin to the stance of a Byronic hero:

Yet a few years, one general wreck will whelm
The faint resemblance of our fairy realm

 . . . future hope and fear alike unknown.
I think with pleasure on the past alone;
Yes, to the past alone my heart confine,
And chase the phantom of what once was mine.
 ("Childish Recollections,"
 11. 183-84, 375-78)

In short, the youthful poems make what McGann calls Byron's debut as if he had already lived the only good part of his life. In the early poems these emotions generally crystallize around the subject of lost friendships (See, for instance, "Pignus Amoris," "To a Youthful Friend," Childe Harold, II, xxiii). While these lyrics are quite conventional, they go beyond the general philosophical-elegiac set piece of the late eighteenth century because they express a personal note. In

some early poems Byron goes beyond lament "that world corrupts the noblest soul" ("To a Young Friend") to a more bitter statement, made in the first person: "I must not think, I may not gaze/ On what I am---on what I was." ("Away, Away, Ye Notes of Woe"). Or, in "Euthanasia," the central idea is that "'T is something better not to be." This attitude will recur in Manfred, Cain, and even Don Juan.

Thus, Byron's earliest lyrics focus on irrecoverable happiness, the joys of a brief time now forever gone. A young man still, Byron must live on without the pleasures that he once knew, and without new ones to take their place. His heroes suffer the same fate, from satiated Harold onward. Selim and Zuleika's happiness is brief. About Zuleika's death (akin to Haidée's later) the author exclaims: "Ah, happy! but of life to lose the worst!" The Corsair's happiness likewise departs. As he leaved his beloved, she exclaims: "This hour we part!---my heart foreboded this:/ Thus ever fade my fairy dreams of bliss" (ll. 410-11). The poignant brevity of love, youth, and happiness is even more essential to the mood of Parisina. Here Byron shows the edenic nature of Hugo and Parisina's happiness. Before the lovers meet and again after they part for what proves the first and last time, Byron announces that their bliss will end shortly. Except for a few, brief lines, the poem focuses on the consequences of daring to indulge in a brief moment of illicit love. Typically for Byron, he speculates that human nature is

flawed in such a manner that we are incapable of enjoying perpetual bliss, even if it were attainable; however, it is not:

Their very sighs are full of joy
 So deep, that did it not decay,
 That happy madness would destroy
 The hearts which feel its fiery sway:
 Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
 In that tumultuous tender dream?
 Who that have felt that passion's power,
 Or paused or fear'd in such an hour?
 Or thought how brief such moments last?
 But yet---they are already past!
 Alas! we must awake before
 We know such vision comes no more.
 (ll. 37-48)

Significantly, in no case does the hero seem to feel real guilt or regret for having seized his happiness, despite its cost. He may (like the Corsair or Manfred) regret that he has caused someone else to suffer. But his typical attitude of defiance implies that if what he did was wrong, then he had rather suffer the consequences than undo the deed, that a superior power forbade but he himself chose knowingly in preference to the alternatives.

Akin to this attitude that joy flies, leaving life-long suffering as its price, is Byron's tendency to pose as either an old man or a young man who is old by virtue of an experience-laden, blighted life. This stance persists in his works, from poems like "To Lesbia" or "I Would I Were a Careless Child," through Childe Harold and down to the parts of Don Juan that the narrator speaks.

It seems improbable that this set of poses was due solely either to Byron's perversity as Shelley sometimes charged or

to Byron's feeling that it might sell. McGann has substantiated his claim that from the beginning Byron deliberately created identifications between his own personality and the individuals speaking his poems.⁷ Byron repeatedly asserts that it is his duty to be sincere, or to rely on actual experience. Not only did he express this in his poems; his letters record a similar desire to rely on actual experience. For example, on January 5, 1816, he writes to Thomas Moore: "I would gladly---or, rather, sorrowfully---comply with your request of a dirge for the poor girl you mention. But how can I write on one I have never seen or known?" Many of Byron's prefaces insist that his story actually happened, as if this kind of truth made his poem more valuable.

As Robert F. Gleckner points out, Byron's letters are often more fully vehicles of self-dramatization than his poems of the same period. But the same attitudes generally exist in both throughout Byron's career (admittedly, expressed with varying degrees of seriousness at different times). In 1806 he protests:

Oh! how I hate the nerveless, frigid song,
 The ceaseless echo of the rhyming throng,
 Whose labour'd lines in chilling numbers flow,
 To paint a pang the author ne'er can know!
 The artless Helicon I boast is youth;---
 My lyre, the heart; my muse, the simple truth.
("Answer to Some Elegant Verses")

Likewise, in another poem attributed to the same year, Byron reveals his always ambivalent attitude toward imaginary creations as opposed to history, as he "to Fiction's motley

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altar turn [s]" in "To a Knot of Ungenerous Critics"; later in the same poem he opposes her to "Truth, my sole desire." In a considerably more complex way Byron tries to balance the two attitudes in Childe Harold, where now he asserts the power of the imagination to transcend reality, and then his skepticism insists that what really happens in this world is more important. This topic could expand into a lengthy discussion, but at this stage in a study that will focus on Shelley, the major point is that Byron seemed always to have a strong strain of skepticism that undercut his inclination to write prophetic poetry. He persistently dismisses such poetry, that triumphantly insists on one stance at the cost of other, more negative possibilities; this stance eventually affects the language, tone, and structure of Shelley's work.

Byron's poetry would do more for Shelley than merely express the negative attitudes that both men held. Shelley's later work shows other, important correspondences to Byron's in diction and in limitation of subject. As Carlos Baker and others state, the young Shelley followed the late eighteenth-century evaluation of poetry's purposes. Using inspiring language, the poem should move its reader to act in a particular way, a way that would benefit society. Shelley's models tended toward flowery language, commonplace observations, and didacticism. Through his philosophical interests, Shelley early added to these qualities speculations on the nature of the universe. Ever the skeptic, he rarely

came up with answers, but he asked far-ranging questions.

Byron also thought about man's position in the universal order, and he likewise was a skeptic. However, his emphasis inclined to the uniquely individual. His poems generally focus on characters more than ideas, although they contain speculative passages. His perspective is nearly always the same, that of life as humans experience it. Unlike Shelley, practically all of his work portrays man's problems from an emphatically human point of view. As Wasserman points out through Shelley: A Critical Reading, Shelley's views remained fairly consistent, but his perspective changed from poem to poem. However, Shelley's questions went beyond interest in individual psychology to questions about how and why the universe operated as it did. Byron's preference for the limited, human perspective was always before Shelley. As he began to feel that Byron was England's greatest contemporary poet as well as her most popular, Shelley's poetry became more personal and more specific. This trend accelerates during the last two years of his life.

Another area in which Byron influenced Shelley is that of diction. Baker, Donald Davie, and others indicate that the young Shelley followed the "high" style of his predecessors. The result was often unfortunate: stilted language, confusing syntax, and trite similes are common. Byron, on the other hand, early adopted a more relaxed style. Until Truman G. Steffan and others studied Byron's revisions, it was a

critical commonplace to attack Byron's careless haste in composition. While he doubtless was careless occasionally, most readers today recognize that Byron deliberately cultivated a conversational style. Eventually this style would affect Shelley. In addition to its obvious relationship with Shelley's 1818 "conversation poems," it gave Shelley a good, contemporary example of how one could write effectively in a "plain" style.

So far, I seem to have forgotten that today Byron is appreciated for his "comic" masterpiece, Don Juan. I have presented him as if he personally and poetically began and ended a Childe Harold or a Corsair. That is not really my point; I wish to emphasize that Byron had a fundamentally dark view of man and the universe, and that this attitude persisted even through Don Juan.

Yet I would not dismiss Byron as a connoisseur of gloom. Throughout his career, in both letters and poems, he also demonstrated that he had a sense of humor. In his earliest poems there are touches that anticipate later comic masterpieces, although the juvenile works are admittedly clumsier. Thus, in "Granta---a Medley" (1806), Byron uses a combination of comic rhyme, third person, and first person intrusion that anticipates ways The Vision of Judgment and Don Juan will use the same devices.

But if I scribble longer now,
The deuce a soul will stay to read:
My pen is blunt, my ink is low;
'T is almost time to stop, indeed.

Therefore, farewell, old Granta's spires!
No more, like Cleofas, I fly;
No more thy theme my muse inspires:
The reader's tired and so am I.

This tone, however significant for Byron's poetry, has little influence on Shelley's major works.

Shelley's early works

Traditional critical consensus would summarize Shelley's development in this fashion: originally an unhappy, overwrought child, Shelley sought escape from his unhappy home and school experiences in Gothic romances. At an early age he began to fabricate singularly unpromising imitations of the prose that he read. He then discovered the social tracts of the revolutionary era and became a zealous reformer and tract-writer himself. At this stage Shelley was a naive meliorist, preaching ardently to a deaf world that humanity could easily and swiftly transform earth into a paradise. Until the time when Shelley began Queen Mab, his future as an important poet was inconceivable. His early prose is adequate, even moderately interesting at times, but the poetry merely consists of adolescent imitations of inferior models.

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Critics often prefer to discuss Shelley's shifting intellectual allegiances, his changing attitudes toward

life, or his own life and suffering as reflected in his poetry. Most of the studies that study his poetics (save as expounded in A Defence of Poetry) judge Shelley unfavorably as a poet. A favorite critical and biographical exercise of past decades seems to be tracing Shelley's development from a naive, melioristic reformer to the frustrated author of the bitter, incomplete The Triumph of Life.

Discussing Shelley's early philosophical development, critics generally begin with Godwin and the French writers of the revolutionary era. Under their influence, especially Godwin's, Shelley accepted the doctrine of Necessity. With time, his allegiance wavered, and he was eventually converted from a Necessitarian to a Platonist. In the process he ceased to be a naive meliorist, lost interest in what occurred in this world, and transferred his passionate poetic energies from the "real world" to an ideal world of his own imagining.

While many critics' readings of Shelley's work would disagree with details in such a developmental summary, the majority of the older studies fit these broad outlines. Surely Shelley's poetry gives some justification for this prevalent interpretation, yet in many ways it is inaccurate. Such readings tend to underplay important patterns that remained consistent through Shelley's works. Several critics, especially recent ones, object to this rigid categorization of Shelley's work. Building upon their work, I will first

discuss what Shelley's early and late poetry has in common--- i.e., what did not change.

Many Shelley studies begin with Alastor, as if it were the first truly Shelleyan poem. R. G. Woodman, Peter H. Butter, Carl Grabo, and others recognize that Queen Mab also belongs, even if it is fairly juvenile. In a summary of its early publication history, H. Buxton-Forman cannot resist describing Queen Mab as:

a receptacle wherein he dug for later poetical efforts, a work which he did not abandon readily after getting it into print as he did many a better work, and finally a creation which, when he had abandoned it, he found by no means disposed to abandon him.

(Shelley Society Papers, I, p. 22)

Republished against Shelley's wishes, it was his best known poem until well into the Victorian period. In studying Byron's influence it is a useful reference point, because Queen Mab demonstrates that Shelley's early works possessed qualities that scholars attribute to Byron's influence after 1816.

As Bennett Weaver demonstrates (PQ, 1953), the lyrics in Shelley's Esdaile notebook express many themes which he used later; however, most of these poems are too short to show how Shelley developed his themes. Queen Mab, a more ambitious work that Shelley hoped would be widely read, gives a fairer indication of Shelley's interests. While it is a youthful work, Shelley clearly never repudiated most of

the ideas that it expresses. In 1821 he attempted to halt the appearance of a pirated edition, but not because his ideas had changed. Letters that he wrote to his publisher Ollier and to the editor of the Examiner (Leigh Hunt) explain why he did not wish the work to reappear: he was sure that the ideas that the poem expressed were "crude and immature" (but he does not say "false"), and he knew that its literary worth was nil.⁸ Compared with what Shelley had produced by 1821, his opinion seems justified. And yet, as his first major poetic effort, Queen Mab repays study. It demonstrates both how consistent Shelley's poetry was and how amazingly he was to develop afterwards.

Shelley's letters show that he always reacted vigorously to the ideas that other thinkers and poets expressed. Biographers and critics of Shelley have long perceived that Shelley's sources were far more than dry words to him; they came to life in his imagination and he participated in the experiences that they recorded. Baker suggests the special relationship that Shelley had with what he read:

But anyone who has looked carefully into Shelley's sources both early and late must conclude that a kind of imaginative act always took place between the recollection and the re-expression. Shelley displayed a singular capacity for projecting himself imaginatively into the literature he admired, and his reading became for him a part of his actual experience.

(Shelley's Major Poetry, p. 29)

This characteristic reaction is important, for it is the source of Shelley's inclination to "correct" the works

of his favorite authors in his own poetry. Bloom⁹ has explored how authors elaborate upon and "correct" their predecessors. As we would expect of an author who read as passionately as Shelley, he actively participates in this process from an early age. As his skill develops, his models change, although the most persistent is Milton, whom Bloom calls "the central problem in any theory and history of poetic influence in English" (Anxiety, p. 33).¹⁰ It is important to see how Shelley adapts earlier sources, for his later reactions to Byron have similar results.

Youthful brashness shows in Queen Mab when Shelley chooses biblical language to support ideas that would scandalize the average pre-Victorian English Christian. With the audacity of youth, Queen Mab attempts to correct Christianity's traditions. Shelley's aim appears at various points, abundantly reinforced by deliberately biblical or Miltonic language. Like Blake's attempts to correct the same venerable tradition, Shelley's efforts alienated his contemporary readers rather than attracting them. But this attempt at correction is legitimately Romantic. As Leslie Brisman observes, "A prerogative of the romantic poem is to see itself as criticism, looking back at its poetic antecedent as text" (p. 8).

Biblically-inspired passages abound in Queen Mab; Shelley the "atheist" clearly knew his enemy. Shelley plainly attempted to give his own, truer version of what he objected

to in the orthodox version. There are far too many biblical echoes to cite individually here, but a few examples will show how Shelley worked. Bloom's description of the Romantic apocalyptic goal is apposite here, as it reminds us why Shelley might choose such language:

What does ally Collins and Keats, Blake and Wordsworth, is one of the great traditions of English poetry, the prophetic and Protestant line of Spenser and Milton, which reaches its radical limits in the generation after Wordsworth. The characteristic concern of this line is with the double transformation of the individual and of nature; the apocalyptic ambition involved is to humanize nature, and to naturalize the imagination.

(The Anxiety of Influence, p. 7)

Although Shelley may dwell on the transformation of nature when he pictures man's edenic future, he more often centers on the imagination. His note to VIII, 203-07, explains what he hopes for, but we must not forget that Shelley does not always claim that we can reach this state.

If, therefore, the human mind, by any future improvement of its sensibility, should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in a minute, that minute would be eternity. I do not hence infer that the actual space between the birth and death of a man will ever be prolonged; but that his sensibility is perfectible, and that the number of ideas which his mind is capable of receiving is infinite.

Of course, this apocalyptic goal persists in Shelley, as a comparison of Ianthe's happy vision of mankind's future with the end of Prometheus Unbound will show. The difference between Shelley's earlier and later poems is partly that we

Byron, while man's power and self-sufficiency exhilarate Shelley, he is painfully aware that this joyous experience of infinitude is brief. In this poem Shelley mentions and accepts the brevity several times. Despite the length of the poem, Ianthe's dream-vision evidently begins just before sunrise and ends while the stars are still out (I, 210-11; IX, 239-40). Shelley likens a brief, critical moment between daylight and darkness to the duration of the experience that Mab can provide. And still he proclaims the ultimacy of creation's "exterminable spirit." In his Hymn to Intellectual Beauty and later, the brevity of such moments causes him more pain; but there too, unlike Byron, he experiences the feelings of dedication and purpose even after his ecstasy is gone. Shelley's late poetry still recognizes this type of occurrence, although as he aged he increasingly realized, like Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Byron, that most of one's life was spent far removed from such insights.

Why would Shelley proclaim a doctrine of purely human potentiality to an audience of his day in deliberately biblical language? Perhaps, in part, he resembled Blake in admiring what was true and great in the Bible even while attempting to correct its errors. Still, given the Notes to Queen Mab, it is hard to believe that Shelley's major point was not to *épater les bourgeois*. This is especially true when we consider that in reality he was not the atheist

that the poem claims he is; as Southey pointed out to him, he was really a pantheist. Thomas Medwin claims that Shelley told him that he took up the name to shock people.

But Shelley really did object to certain Christian beliefs. His summary of Judaeo-Christianity (VII, 106-14) reveals most clearly which elements he least admired in Christianity as he knew it. He gives us God's version of the creation and of human history:

From an eternity of idleness
I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil made earth
From nothing; rested, and created man:
I placed him in a paradise, and there
Planted the tree of evil, so that he
Might eat and perish, and My soul procure
Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn
Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,
All misery to My fame. . . (VII, 106-14)

This passage goes on to reveal the consequences of God's malice---human lust, bloodshed, and damnation. The God who put together Shelley's version of Christianity was clearly cruel, unjust, and arbitrary. The priests, rulers, and rising businessmen of Shelley's day obviously were intimately related to this concept of the supreme power, as Shelley often blamed priests and kings for the savage religion of the people. Shelley several times blasts the injustice of Christ's proclamation, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). At one point he translates it to the social-economic order: ". . . Many faint with toil, / That few may know the cares and woe of sloth" (III, 116-17).

Shelley clearly believes that Christianity must be wrong if "Christian" governments can support such injustice.

Atasverus gives a Shelleyan summary of the consequences of such a creed, focusing on the cruelty and malice that such a God must be guilty of (VII, 106, ff., quoted above). The Wandering Jew then describes the horrors that he has seen accompany triumphant Christianity:

And friends to friends, brothers to brothers stood
Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war,
Scarce satiable by fate's last death-draught waged,
Drunk from the winepress of the Almighty's wrath;
Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace,
Pointed to victory! . . . (VII, 215-20)

Here Shelley translates the winepress imagery of Revelations into an expose of Christianity's savagery.

Shelley and Byron both show that man's higher impulses clash with the power that seems to operate the universe. Once this is granted, one must quickly admit that they emphasize different aspects of the problem. While Byron portrays the psychological reactions of an individual, Shelley more often focuses on reform. In Queen Mab he implies that if men will abolish what he treats as false superstitions (Christianity, tyranny, etc.) the universe will respond to the new, better way in which man sees himself. Shelley speculates relatively little on the possibility that Byron instinctively recognized, that there is no harmony between human virtue and the forces that operate the universe.

Most of Queen Mab's prophecy and optimism is directed toward social melioration, but sometimes, like Blake, Shelley asserts the nature of his personal religion, that he would offer all mankind. For instance, he extends that grass image the Bible so frequently associates with the brevity and insignificance of man's life:

I tell thee that those living things,
To whom the fragile blade of grass,
That springeth in the morn
And perisheth ere noon
Is an unbounded world.

(II, 226-30)

In short, as in his note quoted above, Shelley asserts the power of the individual imagination to defy mortality by perceiving it in a new way. This is the crux of his biblical correction; he would turn one's attention from dead authority to man's own infinite perceptions.

To summarize Shelley's use of scripture, he relies upon certain traditions to depart from them by illustrating the superiority of his own, improved versions. In his presentation he echoes passages from several parts of the Bible, but as Weaver and others point out, most of these passages come from the prophetic books. Like their authors, he wished to present a new version of reality that would convert mankind. Throughout his poetic career Shelley will continue to use some of the same biblical source material, and he will often use it in similar ways; however, as he matures his verse becomes less openly didactic.

Although his religion seemed radical to most of Shelley's contemporaries, his use of the Bible and Milton nevertheless puts him firmly in the mainstream of English poetry. As Bloom points out, Shelley's reliance upon his own experience rather than upon authority places him firmly in the Protestant-Miltonic tradition. Shelley's postscript to the Feb. 24, 1812, letter to Godwin expresses the relativity of this tradition: "I know that Milton believed Xtianity; but I do not forget that Virgil believed ancient mythology." In other words, the truth in Milton's works will survive the life-span of the religion for which he wrote, as Virgil's survived the collapse of paganism. Thus Shelley justified his own rewriting of Christianity, his correction of Milton, and probably later his corrections of Byron as well because they participated in this evolutionary process.

Milton's influence shows throughout Queen Mab. Generally, Shelley selects elements from Paradise Lost (and only Paradise Lost in Queen Mab) that reflect his own interpretation of human and divine history, and there are also echoes of Miltonic language. Brisman's recent study of Milton's influence on the Romantic poets illustrates how Shelley's later poems re-use Miltonic material. Carlos Baker and Frederick L. Jones have also published on this subject. Earlier Raymond D. Havens pointed out (The Influence of Milton, p. 228) that such linguistic influences could all have come from Wordsworth.¹¹

Perhaps this is so, but in some cases the echoes seem too close to Milton's usage and remote from Wordsworth's. Furthermore, Wordsworth's influence cannot account for other ways Shelley used Paradise Lost. Admittedly, there are other sources of Miltonic diction between Milton himself and Shelley, notably the late eighteenth-century poets whom Shelley is known to have read. Shelley's diction may be secondhand in some cases, but in other instances he echoes Paradise Lost directly; he does not merely use an occasionally Latinate word, or one with Miltonic associations.

In addition to Miltonic diction, Shelley uses material from Milton's myth. Paradise Lost, in Shelley's Defense, is the poem that made Milton the world's "third epic poet," and the youthful poet drew from his English Homer. Shelley's famous misreading of Satan's character should come as no surprise to one who has read Queen Mab; the 1813 poem contains seeds of it. Shelley uses several echoes of Milton's epic in the same radical Protestant manner in which he also uses the Bible, in order to correct traditional religious notions. Thus, when Ahasuerus describes God, he does so in terms akin to those in Paradise Lost, but inverted. We see Satan's cherubim "Hurling defiance toward the Vault of Heav'n" (Paradise Lost, I, 669), but in Shelley's poem it is "all the dauntless and the good/ That dared to hurl defiance at His throne" (VII, 89-90). In Milton it is Satan who is vengeful,

who causes man's fall to avenge his own expulsion from heaven. In Shelley's work, God is the villain. Ahasuerus' speech reveals some of the needs that motivate God's warped ego (quoted above). Given a God like this as the ruler of present-day life, a truly worthy character must defy him. This Ahasuerus does, and he accepts his inevitable doom in a manner that Shelley repeatedly extols in his works:

Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly began
My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unweariable war
With my almighty Tyrant, and to hurl
Defiance at His impotence to harm
Beyond the curse I bore. . .

(VII, 196-201)

Obviously, the Wandering Jew bears a close kinship to the Byronic hero and the Prometheus of the Romantic period, including Shelley's own later hero.

In Queen Mab as elsewhere, Shelley implies that humanity's monstrous God results from a perverted self-image that has in turn produced a vicious social order; change these and God will also change, by disappearing. Shelley suggests that since man made his God, he can unmake him as well. One of the more hopeful proclamations in the poem is the happy, pre-Nietzschean, "There is no God!" (VII, 13). However, even in Queen Mab, better times arrive gradually, showing that Shelley realized portraying the ideal was easier than achieving it.¹² By the time that he wrote The Triumph of Life, attainment seemed unlikely---although Shelley's wishes clearly remained the same.

Milton and the Bible continued to inspire Shelley through his life, because both sources said things that impressed him in manners he found memorable. Byron inspired Shelley for the same reasons. His brilliance in portraying the darker aspects of human existence moved Shelley, at various times, to attempt correction of Byron's views and to echo Byron's phrasing.

When the two poets first met in 1816, they had many things in common. Most superficially, both were gentlemen who fled social ostracism in Britain, in favor of a more tolerant and less hypocritical atmosphere abroad. Both men had similar political views, espousing liberal causes but fearing rapid changes. When it came to philosophical views, the two men also had much in common. Most important in this respect, Byron's and Shelley's early poetry shows that both men were aware of the world's evil as well as its good. Byron did not teach Shelley that pure optimism was naive, as Robinson and others seem to assume. Shelley had much to learn from Byron, but he was already painfully aware that man was a defective creature.

Chapter II. BYRON AND SHELLEY IN 1816-17

Although Byron and Shelley continued seeing one another until Shelley's death, biographers generally emphasize the summer of 1816. The typical study suggests that Shelley had a significant influence on Byron's work of that year, while Byron's impact on Shelley's work was slighter. There is rarely much discussion of the later relationship between the poetry of these two men. Probably scholars focus on Shelley's influence chiefly because Shelley's philosophical and literary education was more advanced, and because Byron wrote far more poetry in 1816 than Shelley did. According to Medwin, Shelley "dosed" Byron with a generous prescription of Wordsworth during the summer; the third canto of Childe Harold reflects this. Byron humorously blames Shelley for introducing him to Wordsworth and for infecting the penultimate canto so strongly with the kind of philosophical abstractions that often made him uncomfortable. Critics have followed the biographers in using this admission as evidence that Shelley introduced Byron to Wordsworth, and they cite Wordsworthian passages through Childe Harold, III, and Manfred as departures from Byron's normal practice.¹ These passages they attribute to Shelley's missionary zeal. To them, Shelley's philosophical studies also seem to give Manfred surprising depth when compared with the earlier Oriental tales. I feel that Byron's philosophical stance was both more consistent and

less simple than this reading suggests. Also, Wordsworth's influence is more lasting than Byron and his later critics would have us believe.

No one would deny the fact that Shelley read Wordsworth to Byron, or be likely to dispute that Shelley presented arguments in favor of the Lake poet's work. But this need not mean either that Byron had never read Wordsworth before or that all aspects of Wordsworth's work were uncongenial to him.

Michael G. Cooke demonstrates that certain early Byron lyrics express elegaic feelings akin to those of Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey (he discusses "On a Distant View of the Villace and School of Harrow on the Hill" and "To Edward Noel Long, Esq.," both from Hours of Idleness).² The Preface to this early volume suggests that by 1800 Byron had read at least some works by the Lake poets as well as by Scott. After defending himself in advance from a charge of plagiarism, he apologizes for his amateurish intrusion on their realm:

Though accustomed, in my younger days, to rove a careless mountaineer on the Highlands of Scotland, I have not, of late years, had the benefit of such pure air, or so elevated a residence, as might enable me to enter the lists with genuine bards, who have enjoyed both these advantages. (from the Preface)

The attack on Wordsworth in English Bards and Scotch Reviewers indicates that Byron at least read reviews, if not Wordsworth's poetry, and letters of 1814-15 reflect

the same mixed evaluation that Byron's poetry from Switzerland expresses. Two years before meeting Shelley, he wrote to Murray about Wordsworth's Excursion, praising much, but condemning its excessive length, and concluding, "but there can be no doubt of his powers to do almost any thing" (Sept. 7, 1814). When writing to Hunt a year later, Byron reconsidered, still praising Wordsworth, but claiming that since the Lyrical Ballads Wordsworth had wasted his powers (Oct. 30, 1815).

However, to read a poet need not mean to accept his influence. Perhaps Shelley first interested Byron in attempting Wordsworthian poetry. Medwin represents Byron as claiming, "Shelley, when I was in Switzerland, used to dose me with Wordsworth physic even to nausea; and I do remember then reading some things of his with pleasure. He had once a feeling of Nature, which he carried almost to a deification of it:---that's why Shelley liked his poetry" (Conversations, E. J. Lovell, Jr., Ed., p. 194). And yet, in Canto II of Childe Harold, written well before 1816, Byron expresses a Wordsworthian feeling for nature:

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude, 't is but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms and view her stores
unroll'd.

But 'midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
.
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!
(II, xxv-xxvi)

A little farther on Byron begins a stanza, "Dear Nature is the kindest mother still. . ." (xxxvii).

There is thus some evidence that however strongly Shelley championed Wordsworth during the summer of 1816, he did not introduce Byron to his works for the first time. Wordsworth had touched Byron without Shelley's aid, and he continued to make an occasional mark long after Shelley returned to London. The climactic stanzas of Childe Harold, Canto IV, have a tinge of Wordsworthian language ("There is a pleasure in the pathless woods. . . . I love not Man the less but Nature more. . . . To mingle with the Universe. . ." stanza clxxviii). Or, in stanza clxxxiii Byron's language recalls the Intimations Ode: "Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form/ Glasses itself in tempests. . ."

Even during the season when Byron claimed that Shelley came closest to making him a Wordsworthian, he continued to criticize the Lake poet's subjects. Nor was Shelley an unqualified admirer of Wordsworth at this time; before the summer of 1816, Shelley had also become disillusioned with the later Wordsworth.³ In "Churchill's Grave, A Fact Literally Rendered," Byron parodies Wordsworth's supposedly factual, didactic poems about old beggars, leech gatherers,

destitute widows, and the like, while taking a few side swipes at The Recluse. Byron's poem opens innocuously enough, with the persona speculating over the modest grave of the poet Churchill. Seeking profound truths, Byron has him ask the caretaker why people still ask about this particular grave fifty years after it was filled. In Byron's literal rendition we get lower-class simplicity of another kind than what Wordsworth's characters represented. Byron's simple man expresses the attitude: How should I know? I didn't bury him." Byron sanctimoniously smoothes over this answer by having his persona obscure its significance with very high-flown cliches that treat the transience of human life (including a possible dig at Shelley's language: "and do we rip/ The veil of Immortality, and crave/ I know not what of honor and of light. . ."). But the attempt to extract Wordsworthian profundity from the expressions of this simple but wise character collapse when the sexton opens his mouth again. He does, after all, vaguely recall who Churchill was, and his one clever pun manages to ask the visitor for money even as it gives up its poor mite of information: travelers detour "To pay him honour,---and myself whate'er/ Your honour pleases." "Most pleased," the speaker tips the caretaker, "Though I could spare/ So much but inconveniently." Next, in case we are so well-trained in reading Wordsworth that we miss the point, the wealthy Lord berates us for

enjoying the chuckles which he staged for us and insists that we should misread the sexton's "natural homily" by agreeing with the speaker's egotistical insistence that in his own simple way the caretaker had the same profound thoughts as the poet. Satirizing Wordsworth's egotistical assumption that all readers will perceive reality as he does, Byron creates a persona whose insights amuse as they criticize.

Here, as in the later Dedication to Don Juan, Byron exposes what he considers Wordsworth's chief shortcomings. Although Byron composed the Dedication after that summer in Switzerland, he still acknowledges that despite limitations Wordsworth and his friends are "shabby fellows---true---but poets still" (Dedication, vi). From this evidence, it seems a mistake to claim either that Shelley introduced Byron to Wordsworth's poetry or that he changed Byron's evaluation of it. It seems probable that Byron made these statements to defend himself largely because he was uncertain about the quality of his more speculative passages. As in the Preface to his Hours of Idleness, he may have tried to defend himself from censure by acknowledging criticisms before anyone else could make them. His statements about Shelley's forcing Wordsworth on him seem to me to fit this pattern, which clearly applies to the first draft of Manfred, discussed below.

Various critics suppose that Shelley influenced Byron in various other ways. During the summer of 1816 Shelley

and "Monk" Lewis translated parts of Goethe's Faust, which appear to color scenes in Manfred and elsewhere. Robinson borrows from Medwin the suggestion that Shelley's translating Aeschylus' Prometheus resulted in Byron's poem of that name; however, this ignores the fact that Byron wrote of the Titan in similar terms in 1814 ("Ode to Napoleon Bounoparte"). Given their classical educations, both men undoubtedly knew this myth from youth. Robinson also suggests that Byron's interest in Buffon came from Shelley; from Buffon Byron got the scientific theory which resulted in Darkness. Ronald Bottrall feels that Shelley had a bad effect on Byron's imagery, encouraging "tangled metaphors" (English Romantic Poets, M. H. Abrams, Ed., p. 215).

Several biographers and critics suggest in passing that Shelley's Alastor substantially affected Manfred. Robinson's dissertation treats this material at considerable length, pointing out numerous parallels between the works. Both are quest poems, pitting an exceptional, isolated individual against the universe.⁴ Both focus on love and the desire for knowledge. Both use a curse-motif. Both protagonists die. Both works use an apparition of the hero's female counterpart at a critical moment. Robinson also points out differences, suggesting that Byron exploited them to correct Shelley, and that Byron wrote Manfred, with its "insistence on the power of the reality of the individual mind, to

43.

provide Shelley with an alternative to the idealism that caused his disillusionment in Alastor" (p. 78). This assertion may be true, but The Giaour (published in 1813) inconveniently intrudes. Written before Alastor (in 1815), it also has a quest theme, a lost beloved, an isolated hero, a curse-motif, and a female apparition. Byron certainly treated his materials more crudely in 1813, but he definitely handled them before reading Shelley's poem. As with Wordsworth's influence, these facts do not prove that Shelley had no influence on Byron; they merely suggest that the influence was less than some people claim, and that it may have occurred because Byron was already attracted to materials like those in Shelley's poem.

Whether or not Byron was correcting Shelley, there are characteristic differences in the ways Alastor and Manfred end. Shelley's Poet seeks a value beyond himself, and his quest ends in failure. Byron's hero is more self-centered, and this provides the source of his final victory. While Shelley's poet withers away in bewildered frustration, Manfred defies all external powers and asserts his own power as an individual even as he perishes. The contrast between these endings points out a characteristic difference between the authors' approaches. Normally, Byron concerns himself more with the individual's plight, Shelley with how the individual fits into the scheme of things. This distinction

has far-reaching consequences in differentiating the scope of the two men's works. In much of his work, Byron seems to accent a certain (generally hostile) relationship between his protagonist and the external forces that affect his life; his poem then focuses on how the individual conducts his life, given these circumstances. Shelley's position is considerably more speculative. Deeply concerned with mankind's relationship to these external forces and at the same time unsure what this relationship is, he prefers to deal with abstract, philosophical issues. The individual is both more and less important. Shelley displays less interest in abnormal psychology. His characters are often types rather than distinctive characters. Until his very latest poetry, Shelley tends to treat the protagonists' social responsibilities as more important than self-expression. In his last works, he seems to work within Byronic limitations, confining his subjects largely to how one survives the miseries of his present condition.

Some of Byron's 1816 works do betray a somewhat Shelleyan stance, which numerous critics have noticed. Byron's own uncertainty about the worth of Manfred demonstrates how unsure he was that he could master a new, more philosophical mode. On March 9, 1817, Byron wrote to Murray about the draft: "I have really and truly no notion whether it is good or bad; and as this was not the case with the

principal of my former publications, I am, therefore, inclined to rank it but humbly." By July 9, he claims, ". . . he is one of the best of my misbegotten, say what they [the critics] will."

The picture that certain early Shelley biographers give of Byron's debt to Shelley's immense learning⁵ is clearly an exaggeration also. There is no doubt that Shelley talked about his thinking and reading during the summer in Switzerland. But at this stage in the poets' relationship it is clearly incorrect to claim that most of the influence flowed from Shelley to Byron. There are biographical reasons to assume the reverse. Byron was older and his works were famous; Shelley was unknown. Shelley's letters to Byron display a degree of veneration for Byron's poetic powers that might lead to a Byronic influence in his subsequent work. Byron's prose, on the other hand, reveals a respect for Shelley as a human being, but he never expresses awe at Shelley's poetic powers.

I feel that there is little tangible evidence of Byron in Shelley's 1816 poetry,⁶ but influence need not occur immediately. Probably the balanced, open-ended skepticism of Mont Blanc and its simpler diction result partly from Byron's influence; but Wordsworth could also have had this effect. Shelley actually produced little poetry in 1816, although 1817 saw The Revolt of Islam. In her notes to

this epic, Mary Shelley attributes Shelley's low productivity to Byron's influence:

Perhaps during this summer his genius was checked by association with another poet whose nature was utterly dissimilar to his own, yet who, in the poem he wrote at that time, gave tokens that he shared for a period the more abstract and etherealised inspiration of Shelley.

This cannot be the complete explanation for Shelley's sparse output, however, as he produced even less in 1816 during the months before he met Byron.

Whatever Byron's influence on Shelley's poetry in 1816, it is indisputable that during that summer Byron made at least one lasting contribution by introducing Shelley to Rousseau's Nouvelle Héloïse, although as Bloom (Shelley's Mythmaking, p. 252, ff) points out, Shelley knew some of Rousseau's work before this time.

Robinson suggests other ways that Byron influenced Shelley. Several seem questionable. He claims that a new, "somber" tone appears in Mont Blanc: this he attributes to Byron. But this neglects the end of Alastor, written in 1815. Other critics attribute the same "new" tone in Byron's work to Shelley's influence. The combination of maturity, certain biographical facts, and the poets' inter-relationship may provide a better explanation. Byron introduced Shelley to Coleridge's Kubla Khan, which Robinson feels Shelley echoed in lines 120-25 of Mont Blanc. Robinson may be correct, but the lines also seem related to

a source which we know that Shelley already knew and admired, the last books of Southey's Thalaba.

A major event of this summer was Byron and Shelley's journey together around Lake Geneva. They read Rousseau together, visiting the imagined settings of the novel. The Alpine scenery had already stirred both men, and through their accounts of this period so many similar reactions occur that we must suppose that the responses arose spontaneously, whether both men read the same guide books, whether each poet contributed details to the total, or whether one man expressed something which the other then borrowed. As they generally spent several hours a day talking, the fact that one person or the other wrote a particular phrase down first is insufficient proof that he originated it. Since both poets' previous works express enthusiasm for landscapes, it is probably wise to treat these influences as reciprocal. Shelley's passage in Mont Blanc on the desert mountain region where an eagle brings a hunter's bone may have suggested Manfred's similar description (I, ii, 290, ff). Or, perhaps Shelley took the original idea from something that Byron said. In Shelley's well-known letter to Peacock (July 12, 1816) he describes his trip around Lake Geneva with Lord Byron in terms similar to those that Byron uses: "Meillerie is the well-known scene of St. Preux's visionary exile; but Meillerie is indeed enchanted ground, were Rousseau no magician." Byron expresses the same idea in Childe Harold,

III, civ. Shelley observes of Gibbon (paralleling Byron's later Tasso), "There is something grand and even touching in the regret which he expresses at the completion of his task. . .The sudden departure of his cherished and accustomed toil must have left him, like the death of a dear friend, sad and solitary."⁸ Shelley's comparative judgment of Rousseau and Gibbon parallels Byron's in Childe Harold, III, lxxvi-lxxxix and cvi-cvii.⁹ Perhaps the description of an avalanche in Shelley's July 22 letter to Lord Byron affected Byron's description in Manfred. In Shelley's July 23 entry in a letter to Peacock, he describes a glacier's inexorable destruction of a pine forest. Byron also picked out this detail when he visited Chamounix; but, as Parisina and other early poems use a similarly stricken tree, he need not have noticed this only because Shelley did (Shelley used a "scathed pine-tree's height" as early as 1810---The Wandering Jew, l. 785).

On August 29, 1816, Shelley left Geneva, and he did not see Byron again until two years later, in Venice. In the meantime, however, Shelley acquired several obligations which resulted from the companionship. He returned to London with the manuscript of Childe Harold, Canto III, which he sold to Murray for Byron. Claire was pregnant with Byron's child, a circumstance that Mary and Shelley succeeded in hiding from the Godwins. Complications related to these facts would change the poets' relationship from the relative

idyll of the first summer. Shelley understood that Byron asked him to see the new canto of Childe Harold through the press; but Byron's letter to Murray (August 28) indicated that Moore or Gifford should, naming Shelley as his third choice. Byron never straightened this out with Shelley. In addition, Byron's indifference to Claire and his dislike of children provided more serious problems. Shelley felt responsible for Claire, and he was financially unable to provide for her and the child; therefore, logically, he turned to the child's father. As numerous biographers have stated, these circumstances put Shelley in a doubly unfortunate position: they showed him Lord Byron at his worst, and they forced him into close personal contact, even as Shelley's esteem for Byron decreased. But in late 1816-1817 this process was at an early stage.

Between his return to England and moving to Italy, Shelley had other worries. Insufficient funds, his wife Harriet's suicide, and his own poor health are merely the highlights. And yet Shelley produced far more poetry in this time than during the summer in Geneva. Considering the praise that he bestowed upon Byron's productions of this period, his own work shows surprisingly little direct Byronic influence. Instead, he seems to continue largely in the manner of his earlier work. If any single influence appears, it is Wordsworth's, which strongly affected Alastor (published

1815).¹⁰ Through the works of this time we encounter Wordsworthian language. Shelley obviously owed a considerable debt to Wordsworth's narratives that focus on innocent victims of social injustice. For instance, The Revolt of Islam and the "Prince Athanase" fragment both include a pure, simple old man who inspires and educates a youth. Both poets demonstrate a passionate concern for the victims of social injustice. Shelley, of course, depicts these materials in ways characteristic of his own mind. For instance, Wordsworth's characters usually are poor, but they have dignity, even when their poverty ultimately destroys them. Wordsworth seems more interested in them as characters, while Shelley places greater emphasis on the suffering itself and on the cruelty of those who cause the poverty. Shelley, a more ardent reformer, tends to show the consequences of the entire corrupt political system---tyranny, greed, and other forms of viciousness---rather than focusing on the character itself as fully as Wordsworth does.

There are some connections with Byron in Shelley's 1817 work, however. "Ozymandias" captures in essence the mood of several longer exhortations through Childe Harold, most clearly stanzas cviii-cxi of Canto IV. Byron opposed the enduring names of men who represent virtuous rule to the "nameless column with the buried base" which some tyrant constructed as his own memorial. This triumph of time is also Shelley's subject.

The Revolt of Islam contains some debts to Byron, which Robinson has identified: Shelley uses the meter of Childe Harold, and the subject is one that Shelley proposed to Byron for an epic. Shelley's ruins probably descend from those in Childe Harold (also true of the setting for "Ozymandias").

Byron also seems to be the source for materials in two of Shelley's episodes. Cythna's imprisonment and, especially, her release (Canto VII), recall Byron's The Prisoner of Chillon. Laon's disguised appearance before the priests and warriors in Canto XI resembles that of the Corsair dressed as a dervish (Canto II). But these are relatively superficial matters. Byron's main effect on Shelley at this time seems to me the oblique one that Robinson mentions---searching out an epic subject for Byron to treat, Shelley suggested the French Revolution, which provided the background for his own epic.¹¹

Chapter III. JULIAN AND MADDALO THROUGH
 PROMETHEUS UNBOUND AND THE CENCI

In 1818, shortly after meeting Byron again in Venice, Shelley experiments with a new type of poetry. Numerous critics comment upon the new, conversational quality of Julian and Maddalo, "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," and the "Stanzas Written in Dejection near Naples"; fewer people note how quickly this new style follows Shelley's reaction to Byron's most recent poetry. We know from Shelley's letters to Mary (August 23) and to Peacock (October 8) that on his first journey to Venice he heard Lord Byron recite parts of Childe Harold, Canto IV, and of the first canto of Don Juan. The first forty-four lines of Julian and Maddalo appear in Shelley's notebook shortly after he left Venice.

Wasserman acutely perceives why Byron appealed so strongly to Shelley; not only did Byron attain phenomenal success in a different, more limited kind of poetry. But Byron also preferred a type of subject which Shelley acknowledged when he composed Alastor. Shelley, obviously, could write poetry about human frustrations, although he rarely chose to do so. This subject was central to Byron's work. Much of Shelley's work attempted to transcend the limitations that Byron accepted, to overcome what prevented human happiness. In Wasserman's words:

We can better understand what Maddalo represents and why Byron and his poetry appear so frequently and obsessively in Shelley's thought if we recognize that, together with the visionaries of Alastor and the sonnet, Byronic Maddalo is one of Shelley's archetypes.

(Critical, p. 67)

In 1818 Shelley's work shows that, even when stimulated by Byron's style and stance, he preferred a more optimistic treatment of human problems, a more elevated style, and loftier subject-matter. In this year, for the first time, however, he experiments extensively with subjects, style, and language that were habitual with Byron. But he generally adapts them to his own, more visionary position.

Julian and Maddalo

According to G. M. Matthews (SN, p. 58), this poem could date from any time "between 23 August 1818. . .and 15 August 1819," but manuscript evidence indicates that Shelley probably composed the first forty-four lines within two months of his visit to Byron in August of 1818 and that he only returned to it some months later. It is significant both that the first lines, which reveal Shelley's new, freer, conversational style, should appear so soon after his visit to Byron and that this fragment should be about the relationship between the two poets.

Many readers recognize the biographical details in the poem. Shelley visited Byron in Venice, attempting to ease Byron's restrictions on Claire's access to Allegra. Although

the poem flatters Maddalo in comparison with the account that Shelley gave to Mary in a letter (August 23, 1818), the poets spent the early part of their reunion more or less as Shelley portrays Julian and Maddalo doing in the opening lines.

Julian and Maddalo's most obvious significance in a study of Byron and Shelley is that it reveals Shelley's opinion of Byron at this time. While it is politer than the letter to Mary in treating Byron's faults, obviously Shelley began the work because he wished to correct Byron's statements on human insignificance. Compared with the "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," this work devotes more space to Byron as a man than as a poet; of course, it does the same for Julian/Shelley. This work plainly owes its impetus to philosophical, not technical, poetic, differences between the men. From the preface onward Shelley makes it plain that he feels a change in the attitude of Count Maddalo/Byron would produce important results. Shelley presents the Count as a proud genius, capable of saving his country. But this man lacks patience and restraint and therefore can find nothing "worthy of exertion" in the contemporary world. At the same time, both preface and poem make it clear that Shelley admired this person. The preface lauds his social virtues; the poem presents him as humane and articulate.

Of the many readings of this poem,¹ Wasserman's seems most persuasive. He argues that Shelley, always the skeptic, presented alternative possibilities and structured the poem so that the reader would realize the strengths and weaknesses of both alternatives (Julian, the inactive optimist, versus Maddalo, the active pessimist).² Wasserman's reading is persuasive in the cases of these characters, but not in that of the madman. The Maniac should probably not be considered purely a second guise for either Byron or Shelley, and the fact that this character is remolded from Shelley's Tasso fragments is interesting but unenlightening. However, Wasserman's reading of the madman as Shelley's representative of the human condition seems equally unconvincing. In Maddalo's words, "My judgment will not bend/ To your opinion, though I think you might/ Make such a system refutation-tight/ As far as words go." The main reason that I doubt Wasserman's reading here is that Shelley creates a character to whom we plainly must respond emotionally rather than philosophically. Shelley seems to have ordered things so that our chief reaction to the madman is impatient frustration because he was so blindly responsible for his own suffering. In the context of the poem, the madman's example reinforces Julian's statements to Maddalo, and he can best be read as a negative example of Byron's weaknesses taken to an extreme. Shelley warns Byron/Maddalo of the dangers that can result from passively

wallowing in self-pity over his domestic situation and his other disappointments. In his insanity and his passivity, of course, the Maniac bears little resemblance to Byron. Shelley's character was plainly not intended as a literal representation of his friend, but rather as a personification to warn against what Byron might become if he indulged his weaknesses sufficiently.

The madman resembles Byron in another quality related to Shelley's argument: both men misapplied their considerable powers. Like Count Maddalo, the Maniac wasted his art. The power of his music could still the asylum's inmates, and yet he used his skill only to express self-pity, until he lulled himself to sleep. Likewise, Maddalo could save his country, if he would exercise patience and restraint. Shelley's letters reveal a similar opinion of several of Byron's works, for instance, Childe Harold, Canto IV. Such "perverse" wasting of poetic powers distressed Shelley.³

Evidently, Shelley hoped to produce impatience with the Maniac in Byron and his other readers. He hoped Byron might recognize that his own problem was analogous. This is not to claim with Robinson and others that we should take the madman as a literal equivalent of Byron. Instead, while this character in some ways represents Byron's problems and his reactions to them as Shelley saw them, the madman carries them to an extreme. Shelley obviously hoped that Byron would not go far enough to end in self-willed madness.

Most readers would agree that the Maniac's basic problem results from his own weakness. He is insane because he passively allowed another person to drive him mad. We observe him esthetically wallowing in his misery---which he expresses so artistically that Shelley claims to have inserted his statements into the poem unedited.

Where this character portrays Byron, it picks up his worst aspects. Shelley's August 23 letter to Mary deals with Byron as he actually found him in Venice. The Shelleys and Claire were worried about Byron, having heard that since arriving in Venice he had abandoned himself to a debauched existence. Shelley writes, "The account which they gave of Albe unfortunately corresponds too justly with most of what we have heard---tho doubtless with some exaggeration." He then describes the real conversation that the poets held (described otherwise in the poem, as "the swift thought,/ Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,/ But flew from brain to brain. . ."). The actual conversation "consisted in histories of his wounded feelings,. . ." In short, this conversation is closer to the madman's soliloquy than to anything that Maddalo says.

Maddalo idealizes the active, sympathetic qualities in Byron, even as he reveals his cynicism and impatience. The Maniac exaggerates the weakness of Byron's passive philosophy. As Julian tells Maddalo in the poem, "It is our will/ That thus enchains us to permitted ill" (170-71). Shelley opposes

the strong qualities of Maddalo-Byron to the madman, while also indicating that Maddalo shares the Maniac's dangerous passivity; the poem and preface repeatedly warn against this tendency. Thus, it seems that Julian has a few more cards stacked in his favor than Wasserman's reading indicates. Although I admit that in the end Julian fails to save the madman despite his good intentions, I feel that this occurred partly because Shelley wished to indicate to his readers that one must save oneself.

Shelley's preface calls Maddalo "proud," and he discusses how this stance gave rise to pessimism about mankind. Despite these feelings, the introduction emphasizes the Count's social virtues. Shortly afterwards, the Maniac receives similar treatment, but here Shelley connects a description of his social graces with mention of his domestic misfortunes, which the poem shows resemble Byron's as described in his letters and the so-called "domestic pieces" of 1816, as well as in the memoirs of his friends. Shelley joins the Maniac's and Maddalo's psychology and biography to show a cause and effect relationship. "Pride" is the central psychological defect in the poem's opening. Julian first characterizes Maddalo by referring to it:

. . .but pride
Made my companion take the darker side.
The sense that he was greater than his kind
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind. . .
(ll. 48-51)

Julian also suggests that pride caused the Maniac's madness:

. . .there are some by nature proud,
Who patient in all else demand but this---
To love and be beloved with gentleness. . .
(ll. 206-08)

Although character predominates, psychology and philosophy merge through the poem---the main characters' personalities shape their views on life in general. Shelley is too much the skeptic to assert directly that one character or the other is totally right. Although Julian is the mouthpiece for what he clearly preferred to believe, Maddalo's arguments also persist; neither character wins an absolute victory. The Maniac offers evidence for both parties. The arguments of ll. 195-211 remain unresolved, as the madman's further history shows both human cruelty and the failure of will. Shelley's Maniac, like most other humans, fails to provide final answers about life's deepest questions. By the end of the poem, the nearest we come to a solution is the question that Julian voiced even before he knew of the Maniac's existence: ". . .for ever still/ Is it not wise to make the best of ill?" (ll. 46-47). Shelley does not claim here that life could be what he wishes. He recognizes that his higher intimations may be illusory. The desolate Lido appeals to him because in such places "we taste/ The pleasure of believing what we see/ Is boundless as we wish our souls to be" (ll. 15-17, underlining mine). In short, he is not preaching a message to Byron; instead, Shelley tactfully

suggests that since it is a more productive stance, and since we do not know that it is false, one would be happier if he reacted to life's adversities in the most positive way possible.

In Julian and Maddalo Shelley also reveals in other ways that he was reacting to Byron's poetry. Matthews (SN, pp. 64-65) mentions that Shelley's original draft of the opening echoes lines from Childe Harold, IV, ix. Other, closer echoes from Byron's poetry remain in the final version. For instance, the sunset that begins at line 70 closely resembles that of Childe Harold, IV, xxvii. Much in the description of the madhouse resembles Byron's setting in The Lament of Tasso, III. The Count uses one of Byron's favorite terms to describe human frustration---our aspirations are "baffled" (l. 130). The Count's philosophical position resembles the darker passages in Childe Harold, Cantos III and IV. Byron's natural daughter frames Julian and Maddalo, much as his legitimate daughter does Childe Harold, III, except that in Shelley's poem she comes closer to fulfilling the hopes that Byron expressed, and she serves less as a vehicle of the author's self-pity in Julian and Maddalo than in Byron's poem.

Much in the character of the Maniac resembles the image that Byron projected in the era after his separation, when all Europe enjoyed the spectacle of his bleeding heart. The madman has the same reaction to his abandonment: in a tone of "wondering self-compassion" (l. 290) he asks how she could

have betrayed him and simultaneously blames her for blighting his life and magnanimously wishes her well. The Maniac long ago convinced himself that this person's actions have blighted all his promise; he is "worthless now" (l. 382). Julian interjects a judgment: ". .it were a grief indeed/ If he had changed one unsustaining reed/ For all that such a man might else adorn" (ll. 537-39). This judgment obviously applies to the Count's "pride" as well as the Maniac's weakness.

The poem ends equivocally. Moved, like the inmates, by the power of the man's song, Julian wishes to save him; but other obligations interfere. He returns to Venice too late. In a Wordsworthian dialogue with a child, he learns about the Maniac's end. Julian convinces Maddalo's child that the story could move him and she tells him what happened, but Shelley refuses to relay it to us. Thus, in the end, Julian and Maddalo provides no answer. Instead, it asks us to rely on our own feelings.

Ultimately, then, this poem expresses Shelley's feelings on how one should translate his philosophy of life into action. He illustrates the consequences of three stances, implying that the most positive is the most productive. His negative illustrations plainly owe their existence to Byron's stimulus; Shelley reacts to Byron's ambivalent strengths and weaknesses as a poet, a man, and a public figure. One can claim that had Byron never existed, Julian and Maddalo would also not exist.

Since Shelley did not adopt new Byronic attitudes at this time, one should not claim that Byron's influence was complete. Reaction to Byron and a desire to correct his stance produced Julian and Maddalo; but the work is distinctively Shelleyan in content, too didactic and philosophical to be Byronic. Byron's "influence" shows most strongly in the new, conversational style, especially in the sections that feature Julian and Maddalo and report their conversations.

Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills

One passage in the Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills treats Byron directly, without resorting to the fictional guise of Julian and Maddalo.¹⁵ These lines, added late, express Shelley's esteem of Byron as a person. This section of the Lines expresses a sentiment like that of Childe Harold, IV, lvii: Venice possesses a guarantee of immortality simply because she shelters Byron. Even as Shelley lauds Byron's power as a poet he criticizes Venice for corrupting Byron: ". . .oh, rather say/ Though thy sins and slaveries foul/ Overcloud a sunlike soul. ." (191-93). This regret corresponds with what Shelley expressed to Mary in his August 23, 1818, letter, written from Venice upon seeing Byron for the first time since Shelley left Geneva. The Lines also imply another weakness in Byron. Florence exiled her great poets, and in Childe Harold, Canto IV, Byron condemns her for doing so. While Byron considered himself an exile, his native

land did not expel him; the poet's own "evil dreams" drove him from his homeland.

This part of the Lines pursues the subject no more, but the poem as a whole deals with related material that justifies Shelley's interpolation of this passage. It seems to me that this passage is merely the most overt expression in this poem of Byron's attitudes.

The Lines is related to Childe Harold. Despite its brevity and its tetrameter couplets rather than Spenserians, it shares many features with Byron's poem. Shelley's work, of course, is briefer, and its structure is tauter: the single day and one vantage-point above the Lombard plain limit and focus his observations. Shelley's poem is more than a miniature imitation of Childe Harold. It takes many features from Byron's poem, to fuse them in Shelley's own fashion. The result is a poem that seems intended to correct Byron's vision of life, as earlier poems have criticized other views. As in Julian and Maddalo, what Shelley reacts against here is the hopeless passivity of Byron's hero. Too skeptical and too honest to suggest a direct line of action for anyone, Shelley suggests rather than insists that a different reaction to one's circumstances would produce a better result.

The Lines, especially the early passages, use many devices that we see in Childe Harold. The poem's end, suggesting an alternative response, uses fewer Byronic elements. Shelley took the manuscript of Childe Harold's third canto

to England from Switzerland. His summer, 1818, letters testify that Byron also recited parts of Canto IV to Shelley when he was in Venice. Echoes from both cantos appear in Shelley's poem.

The Lines resemble Childe Harold by being in the descriptive travel mode. Although Shelley had used landscapes from his travels before, his early and later scenery is rarely this specific. The Lines and "Ozymandias" are virtually the only cases of this type of poetry in Shelley's work. In The Revolt of Islam and Alastor, for instance, the setting is much vaguer---a city, an island, a waste area. Alastor's Poet wanders through the Near East and Africa, but Shelley tells us these facts quickly, devoting little time to specific details: the Poet passes through "awful ruins" (l. 108) and "the waste/ Where stood Jerusalem" (ll. 109-10). The Poet's Grand Tour seems as impressionistic as his later boat trip. Shelley's Lines, however, focus on unique features of specific cities. Instead of "awful ruins" and a "waste," the poem spends one hundred lines on Venice, describing her shape, her color, her history. Shelley dwells equally long on other cities of the Lombard Plain, describing their present state and their past glories in ways that recall Childe Harold. Contemplating a specific place and its history in this manner often moved Byron to poetry, while Shelley rarely chose similar material for his works.⁵

Byron's letters and journals, as well as his poems, demonstrate that throughout his life he was interested in specific details. While he often abandoned travelogue description and referred his reader to a guide so that he would not have to repeat commonplaces, it is plain that Byron habitually visualized more specific settings for his poems than Shelley did. On one level Childe Harold consists of a series of concrete descriptions. Through Spain, Portugal, Greece, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy, Byron chooses specific sites. These places evoke reactions that give the poem its character. In many cases, history colors Byron's reaction to a setting, and he contrasts the past and present of this spot. For instance, the past battles of Talavera (I, xxxviii, ff.) and Waterloo (III, xvii, ff.) gripped him; the contrast between stirring past and uneventful present supply the chief emotional content of these passages. Byron's lines on Venice (IV, i, ff.) express the same pattern, although it is not a battle site. He describes her beauty, regrets her present, and describes the relics of her glorious past for us.

Shelley's journals and letters (often to Peacock) demonstrate that he noticed such details as surely as Byron did--- but he chose to leave them out of most poems.⁶ Even in "Mont Blanc," where a landscape dominates the poem and names it, Shelley preferred to dwell on abstract philosophical analogies rather than on the area's unique features as they

would appear to a tourist.⁷ Characteristically, Byron, on the other hand, drew his hero in a specific place. If relevant, he described significant historical events as well as the scene before he philosophized on the general significance of this material. For instance, Childe Harold's fourth canto begins, "I stood in Venice." Byron combines specific description of Venice with his lament over the city's decay; the location of palace, prison, and bridge, a silent gondolier, St. Mark's lion, and other details contrast with the city's past greatness. Byron's passage on Venice alternates such descriptive materials with historical details and with ideas.⁸ The central thought is that the mind's creations guarantee Venice's survival, even if the physical city perishes. However, later data on mortality undercuts this temporary optimism. Like Shelley, Byron is too honest to dogmatically claim truth for what he would like to believe, in the face of contradictory evidence.

Byron poses his Childe against a background that he describes before moving to more speculative material. This structural pattern, of course, is common in descriptive and travel poems; Byron hardly had a monopoly on it. But Shelley had not used this structure in any long poem prior to his reunion with Byron.

In addition to describing unique features of the scene, Byron uses history, a favorite study early and late. Childe Harold, of course, combines travel and history in a unique

and personal manner; Shelley imitates this manner in his own Lines. From its first canto, Byron's poem uses historical events to justify the attitudes that it expresses at any given moment. Byron assumes that mankind remains the same, and that therefore past events that moved man can possess the same significance as his own experience, provided he can feel an equal identification with the raw material. While there are exceptions, Shelley did not use history in the way that Byron did through his early poems. His early letters to Godwin show that he disliked the subject until Godwin urged that he study it. Rather than being emotionally caught up in a past event and then using its timeless features, the early Shelley preferred a developmental approach: men had done thus; they would ultimately evolve until they were better. This treatment of history is the subject of Ianthe's vision in Queen Mab. Shelley also uses history this way in the Lines, but his treatment of the historical details suggests that here, as in Julian and Maddalo, his purpose is to correct Byron's view by offering hope for the future (Byron's arrival in Venice, and the hopeful end of the poem do this).

In this 1818 poem, virtually for the only time, Shelley poses his protagonist in the manner customary with Byron. His persona lounges against the landscape, recalls its history, and utters questions about human life and the significance of art, as Byron's Childe does. But while Shelley borrows an organizing principle, the poem remains his own,

both in the particular emotions that it expresses and in its conclusion.

While the body of the poem describes the scene that its creator viewed, the framing stanzas exploit the metaphor of life's ocean, as Byron used it through the late cantos of Childe Harold. The Lines opens much like Byron's poem, while its close reasserts the hopes of Queen Mab and The Revolt of Islam. Here Shelley opens with a "worn and wan" mariner drowning passively as the poet attempts and then shelves questions on an afterlife, observing that regardless of the outcome, after death a person no longer partakes of the emotions that give meaning to human life. This limited perspective is quite Byronic. Like his older friend, Shelley here confines himself to what experience provides data for; he focuses on the individual's limited experience and temporarily omits more abstract subjects as irrelevant. He does not express a conviction one way or the other about man's ultimate significance. The opening metaphor summarizes Childe Harold's structural method:

Many a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on.

Byron's pilgrim, oppressed by life's emptiness, "voyages" on, now and then finding something worthwhile enough to give him the transitory pleasure of an "island." The poem exists because Byron chose to depict these islands---the places and

persons (largely historical) that give the Childe temporary pleasure. Of course, the timelessness of these islands gives Byron evidence that human life is more significant than his protagonist at his most pessimistic fears it may be. However, equally, Byron shows his doubts about this evidence. Even landscapes change. People who die heroically do not always find historians. Time loses our records of the wealthiest Roman's wife. Without proof that his hopes are valid, Byron's honesty confines his poems obstinately to what he knows.

Shelley's opening takes the most negative aspects from the second stanza of Childe Harold, III. Both poets describe their protagonists as voyagers on life's ocean. Byron's persona accepts his relationship with this sea, even as he realizes that his own role is largely passive. He boards his ship knowing that shipwreck may be his end:

Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvass fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock on Ocean's foam, to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath
prevail.

These lines obviously relate to Shelley's opening, although Byron's protagonist seems too energetic to be Shelley's listless drowning victim. But the image is the same in both cases. A ship is caught in a storm, "Riving sail, and cord, and plank,/ Till the ship has almost drank/ Death from the o'er-brimming deep" (Lines, 13-15). Byron uses the same idea

in Childe Harold, III, xvi, as well as later in the fourth canto. Byron and Shelley both pit nature's power against human insignificance. Even Shelley's rhyme here (plank, drank) is Byronic. After his victim drowns we visit a place related to numerous burial places in Childe Harold; like Byron's hero, Shelley's persona wonders over the dead remains of "what now moves nor murmurs not" (Lines, l. 65).

Shelley, however, undercuts the Byronic implications about human futility with which he opens by changing Byron's formula in a critical way; instead of presenting his material "straight," he turns it into an analogy. The dark view of life that he presents is "like that sleep/ When the dreamer seems to be/ Weltering through eternity. . ." (ll. 16-18, underlining mine). The expanded context makes it clear that Shelley here suggests this vision of human impotence is like a bad dream.

At the end of his Lines, Shelley returns to the opening imagery and presents an alternative. Like Byron, he is a skeptic; therefore, his ideal appears as a possibility rather than a certainty. He hopes that "perhaps" his life may improve. Shelley hopes that his protagonist, rather than drifting aimlessly through life, may happen upon a "healing Paradise" that will enable him to assist in the rejuvenation of mankind. The poem ends on the most optimistic note possible in a relatively skeptical poem; keeping his doubts out of the last lines, Shelley sees earth growing young after

humanity ceases its envy and rage. In other words, he presents an alternative to Childe Harold's restless, never-ending movement and to its author's cynicism.

Unfortunately for Shelley, his solution carries less conviction than does the problem that both poets present. In his desire to give purpose to existence, Shelley insists that there "must be" what he needs; he has not experienced this "bower," however, and he has experienced the pain. In the end his pain seems more real than his paradise.

The ending resembles the visions of Queen Mab and Prometheus Unbound, which also show purified men living on a planet reborn. The Lines also exposes a major weakness of such endings: while the poet's vision may be appealing, it is not based on his experience, nor on ours. He can assert that "other isles must be/ In the sea of Life and Agony," but he cannot tell us why he knows this.⁹ As time passes, Shelley's expectations will dwindle, until in his last poems, like Byron's Childe, he appreciates mere interlude. As the "visionary" element decreases in Shelley's poetry, "real" things become more important.

Byron does not appear only in the opening problem and the shipwreck image. The body of Shelley's poem also shows his influence. As indicated above, Shelley combines history and observation in a manner that suggests Byron. Harold-like, his protagonist watches the sunrise from a solitary vantage-point. He responds to both landscape and human works,

giving both in their historical context, in addition to describing their present states. As in Childe Harold, IV, Shelley's first city is Venice, which he describes in terms close to those of Byron's poem, stanzas xi-xix. For instance, Walter E. Peck notes a kinship between Shelley's description and Byron's lines, "Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,/ Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!/ Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun. . ." (Childe Harold, IV, xiii). There are also other related details, several of them traditional epithets. Both poets dwell on Venice's reversal, from queen of the Adriatic to crumbling ruin. Byron peoples his city with a lone "songless gondolier," while Shelley's counterpart is a lone fisherman (who closely resembles the figure at the opening of Byron's The Giaour as well). Both poets discuss the city's political decay. And both state that Venice will endure after her disappearance because of her literary fame. Symptomatic of the poets' differences, however, is the fact that Shelley focuses less on the pathos of Venice's beauty and more on her moral decay and the tyranny of Italy's conquerors.

In his portrait of Venice Shelley later inserted some lines on Lord Byron that parallel Byron's treatment of great artists who have immortalized Venice. Byron somewhat later berates "ungrateful Florence" for her abuse of her three most famous sons, Dante, Boccaccio, and Tasso. Because of this, the city cannot legitimately claim their bones once they

become famous. Shelley brings this same material together in his passage on Byron, where he asserts that Venice's future fame is assured despite her imminent death, because she provided a refuge for Byron. Shelley is also aware of the city's great past but, characteristically, he appears more interested in her present and future.

Shelley gently suggests a difference between Byron's situation and what Florence did to her three sons. Despite their own virtues, the Italian city mistreated Dante, Boccaccio, and Tasso. Shelley describes Byron, however, as "driven from his ancestral streams/ By the might of evil dreams." When compared with Byron's rebuke to Florence, this criticism of England is mild. Instead of rebuking England for mistreating a great poet, Shelley implies that Byron chose to leave.

Shelley next describes Padua's decline. This city does not appear in Byron's poem, but Shelley's description uses a method that was habitual in Childe Harold but extremely rare in his own earlier poetry. As in his treatment of Venice, he begins with a traveler's-eye view of the city and its setting and then contrasts her past with her unfortunate present. Opposing the glory to her decline, he can go beyond the specific to a general problem---in this case, Liberty versus Tyranny. His lines on Padua end as Shelley asserts his belief that freedom is rising again.

Like his hope that humanity will be restored, Shelley's belief in freedom seems more desire than fact. However, unlike Gradgrind's philosophy, poetry cannot thrive on pure, square "Fact, fact, fact!" Both Byron and Shelley assert hopes and fears as well as pure fact. But the way that the two poets express their wishes is significant. Shelley develops his poems so that the structure builds up to his desires, and Shelley characteristically closes with a triumph. Byron is far more likely to express a more modest desire in the beginning and to undermine even that. Shelley's poem ends with an edenic description of a hoped-for human improvement. Byron's lines late in Canto IV wish for a humbler Eden. Byron's hopes are less ambitious; he merely desires a lonely refuge for his persona and his beloved. And even this modest hope does not stand alone at the end of his poem. Instead, lines follow that affirm and accept human transience and Nature's majesty.

Byron's "perversity" in reiterating such claims about human insignificance exasperated Shelley, so it is understandable that Shelley would react against them.¹⁰ However, even when the poets express the same attitude their difference in stance persists. For instance, both poets hated tyranny and championed liberty. Here, again, Shelley constructed his poem more optimistically and Byron more tentatively. Byron has sufficient faith in liberty to assert that Freedom's tattered banner still flies, against the winds

of his era. But this assertion does not end his poem; immediately after making it he speculates on the tomb of Cecelia Metella, whom history has forgotten except for her tantalizing epitaph. Shelley's analogous assertion about freedom's rebirth despite opposition occurs at a more critical point in his poem. Immediately after, it is noon, and he experiences the interpenetration that supplies this poem's "island" in his "sea of Life and Agony." Like Byron, he is unable to sustain the momentary glow, and pain reappears. However, by an act of will Shelley throws off his gloom to close with a vision of life that sustains such paradisaical moments and shares them with other men.

This positive ending gives Shelley an advantage over Byron. I would hardly claim that Shelley's Lines are greater than Childe Harold, let alone Don Juan, but the organization is firmer.¹¹ Shelley's sense of purpose enables him to do more than sail aimlessly from island to island on the sea of life. His poem, like Byron's, starts without direction. But, at this stage in his development, Shelley still hoped for a permanent home, and he hoped that his example could help reform mankind. It is significant, though, that while his other descriptions of settings are more detailed than in earlier works, his Eden is vaguer; even less sure is how he will attain it. When younger, Shelley espoused a definite programme, that would produce the desired effect if he could induce humanity to follow it---the Irish should educate themselves

so that they would gradually improve; Queen Mab's readers should return to a vegetable diet and abolish envy, hate, and greed. But by 1818 Shelley was not so certain how one could attain his paradise. This uncertainty, combined with Byron's and his own skepticism, contains a great danger to any reformer-poet. Ultimately Shelley becomes less a reformer and more a lyrical poet, but the conflict is clear in his Lines of this year.

In 1818 Shelley's poetic language suddenly relaxes. He seems to have mastered a new, conversational mode. Critics have asked why he did not utilize such a comfortable style earlier, and Baker has given what I feel is the likeliest explanation: Shelley seems to have felt strongly that the poet's duty required him to express only uplifting ideas, and these ideas should appear clothed in an appropriately "high" style. To Shelley, until well into his career, this conviction limited him to the language and forms of the more pretentious eighteenth-century poets.

Two contemporary writers, Wordsworth and Byron, profoundly affected his style. Significantly, the sudden experimentation with a conversational mode coincides with Shelley's renewed acquaintance with Byron. Shelley had found much to inspire him in Byron's verse and conversation while they were in Switzerland, but at that time he was more attracted to Wordsworth's style. Still, Shelley then felt

Byron's attraction so strongly that he clearly feared to renew the acquaintance, lest his own poetic integrity crumble. In the letter that announces Allegra's birth he tells Byron:

I have no other news to tell you, my dear Lord Byron, unless you think this is news: that I often talk, and oftener think, of you; and that, though I have not seen you for six months, I still feel the burden of my own insignificance and impotence; as they must ever forbid my interest in your welfare from being put to the proof.

(January 17, 1817)

Although Shelley may have intended these words partly as flattery, their gist recurs through letters that he wrote to other friends. During the later years of his relationship with Byron, Shelley's respect for Byron as a human being declined while his awe of Byron's poetic powers increased. Through Claire's and Hunt's needs and the poets' common nationality and social class, the two men continued associating long after Shelley ceased to enjoy the relationship. But in 1818 the financially strapped, little-known poet clearly found much stimulation in his relationship with Byron, who had received both wealth and fame through his verse. Whether or not the relationship was ultimately beneficial to Shelley, at this stage it helped him to find his own style. By liberating verse from the diction that Shelley clearly considered "poetic," Byron demonstrated that one could successfully adopt a more natural vocabulary and still write good poetry. By writing good poetry on human limitations, he stimulated Shelley to re-examine the premises of his own work.

Other 1818 Poems

Some poems of this year belong more with Shelley's earlier works than in a discussion of his changes during this year. Still, several others show relationships to Byron and to directions that Shelley's later work takes. Of course, certain subjects and treatments also persist through Shelley's career.

Illusion had been a subject of Shelley's work, at least since Alastor. His Byronic characters insist upon stripping it away and regarding humanity's unvarnished ugliness as truth, a tendency toward which Shelley plainly felt ambivalence. Ever the skeptic, he remains persistently uncertain of what is actual and what is false. This skepticism causes him to vacillate between opposite views of life; but he clearly feels that a more positive view is better for mankind's future, and he asserts it whenever possible. Still, he plainly feels the temptation merely to accept his human limitations and cease fighting to transcend them. Byron represents this negative voice in Julian and Maddalo and elsewhere. In the 1818 works, Shelley repeatedly focused on the same problem when he presented a Byronic character. Even if this view of life should be the correct one in the long run, it severely limits the scope of a person, who could effect more if he had a more favorable outlook. And yet Shelley would not have spent so much energy attacking a

negative stance had he himself not felt its attractions. Even if his illusions are a lie, they provide a source of power; the contrary fears, even if justified, paralyze. Thus, Wasserman quotes a holograph ending to the sonnet "Lift not the Painted Veil" in which Shelley says, "I should be happier had I ne'er known/ This mournful man. . ." who could find nothing desirable in life (Critical, p. 46). Wasserman suggests that Byron may have been the subject of this sonnet.

In a lighter, narrative vein, "The Woodman and the Nightingale" makes the same plea for illusion. Here the illusions that the bird's song create serve a comparatively trivial purpose. Instead of strengthening man for life, they create pretty pictures. Shelley acknowledges that many people dislike such fancies and would deny them to all. For this reason the woodman killed the woods where the songbird lived.

Shelley occasionally reacts to Byron as if he were the woodman. His interpretation of Childe Harold, IV, as a negative, perverse work may have been productive for his own work, but it is also unbalanced. While Byron's view of life is hardly one of sweetness and light, like Shelley, he generally sees both good and bad aspects---the sublimity of St. Peter's, for instance, temporarily silences his taunts about human insignificance. At this time in his development, Shelley usually presents contradictory views of human life as if only one can prevail ("either. . .or"), while Byron characteristically takes a "both. . .and" stance. In other words,

Byron presents his data more or less as he finds them; Shelley tries to construct an argument by selectively organizing the facts.¹² Since Shelley was aware of inconvenient facts that contradicted his hoped-for vision, he had to contend with a structural difficulty that does not exist in Byron's less selective vision. How can one affirm and still honestly reflect human experience?

Shelley never solved this problem. Perhaps Browning later comes close to making a positive picture by accepting both bright and gloomy facts, but only at the expense of beautifying the darker aspects of life to an unrealistic degree. Shelley's honesty and ambition are both admirable; but they prevent the affirmation that he so urgently desired. His early, ambitious poems fail to convince us of man's eventual salvation. His arguments seem more effective when confined to a less epic scope. Somewhat later, in Prometheus Unbound, Shelley is able to convince us that his protagonist deserves a happy ending; however, the process that he presents as causing Prometheus happiness once he learns to love and forgive is likewise capable of bringing misery if hatred returns.

When Shelley's early poems cannot affirm, he still tends to eliminate one alternative in them---even when he cannot decide which is valid. He seems to say (for instance, in Mont Blanc): Either this is true, or its opposite is true. Here are my thoughts on the subject. You decide which

alternative is correct; I can't. But clearly only one of the possibilities can be correct. An atypical 1818 poem that does not operate in this manner will serve to illustrate another method of resolving the difficulty. "To the Nile" presents matters more as Byron tended to see things (although Shelley wrote it before his trip to Italy). This sonnet first appeared in 1876 rather than in either the volume with Rosalind and Helen or Prometheus Unbound. It is atypical of this period in its Byronic balance. The Nile produces both "fruits and poisons"; knowledge has a similarly dual effect on man. Although Shelley seems to emphasize the pain more than the rewards, like Byron, he acknowledges in this poem that both aspects occur simultaneously; one is not temporary or illusory, the other true.

Other poems reveal effects of Shelley's renewed intercourse with Byron. The "Tasso" fragments treat a subject that Byron used earlier. Shelley's repeated requests for a copy of Byron's version show that he knew of Byron's poem before beginning his own. Havens and others discuss the kinship between the "Tasso" fragments and Julian and Maddalo. The song for the play shows its kinship with Shelley's Maniac; both claim related causes for madness. Perhaps Byron's poem, as well as the analogy between the situations, led Shelley to merge the Tasso fragments with his treatment of Byron.

The fragment of Marenghi has several ties with Byron's Prisoner of Chillon. The subject-matter is similar. Both

poets portray the effect of tyranny and power on the spirit of one who opposes them, as he passes years in isolation. Stanzas eighteen through twenty of Shelley's poem show the influence of Byron's poem quite strongly, with variations resulting from changing the first-person narrator to third person and from changing authors. These stanzas open with the speculation, like that in Byron's poem, that Marenghi survived as long as he did because the fire that "burned within Marenghi's breast" enabled him to prefer his "dungeon" to the oppressor's realm. Like the prisoner of Chillon, but to a more exaggerated degree, he makes friends with the creatures around him when denied human fellowship. Of course, the Ancient Mariner learns to love Nature's creatures, as do numerous heroes and heroines of the era, but Shelley's character resembles Byron's because unlike the others both appear as victims whom tyranny denies social intercourse, while Coleridge's character suffers through his own guilt. Various heroes of Romantic and Preromantic novels express love for lower creatures; it seems almost an obligatory response to prove that they are decent human beings.

As with Byron's early heroes, liberty, the sheer freedom to move over land and sea, invigorates Marenghi (st. 22). Shortly after this passage Shelley abandoned the poem. Taken with the "Tasso" remnants, perhaps this demonstrates that Shelley was reluctant to use actual material that Byron had treated.¹³ Byron's most useful function in Shelley's

poetry of this year may well have been as a stylistic model and as an archetypal attitude to react against, rather than as a mine of images or plots.

Prometheus Unbound and Manfred

Again in Prometheus Unbound Shelley seems to correct Byron's stance, but in a less tentative manner than in Julian and Maddalo. Shelley begins this play with material that resembles Manfred and develops alternative consequences. As in Julian and Maddalo, patience and love make the difference.¹⁴

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 chance, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!
(Prometheus Unbound, IV, 570-75)

While Shelley's closet drama owes a considerable debt to Byron's there are characteristic differences between the two. There are unmistakable similarities between characters, language, scenery, and machinery in the two works, and yet each reflects its own author's predispositions. Byron's protagonist remains obstinately human despite his exceptional qualities; he confronts problems (chiefly his relationship with Astarte) as they affect him. In short, Byron emphasizes Manfred's individuality. Shelley's hero is superhuman, and Shelley's drama suggests that Prometheus' liberation

illustrates laws of the universe rather than solutions that apply to only one character. While Manfred insistently asserts his significance as an individual man in the face of human and supernatural opposition, Shelley's Prometheus will come to find this question irrelevant. This, of course, parallels the contrast between Shelley's Lines and Childe Harold.

Although Shelley sets Prometheus Unbound in a superhuman realm, in some ways it is less daring and more limited in scope than Byron's dramatic poem. In other ways it is considerably more ambitious. Because Shelley does not portray humanity, he need not treat man's awkward, limited place in the universe. His character's immortality enables him to omit many of the difficulties that Manfred must face because he is mortal and only possesses limited, human knowledge. Byron's drama represents the qualified triumph of a lone individual against higher powers, that are, at best, indifferent to his needs. Understandably, under such conditions, Manfred's triumph must be egotistical. After discovering his comparative isolation and impotence, he acquires sufficient self-knowledge to die bravely, banishing the higher power that claims him.

By creating a superhuman protagonist, Shelley can give Prometheus more time to learn what he must do. Shelley does not have to deal with temporal frustrations, like Astarte's death. By taking an immortal perspective, he can show that

the emotions we humans also experience (love, hate, forgiveness) can affect the entire universe. Where Byron's drama is strongly individualistic in its emphasis, Shelley's is cosmic and general.

Manfred also seeks answers beyond the human realm; like Shelley's "Mont Blanc," it asks how a single human being fits into the universe. Although Manfred is keenly aware that his humanity makes him a mere speck in the total flux of time and space, in the end he succeeds in accepting this himself, and, more difficult, in convincing those who meet him that he is an impressive character nevertheless. As we admire Manfred's strength of will, we see what Byron is saying about human life---that it is finite and lonely. In the beginning he suggests that even a remarkable individual may lack significance when considered against the vastness of the universe. In the end, the defiant will to individuality is all that gives a man significance, that sets him off from more formless, abstract powers. Shelley reacts against Byron's presentation of the will as the individual's last refuge. In the last act of Prometheus Unbound, even while he lauds Prometheus' strength of will in defying Jupiter through millennia, he puts will in its proper place---subordinate to love. The Earth envisions a new human society in which man functions harmoniously as "Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought, / Of love and might to be divided not. ." (IV, 395-96). In this "one harmonious soul of many a soul" (l. 400), the will

becomes subservient to love---will should serve, being "a spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey" (l. 408).

Although Shelley acknowledges that evil can return, he portrays the triumph of good. He demonstrates that one being (albeit superhuman) can affect all of life. The scale of his cosmos shrinks relative to Byron's: rather than stressing man's insignificance in a vast area, his "universe" centers firmly on our planet, and Shelley assumes that the human emotions, love and patience, belong to the superhuman realm as well, and that they also affect subhuman life. Thus, Earth has earlier responded, like the gods and men, to the fallen state of hatred. The Greek deities also relate directly to the human flux, and Shelley assumes that their concerns are universal, that all orders of being operate under common responses to love and hate. In other words, his universe, unlike Byron's, implies that an individual can comprehend (and also affect) the motivations of the entire universe.

Despite the different perspective, the two plays share enough features to suggest that Manfred had a direct influence upon Prometheus Unbound. Perhaps Shelley conceived of his play as an alternative view of life. Both dramas open with revelations by the protagonists that they have suffered long and expect to continue living in pain. Manfred suffers "a continuance of enduring thought/. . . .and yet I live, and bear/ The aspect and the form of breathing man" (I,i). Prometheus foresees, "alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!/ No

change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure" (I, 23-24). These lines seem related to a passage in Childe Harold, IV, xxii: ". . .if they,/ Things of ignoble or of savage mood,/ Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay/ May temper it to bear. . ."

Both protagonists ultimately learn similar things about the nature of their tortures---that they were self-inflicted. Manfred learns that none of the powers that he calls forth can aid him, and from Astarte he learns enough to accept his own isolation and his own responsibility, to return home, and to die. Prometheus' own limitations also caused his suffering; when he overcomes them, Jupiter's power over him ceases without further action on his part.

If the openings of the two plays are similar in revealing tortured heroes, the subsequent actions illustrate two possible ways for tortured protagonists to live. Manfred sees himself as unchangeable "since that all-nameless hour" when he caused Astarte's destruction. Doomed to an earthly lifetime filled with remorse, Manfred seeks what he can learn about non-human levels of existence. Ultimately, he realizes that such questions are irrelevant to his problems. In the end, his own individuality is the only thing that Manfred can claim as his own. At the last he can state two things, that the mind is immortal and makes its own values (IV, iv, 389-92), and that "'t is not so difficult to die."¹⁵ Prometheus, too, seeks ultimate answers, but those that he finds are less self-centered and more optimistic; he repeats the message of Shelley's

1818 conversation poems. Prometheus' suffering teaches him a positive lesson, that is at the core of Shelley's message: "For I hate no more,/ As then ere misery made me wise. . . ." This lesson, once learned, transforms the world, changing all aspects of life. Thus, pain has its role, but it ultimately disappears. When Byron portrays a similar attitude of charity in his protagonists, the same sense of power fails to accompany it. Changing their understandings cannot change any aspect of their lives. Suffering is at least lifelong. As his Dante says:

Many are poets but without the name,
For what is poesy but to create
From overfeeling good or ill; and aim
At an external life beyond our fate,
And be the new Prometheus of new men,
Bestowing fire from heaven, and then, too late,
Finding the pleasure given repaid with pain
And vultures to the heart of the bestower,
Who, having lavish'd his high gift in vain,
Lies chain'd to his lone rock by the seashore?
So be it: we can bear. . . .

(The Prophecy of Dante, IV, 10-20)

Despite the power and virtue of his conceptions, Byron's Promethean heroes are subject to a higher power that is amoral at best or, more likely, malicious. Byron's 1816 Prometheus, like his Manfred of the same year, is "in part divine," and yet is subject to "the deaf tyranny of Fate." Like Manfred, he can triumph only by accepting similar torture: a "firm will" wrings its reward from inexorable Heaven's torture, "triumphant where it dares defy,/ And making Death a Victory" (Prometheus, 58-59).¹⁶

On the contrary, in Prometheus Unbound Shelley presents the power that rules the universe as corresponding to one's higher or lower impulses. The entire universe responds according to whether Prometheus feels love or hate.¹⁷ Thus Shelley suggests that if man will dare defy what he perceives as evil, the apparent order of the universe will alter to fit his conceptions. In 1818-19, while writing this particular drama, Shelley shows the positive effects of love. But we must not forget, as Wasserman reminds us (Critical), that in The Cenci of the same period Shelley shows the darker side. The first drama, that he regarded as his greatest work to that time, explores the consequences of espousing the most positive view, as the second play presents the opposite viewpoint.

Several related scenes clearly demonstrate how differently Manfred and Prometheus Unbound present the relationship between the individual and the universe. Shelley evidently borrowed from Byron's scene between Manfred and the seven spirits the notion of a communication barrier between the human and the non-human orders of being.¹⁸ Byron's spirits cannot comprehend Manfred's questions because they have neither form nor a sense of human time; consequently, the immortal powers fail to satisfy Manfred's very human, limited desire for forgetfulness: "I then have call'd ye from your realms in vain;/ Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me" (I, i, 164-65). Manfred's protagonist never bridges the gap between the worlds; he dies

as he lived, alone. Shelley's Prometheus also attempts to communicate through two realms when he asks to hear his curse again. Both Prometheus and Manfred experience a communication barrier between their existences and a different level of reality. The spirits in Manfred cannot comprehend a lower, human request. Prometheus has forgotten the language that he once spoke in his lower, "fallen" state. The Earth warns Prometheus that he will not understand the curse when he hears it, because he "knowest not the language of the dead" (I, 138). This scene indicates both that Prometheus' forgiveness has enabled him to transcend a former, more limited mode of existence, and that a barrier exists between the two realms, as in Manfred. But, in Prometheus Unbound, communication can exist between the two realms. Both the Earth and the Spirit of the Hour serve as mediators, showing that there is a fundamental harmony between the human and superhuman orders of existence. Byron's play emphasizes the hero's isolation, the discontinuity between the two modes of existence; therefore, no such mediation exists. In Shelley's work, on the contrary, union and reunion occur on all levels.

Because he assumes this harmony between natural, human, and superhuman realms, Shelley's poem can have wider applications. Byron's protagonists typically defy a fate that a superior power seems to have thrust on them, but any answers that they receive apply only to their unique circumstances. Shelley, on the other hand, favored a more ambitious scope,

with universal implications.

There are many similarities in how Manfred and Prometheus defy their tormentors. Shelley's *Second Fury* proclaims, like the seven spirits in Manfred, that he is formless by nature.¹⁹ Both take forms that torture their victims, after their victims invite them to. Prometheus tells the Furies, "Pour forth the cup of pain." Manfred professes indifference to what form the spirit takes and invites it to choose. Both heroes expect more suffering like what they are accustomed to; both are mistaken. The form of Astarte appears and then disappears to convulse Manfred; the history of human failures, not more physical pain, tortures Prometheus. Again, obviously, the differences between the poets' treatments emphasize the contrasting scopes of the plays.

Prometheus' attitude toward his tormentors parallels Manfred's terminal defiance of the Spirit that comes for him. Manfred sends the Spirit away, asserting that no such force has any right to claim him. Prometheus says, "I laugh your power, and his who sent you here, / To lowest scorn." In neither case does the poet give external spirits power over his hero. But in Shelley's play, unlike Byron's, all characters ultimately appear to operate by the same laws.

As indicated above, Shelley's evaluation of Prometheus' power does not signify unequivocal belief in human melioration. Rather, he either implies (as in the Lines and Julian and Maddalo) that an optimistic approach is more constructive,

whether right or wrong; or, at a critical juncture, he inserts the question, "what if. . .?" (Mont Blanc); or he produces two works that express alternative approaches (Prometheus Unbound and The Cenci).

After Prometheus hears his curse again Shelley's first act continues in a way akin both to the Greek tradition and to Manfred. Byron's hero calls up the spirits of the earth and air, and they taunt him with his mortality. Manfred asserts that his "Promethean spark" is as powerful as theirs, "though coop'd in clay" and he demands that the spirits appear in some concrete form, asserting his indifference to all earthly forms. The most powerful overcomes him by assuming Astarte's shape, and then a Voice sings an Incantation that spells out Manfred's torture. "By a power to thee unknown" it binds him, because of his own weaknesses, like Milton's Satan, "Thyself to be thy proper Hell."

The Furies taunt Prometheus, who is likewise physically helpless at the time. But, significantly, they torture him with human history, not his own conduct. This again shows the difference in the poet's objectives. Yet Shelley, like Byron, makes it clear that his hero caused his own torture, which lasts from the time he curses Jupiter until he withdraws the curse. The Furies' power ends when Prometheus expresses the correct attitude of pity toward the most evil men. The Fury responds, "Thou pitiest them? I speak no more!" and disappears. From this point, the triumph begins.

Shelley's torturing spirit disappears in the first act, vanquished by the hero; not so Byron's. The spirit who spoke the Invocation in Manfred disappears when it finishes its speech, not when Manfred demands it. An analogous being reappears at the play's end, Faust-like, to demand Manfred. By this time Manfred has gained enough knowledge to defy the spirit and die alone. Dying, he affirms the play's one positive value: that the strong individual alone bears the responsibility for his fate. By the end of his play Byron thus affirms less than Shelley does before his first act ends. Although both authors affirm the virtues of self-knowledge and defiance, the consequences differ greatly---one play ends with self-knowledge followed by death, the other with universal improvement.

Differences in two other scenes again demonstrate the same variations between authors. Manfred descends to the hall of Arimanes, has a question and answer exchange, gains a degree of knowledge and self-acceptance, and returns to his tower to die. Asia likewise descends to the hall of Demogorgon, has a question and answer exchange, and departs. Various critics point out a feature common to both sessions: neither underworld power can tell the quester anything that he does not already know. The consequences of the interview differ for the two questers in a familiar way. Manfred returns to his castle, to assert his power even as he dies. Asia leaves in the Chariot of the Hour, to join Prometheus

and usher in a joyous period for the universe.

Asia, Prometheus, and Manfred all change in the course of the plays' actions. At the long-ago point when Prometheus' punishment began he was most like Manfred. Both characters display their Miltonic ancestry, but Prometheus' curse on Jupiter also clearly resembles lines in Manfred's speeches:

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;

. . . .
One only being shalt thou not subdue.

. . . .
Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. . . .

(Prometheus Unbound, I, 262, ff.)

Manfred is less defiant, except when he spurns the fiend that comes for him at the end. But, like Prometheus, he invites the spirits in Act I to do as they please, claiming indifference until one assumes Astarte's form. Later, this famous speech, substituting the term "mind" for "will" makes Shelley's point about the individual will's power. As he defies the Spirit that claims him, Manfred proclaims:

The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts---
Is its own origin of ill and end---
And its own place and time. . . .

(III, iv, 389-92)

Both heroes claim that the individual will is sovereign.

Obviously, both Byron and Shelley express an idea counter to Milton's; their Satanic heroes are virtuous largely because they defy a superior power. Shelley's major point is that Prometheus overcomes the hateful aspects of his own character

and Jupiter's "omnipotence" collapses. Byron portrays no such interrelationship between his protagonist and the universe's power, no such defeat of a villain, and no such transforming love. His protagonist can retain significance only insofar as he clings to his individuality in the face of hostile omnipotence; he cannot convert his enemy to his own ends. At the last, as in the beginning, defiance is Manfred's cardinal virtue.

At a comparatively early point in Prometheus Unbound, the Earth takes a stance akin to Manfred's. Misunderstanding the significance of Prometheus' change of heart, she laments when Prometheus would recall his curse. Like Manfred, Earth misconceives Prometheus' role as eternally defying a higher power, when Prometheus has in fact overcome himself and begun the process of Love's triumph. Uncomprehending, Earth laments, "That Jove at length should vanquish thee."

Understandably, since Shelley's play diverges from Byron's from the moment when Prometheus calls back his curse, there are fewer similarities later in the play than at the beginning. Yet sufficient resemblances exist to demonstrate again that Byron's conceptions influenced Shelley. Manfred begins by confronting seven spirits of earth and air; Shelley's opening earth spirits bear a marked resemblance to them (although Shelley omits a representation of Prometheus' destiny). Shelley combined these spirits' qualities with those of Manfred's Destinies (II,iii). The closest parallel is

between Byron's Second Voice and Shelley's Second Spirit.

The ship sail'd on, the ship sail'd fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck;
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair,
And he was a subject well worthy my care;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea---
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!
(Manfred, II,iii)

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immovably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between, with many a captive cloud,
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by the lightning riven in half:
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.
(Prometheus Unbound, I, 708-22)

The differences between the two passages emphasize the authors' dissimilar intentions. Byron reaffirms that the higher human virtues do not apply in more powerful realms. Shelley's passage occurs just after Prometheus has recalled his curse, and it reflects the new, tentative implications of his victory--- the drowning victim expresses love and self-sacrifice, and the survivor is not an evil wretch.

Both works contain addresses to Mother Earth, but the resemblances barely go beyond this fact. Manfred perceives her beauty and acknowledges that he is partly her product--- but she bequeathed him only one-half of his essence, the part that limits: "Half dust, half deity, alike unfit/ To

sink or soar. . . .Till our mortality predominates" (I, ii). Asia and Prometheus, on the other hand, are superhuman and do not experience mortality's frustrations. Asia's tribute to Earth's beauty (II, iii) resembles those that Manfred offers, but the play substantiates her speculations that earth could be lovelier still if evil's stain would disappear. In the same speech, Shelley purposely transforms the malicious avalanche of Manfred, that will "only fall on things which would live" (Manfred, I, ii). For Asia it becomes instead a symbol of "some great truth" which the nations echo. Thus here, as in the shipwreck materials in Shelley's Lines and the Second Spirit's speech, Shelley deliberately transforms Byron's data on natural phenomena by altering its significance.

Prometheus transcends his own limitations and at the same time renews the earth, which he leaves for his own, higher realm. The Spirit of the Hour informs us of man's state on this new Earth. Like Manfred, man now accepts his mortality; but love and imagination enable him to overcome the frustrations of being human.

Logically, patience will also mean different things in the two plays. To Manfred it means capitulation:

Patience and patience! Hence---that word was made
For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine,---
I am not of thine order. (II,i)

Shelley presents Prometheus' patient suffering as the chief source of man's hope; his resistance alone bars Jupiter's omnipotence. Furthermore, his pain served to educate the

Titan: ". .for I hate no more,/ As then ere misery made me wise. ." (I, 57-58). Thus, while temporary pain results from goodness, mere suffering is not the ultimate result.

Both heroes reject temptations to give up their own power in return for other rewards. The Seven Spirits and then the Witch of the Alps offer Manfred various earthly rewards if he will acknowledge their superiority and worship them; he refuses. In Act I of Prometheus Unbound, Mercury's temptations parallel Manfred's. If he will acknowledge Jupiter's superior power and give him the information that he needs, Mercury promises that Jupiter will grant physical freedom and an end to his torture; Prometheus refuses. Characteristically, Manfred's action has fewer ramifications than Prometheus'. Manfred acts as a lone individual, while Prometheus is the sole remaining hope for man and gods. "Heaven seems Hell" to Mercury when he thinks of Prometheus; Earth tells the Titan that his defiance inspires human hopes also. Manfred's bleak world lacks such interrelationships; Byron's hero triumphs only to the extent of affirming his individuality as he dies. The source of Prometheus' victory, like Manfred's, results from his unique strength in defying superior powers; however, love, the ultimate cause of the transformations that the poem celebrates, is not a distinctive quality that belongs only to Prometheus. The source of hope in Shelley's play rests less upon his protagonist's unique defiance than upon the love that purifies him---an emotion the drama assumes is universal.

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Because love resides in all orders of being, all can respond to the victory of love that Prometheus wins.

Astarte and Asia likewise demonstrate differences in their creators' visions. Both characters have softer qualities that their male counterparts need to be complete. Both represent love to their partners, and both plays begin with the women separated from their partners. In Manfred this is the source of the hero's agony; he has caused Astarte's death, and he suffers from consequent remorse and loneliness. In Shelley's play Prometheus' separation from Asia symbolizes his own error, their reunion his self-correction and fulfillment. Manfred contains no such reunions, while they are central to Shelley's message. Again, we come back to the poets' contrasting pictures of the universe. Manfred presents an existence in which one is basically powerless and must either submit to the evil, tyrannous order of existence or cut oneself off from the harmony of things in order to retain one's virtue. In such a world, clearly, the most heroic---and futile---act is defiance of this tyranny.

Prometheus Unbound presents another order. While Manfred discovers how alone he is and progressively isolates himself from irrelevant beings, Prometheus does the opposite. Interestingly, both poets portray tyranny in similar terms through their careers, as a vicious power that would grind all individuality underfoot. Shelley's Prometheus is heroic in his defiance of this power, even as Manfred is. The

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difference is that in his work Shelley presents an alternative to isolated defiance, and the drama's movement toward union typifies the alternative. Panthea and Ione fade into Asia, who in turn rejoins Prometheus; the earth and moon interpenetrate one another; human beings become "Man, oh, not men!" These mergings result from the substitution of love for will. Earth perceives this about herself and her humans in Act IV. Tyranny's "sceptred curse" attempted a form of union, asserting its will to force homogeneity--- "to one void mass battering and blending" (IV, 343). Until Prometheus' difficult, liberating act of love, Manfred-like defiance seemed the only respectable alternative to joining the void mass. But Prometheus' example goes beyond, to teach a higher ideal of multiplicity limited by love before one tyrannizes over another: "Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul, / Whose nature is its own divine control" (IV, 400-01).

The Cenci

Stuart Curran has demonstrated recently that Shelley's The Cenci and Prometheus Unbound show their contemporary composition in numerous ways.²⁰ He quotes parallel passages in the two plays. Several characters have parallel roles (the Count and Jupiter, Orsino and Mercury, Beatrice and Prometheus). Curran argues that both plays deal with the same materials from different viewpoints: "The Cenci is the tragedy within Prometheus Unbound, rendering with tragic realism the mythic

relationship of Jupiter to Thetis and to the world over which he wages his tyrannical powers" (Scorpions, p. 130).

Being merely human, Beatrice commits "pernicious mistakes" that defeat her in the end. Through ages of suffering, the Titan Prometheus has time to learn that "the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance. . ." (Preface to The Cenci). Having only one lifetime, Beatrice's wisdom dawns too late; hence, The Cenci ends tragically while Prometheus Unbound closes with a triumph.

Since the latter exhibits numerous affinities with Byron's Manfred, one would expect that Shelley's drama of human limitations would likewise draw from this Byronic source.²¹ Like Byron's play, The Cenci dramatizes human limitations. Despite several supernatural settings, Manfred portrays its hero's acceptance of his mortality. As exceptional as Manfred is, still he must operate within human limitations. He may call spirits, but he cannot always subject them to his will. He could not protect Astarte from her doom, and he cannot force her phantom to answer his questions. Manfred wins admiration from the spirits by refusing to operate by their standards, even as he acknowledges mortality's limitations. His confident individuality persists until the end, when Manfred triumphantly defeats the spirit that claims him, before perishing alone.

Because The Cenci confines itself to the human realm, in many surface details Shelley could not use Byron's

machinery to the extent that he did in the other case. The Cenci has a more domestic setting; therefore, it lacks the spirits, caves, and mountains of Manfred. Manfred and Prometheus Unbound are more overtly philosophical; Shelley's tragedy required more concrete language.

Still, in a number of ways Byron provides a likely source for some of Shelley's material in the Italian play. Several details of the Preface parallel Byron's approach, while they do not resemble Shelley's customary statements. Shelley insists that this play represents actual events, hardly what he claimed for works like Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, or Prometheus Unbound. He rarely attempted to attract readers by claiming that a particular setting was absolutely authentic or that a given event actually occurred. But Byron habitually announced to his readers that his works portrayed authentic facts. Various claims of this nature through Byron's works show that he insisted on his works' verisimilitude. As early as the first cantos of Childe Harold (1812), he insisted that he had actually seen the settings of his fictional character: "Thus much it may be necessary to state for the correctness of the descriptions." The Preface to Marino Faliero proudly informs us that Byron is probably the first English writer to present the Doge's story accurately. Don Juan also repeatedly refers to actual events and to details that Byron noticed in real life, like the misspelling of an acquaintance's name in a death-list (Canto VIII, 18).

Shelley's case is different. More interested in portraying "the manifestation of something beyond the present & tangible object," his emphasis on verisimilitude gives way to his interest in delineating abstract philosophical, political, and moral issues (as in Shelley's letter of November 6, 1818). Once before Shelley had openly followed Byron's lead when he began with historical fact. He started a drama on Tasso's life in 1818. Byron's The Lament of Tasso dates from 1817, and Shelley's letters reveal that he knew it before he began his own version of the story. Shelley had read history before, of course, but the Tasso drama was his first attempt at a work based directly on history.

We know from Shelley's letters how desperately he wanted The Cenci to succeed. When he sought a popular triumph, he modeled his approach on that of his successful acquaintance and turned once more to historical sources. As Shelley attempted to derive an equation for a Byronic success, he focused on certain elements that he hoped might guarantee popularity. One of his most important decisions was the play's subject. He wished to produce a drama capable of "awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men." To accomplish this, obviously, he must find a subject capable of moving the average person. The Cenci family's story seemed ideal to him, because it continued to excite interest among Italians after centuries. Like Byron's Marino Faliero, it told a story that few English readers would know.²² Shelley therefore possessed a story

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with proven power over people, but one unknown in England, so that he could describe exotic beliefs, settings, and customs in a manner that he hoped would appeal to the day's readers.

From The Cenci's preface onward the readers know that they no longer explore a world as abstract as that of Prometheus Unbound. Where Shelley represents the Titan as "the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature. . .," this preface promises something altogether different. Like Byron, Shelley assures us that he has actually visited several sites of the play's action. Like Byron, he likewise insists that his story is true: It "was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome," and the author has "endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were."

Shelley's Preface makes an extremely atypical claim about The Cenci's composition: "I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry. . .In other respects, I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fasidious and learned choice of words." This sounds like Byron, who favored the role of a gentleman dashing off brilliant verses at his leisure; he would descend beneath his rank should he labor unduly over technical details.²³ As usual, Shelley must qualify his statement. In words that allude to Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, when he stated that

he wrote with little care, he meant "without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words." He then agrees with Wordsworth that a poet should use "the familiar language of men," but his qualification suggests that, in Shelley's opinion, Wordsworth did not accomplish this: "But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong." Shelley again refuses to rest with a personal statement of his own convictions. Unlike Byron's treatment of the same subject, Shelley's generalizes beyond his own practice.

When we turn to the play itself, a number of details remind us of a Byronic hero, although Shelley adapts them to his own purposes.²⁴ Camillo has known Count Cenci since youth:

I stood beside your dark and fiery youth
Watching its bold and bad career, as men
Watch meteors, but it vanished not: I marked
Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now
Do I behold you in dishonoured age,
Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.
(I, i, 49-54)

These qualities fit the stereotype of most gothic villains, but the imagery is close to familiar descriptions of the Byronic hero.²⁵ While the Count resembles a Byronic hero gone awry, Cardinal Camillo's role resembles that of the Abbot who appears at the end of Manfred. Both attempt to save the character whom they observe, fearing for his spiritual future. Both seem to be sincere, although limited in

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understanding. Finally, the Abbot and the Cardinal prove equally ineffectual; Count Manfred and Count Cenci both spurn their advice as inappropriate to their exceptional personalities. Beyond this, there are parallels in how Byron and Shelley structured the interviews. In many ways Shelley's scene (The Cenci, I, i) follows the Abbot's first interview with Manfred (III, i). In Byron's scene the Abbot repeatedly urges Manfred to reform. Manfred responds, "It is too late," and he elaborates, chiefly analyzing how he differs from other men. After Manfred cuts off the Abbot's exhortations, the churchman leaves, resolving, "I will try once more." Camillo expresses regret for Count Cenci's career, "Yet I have ever hoped you would amend." The Count, like Manfred, warns his would-be rescuer that he is too exceptional for such a mundane course as reform. Count Cenci cuts off Camillo's sermon by leaving him. Like the Abbot, the Cardinal then vows that he will continue to "pray/ Almighty God that thy false, impious words/ Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee" (I, i, 123-25).

Obviously, Shelley's character is no hero; unlike Byron's protagonist, the Count has attained "dishonoured age" rather than dying or disappearing while he was still young and attractive. Unlike Byron's flawed heroes, Cenci feels no remorse: "I am what your theologians call/ Hardened" (I, i, 93-94). Like Byron's Childe or Lara, the Count is world-weary. Recalling a happier past, he regrets that "now/

Invention palls" (I, i, 98-99). Singularly unbyronic is Count Cenci's lack of remorse and his cruelty to the female characters, deficiencies that prevent reader or spectator from forgiving him.

In reality Beatrice resembles a Byronic hero more than her father, although her sex, her helplessness, and her lack of political power suggest that Byron himself never would have created her. She alone defies her father, up to and beyond his death. Beatrice's resistance comes from her faith that she is right, despite the refusal of Church and society to help her, lest they offend her powerful father. She courageously protects Lucretia and Bernardo from the Count whenever possible, as Byron's heroes chivalrously protect the weak. Despite an unbyronic lapse, her persistent refusal to confess her father's murder and her courage when tortured make her heroic.

Beatrice differs from the Byronic hero in significant ways.²⁶ First, until Act IV Beatrice has committed no crime; therefore, she lacks the mysterious past and the secret guilt of a Corsair, a Lara, or a Manfred. Even more important, she possesses a different view of human life and its significance. Until late in the drama she possesses faith that, despite her father's aberrations, human life ultimately operates under the standards that Christianity inculcated in her. This faith enables her to defy her father and to beg the banquet guests for help. After the diners leave, her

faith wavers temporarily and she thinks, "'Twere better not to struggle any more" (II, i, 53). When her father violates her, he unleashes Beatrice's energy. From the moment when she decides how to respond, her actions are cast, as irrevocably as a Byronic hero's. Shelley, unlike the early Byron, dramatizes the critical decision itself.²⁷ Overcome by her father's violence, Beatrice gropes for a solution, using Byronic terms and expressing the Byronic sense that once she acts, the rest of her life will be fixed beyond recall:

. . .Ay, something must be done;
 What, yet I know not. . .
 . . .
 When I know what, I shall be still and calm,
 And never anything will move me more.
 (III, i, 86-87, 93-94)

Beatrice's lines prove true for her in a double sense. She first believes that murdering her father will solve the difficulty; this act becomes to her a "high and holy deed" (IV, ii, 35) to "make/ The thing that I have suffered but a shadow/ In the dread lightning which avenges it" (III, i, 87-89). Subsequent events prove to Beatrice that her faith was too sanguine; the forces that her father represents are more powerful than she expected. She very quickly moves through a series of possibilities between the time when she hears that Lucretia and Giacomo confessed until the final curtain. At first, she remains secure:

. . .The God who knew my wrong, and made
 Our speedy act the angel of His wrath,
 Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.
 Let us not think that we shall die for this.
 (V, iii, 113-16)

When she learns that she will die, she temporarily panics, fearing lest "all things then should be. . .my father's spirit,/ / For was he not alone omnipotent on Earth, and ever present?" (V, iv, 60, 68-69). Finally, she assumes the stance of a Byronic hero: she knows that she will not fear any more. She sees that life is unjust and welcomes "obscure Death" (V, iv, 115), although she does so with typical Shelleyan skepticism (ll. 80-89). Taking farewell, she advises her brother how to live that he may die as she does, "fear and pain/ Being subdued" (V, iv, 155-56). Her final words recall the last scene of Manfred. Even as he knows that he is dying, Byron's protagonist attempts to protect the witness of his death (the Abbot). Then he asserts his own independence as he defeats the Spirit. Likewise, Beatrice attempts to protect Bernardo (and in a sterner, but more similar way, Camillo), and she asserts her independence in terms similar to Manfred's. Manfred's treatment of the Abbot is courtly, yet his dying gesture goes beyond manners to acknowledge their common humanity. Beatrice sees the Cardinal in less flattering terms, but in the end she spares him any reproach and civilly dismisses him.

Byron's hero admits his guilt but denies that an outside Spirit can claim him: "I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey,/ But was my own destroyer, and will be/ My own hereafter" (III, iv, 398-400). Unlike Manfred, Beatrice suffers less from guilt; like him, she dies insisting on the primacy of

her own values over those of society. She asks Bernardo,
"For thine own sake be constant to the love/ Thou bearest us;
and to the faith that I,/ Though wrapped in a strange cloud
of crime and shame,/ Lived ever holy and unstained" (V, iv,
146-49).

Both plays dramatize the education of an exceptional individual. What the protagonists learn makes death their fitting end. Byron's hero needs to learn less than Beatrice before he can accept his combination of mortality and isolation. As Manfred opens, the Count already accepts as fact that he does not operate according to the standards of most men. During the play, he learns that he will remain totally alone unless he acknowledges his inferiority by submitting to a higher power, in return for the favors that he can win thereby. Instead, Manfred prefers to assert his individuality and to operate only by his own standards. His final, Pyrrhic victory ends the play. Defying the Spirit that has come for him, he proves that no outside power controls him. However, he proves mortal, and even as he vanquishes the Spirit, he dies. His final victory is his ability to accept this. "Old man! 't is not so difficult to die" (III, iv, 411).

Beatrice learns a similar lesson, but her education begins at an earlier point, causes her more pain, and ends less certainly. Through most of the play, she expresses her faith that God, Church, and society will aid her. She learns to her grief that none of the three will protect her from her

father. She also learns that they will not avenge her. When she solemnly asks Orsino how to prevent further rapes, he advises her, "Accuse him of the deed, and let the law/ Avenge thee" (III, i, 152-53). Beatrice knows better, and she refuses on two grounds---first, that she cannot express the crime (to her it goes far beyond mere physical violation) and, second, that her father's power and gold would block justice. After the Count's murder and her arrest, she realizes that neither the world of God nor that of man operates according to her highest conceptions. When the Judge threatens Beatrice with torture, she makes a bitter speech inviting torture and revealing her vision of life:

And with considering all the wretched life
 Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,
 And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth
 To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,
 And what slaves these; and what a world we make,
 The oppressor and the oppressed---such pangs compel
 My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?
(V, iii, 70-76)

Finally Beatrice comes to a position similar to Manfred's, as she nerves herself for death. Both authors express the same skeptical attitude about life beyond what we know, although Shelley's view necessarily seems more skeptical here. Byron's machinery involves a human and a nonhuman world, and this duality affects the Abbot's final question to us about Manfred: "He's gone, his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight; Whither? I dread to think; but he is gone." Shelley's play is flatter in this respect; we see only a human world.

Like a Byronic hero, she evaluates them on her own terms rather than by social convention. Yet in the final analysis The Cenci ends less triumphantly than Manfred. Despite the darkness, Byron's hero perishes so memorably that his heroic defiance persists in our memories after his death. Beatrice is less defiant, and therefore less triumphant. Where Manfred's death accompanied victory over external forces, Shelley's heroine has nothing to defy; she is the victim of a world that she cannot accept or comprehend. Having no concrete foe to resist in the end, Shelley must deny her the final, memorable gestures that gave Manfred heroic stature. The Cenci's audience responds to the pathos and courage at the end. Denied the death of either hero or martyr, Beatrice's last act is a mundane repetition of an everyday act, that gains significance for that very reason. Manfred's last act is equally mundane (He asks the Abbot, "Give me thy hand"), and his end is as problematical as Beatrice's.

The Abbot wonders where the Count has gone. Beatrice even refuses to speculate on the subject; she concludes that while alive she cannot know about nonhuman existence. Manfred's last gesture expresses his humanity and moves a person who survives his demise. Beatrice's end likewise asserts her humanity, in an inspiring way. Instead of preoccupation with her coming death, we see her concerned with comforting the only people who helped her in her lifetime. She tries to put the Cardinal at ease, she suggests how her half-brother may

live down his infamy, she puts up her mother's hair. Then, with neither faith nor defiance to sustain her, she exits. Her last victory is that we are moved at the waste of her life.

Chapter IV. SHELLEY AND DON JUAN

Shelley's letters tell us that he read Beppo before leaving England. His April 28, 1818, letter to Byron apologizes for leaving it there, assuring him that Peacock will send it to Italy. When Shelley visited Venice (August 1818), he heard Byron read Don Juan's first canto and its Dedication shortly after completing them. Shelley's first description of it shortly afterward is brief, though favorable: "a thing in the style of Beppo, but infinitely better" (October 8, 1818). Subsequent letters indicate what pleased Shelley most and least in Byron's first five cantos.¹

"The power & the beauty & the wit" are Don Juan's outstanding qualities, Shelley wrote to Byron (May 26, 1820), also praising and criticizing specific details in the first two cantos. About Canto V, which Byron read to him later, he wrote Mary, "Every word has the stamp of immortality" (August 8, 1821).² After receiving a published copy, he wrote to Byron praising the vigor and originality of Cantos III-V, and he observed (contrary to Shelley's earlier criticisms of Byron), "You are building up a drama, such as England has not yet seen, and the task is sufficiently noble & worthy of you" (October 21, 1821).

Considering how widely Shelley's verse experiments range, one would expect him to borrow ideas from a work that he praised so highly. Echoes of Byron's poem do indeed appear through Shelley's works, but in number they are fewer than

one might foresee. Childe Harold definitely gave Shelley more useful phrases throughout his career. And yet, in other ways, Don Juan may have affected Shelley's poetic career at least as profoundly. Shelley's awe of Byron's wealth, fame, and poetic power combined with his frustration at his own obscurity and seemingly limited skills; these factors probably contributed to the decreased poetic output during the last months of his life. Don Juan's brilliance definitely increased Shelley's esteem of Byron as a poet even as it diminished his self-evaluation, thereby indirectly contributing to Shelley's discouragement.³

Brian Wilkie suggests why Don Juan may have had little poetic influence. He opposes Shelley's lofty notion of poetry as expressed in the Preface to Prometheus Unbound to Byron's more social, limited ideal. Of Byron he observes:

Melody, prosody, truthfulness of fact---these were areas of art that Byron could respect, but intricacy of aesthetic effect, achieved through subtleties of diction and imagery, was alien to his taste, socially because it seemed to him a kind of pedantry beneath the level of gentlemen, and aesthetically because he himself gravitated toward a more broadly rhetorical tradition in poetry which tends, perhaps accidentally, to be associated with patrician values.

(Romantic and Victorian. . . Edited by W. Paul Elledge and Richard L. Hoffman, pp. 136-37)

There is clear-cut evidence that Byron's example stimulated Shelley to new poetic experiments, some of them based upon Don Juan; Byron's example did not simply intimidate Shelley. In 1819 and 1820 Shelley produced his two longest comic works, Peter Bell the Third and Swellfoot the Tyrant.

While the latter seems a failed Aristophanic attempt, the former clearly shows Don Juan's influence. Shelley hardly ever mentioned Peter Bell, but his characterization of it to Ollier underscores its anomalous position in the Shelley canon: "I think Peter not bad in his way; but perhaps no one will believe anything in the shape of a joke from me" (December 15, 1819).

Peter Bell the Third

While this work's sustained humor is atypical of Shelley, its genesis reveals the same complex combination of outside influences and originality that is typical of Shelley's poetry.⁴ As the title proclaims, Wordsworth's poem and Reynolds' travesty of it provide the occasion for Shelley's creation. In reality, Hunt's review of these provided Shelley's chief impetus. Before we move from the prefatory material to the poem itself, Shelley gives us other literary allusions (the Shakespeare quotation that provides the author's pseudonym and a comic dedication to Thomas Brown, creator of the Fudge family, plus a pseudo-serious attempt to claim that technically his own work belongs to the same class as Homer's). Shelley likewise echoes a theme of Byron's Preface to Don Juan, as Miching Mallecho proclaims his own genius: "Your works, indeed, dear Tom, sell better; but mine are far superior. The public is no judge; posterity sets all to rights." Byron had likewise observed of Southey that he

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Shelley focuses on the same failings in the Lake poets, but as the tone of this poem is less serious than Byron's Dedication, his wrath remains farther in the background. Clearly, however, his objections to Wordsworth are identical to Byron's.⁶ Shelley has perceived these features in the Lake poets for a considerable time, and one should not attribute their presence to Byron's influence. See Shelley's reaction to Wordsworth's Excursion, or his early, disillusioned reaction to Southey, whose Thalaba he so enjoyed:

Southey says Expediency ought to [be] made the ground of politics but not of morals. I urged that the most fatal error that ever happened in the world was the seperation (sic) of political and ethical science. . . Southey did not think the reasoning conclusive---he has a very happy knack when truth goes against him of saying, 'Ah! when you are as old as I am you will think with me'---this talent he employed in the above instance. Nothing can well be more weak. . . I do not think so highly of Southey as I did. (letter of January 7, 1812)

Thus, the significant Byronic influence does not lie in the ideas behind Shelley's poem but rather in their treatment.

Shelley's Prologue announces that his poem and Wordsworth's are "wrapped in weeds of the same metre." It is true that Shelley's parody also uses a five-line, iambic tetrameter stanza, but Shelley made a significant alteration, that relates his poem to Don Juan. Wordsworth's more solemn lines are garbed in a different rhyme scheme than Shelley's. Where the Lake poet took the pattern ABCCB, Shelley chose ABAAB. This slight change in pattern provided him with a significant aid in undercutting Wordsworth's pomposity, while,

in effect, it gave him several opportunities for comedy. His stanza form differs even more significantly from Don Juan's, but Shelley exploited two similarities to produce his own comic effects.

Byron's couplets often contain his most outrageous rhymes. Occurring at the end of his stanza, they enable him to treat a subject for a certain interval then dismiss it in a memorably comic manner. Some famous examples include Byron's announcement of his hero's name, rhyming "new one" and "Don Juan" (I, v); his warning against marrying a bluestocking, rhyming "intellectual" and "hen-peck'd you all" (I, xxii); and Byron's comment on Juan's exemplary education, during which "he learn'd the arts of riding, fencing, gunnery,/ And how to scale a fortress---or a nunnery" (I, xxxviii). The form of Shelley's stanza does not include such a final, rhymed coup de gr^âce for its chosen subject. However, Shelley's couplets often provide the most comic rhymes. Describing Peter Bell's corpse produced an early attempt to imitate Don Juan: its expression "told, as I understand the case,/ That he was gone to the wrong place" (I, xi). The continued rhymes, some more skillful than this instance, reveal additional attempts at Byronic devices. Thus, Shelley deliberately locates a conjunction at the end of the line as he describes the Devil: ". .that he was aping fashion, and/ That he now came to Westmoreland. ." (II, xi). Or, more daringly, stanzas separate adjective and noun in II, viii-ix: "Had he gone and boldly

Solemn phiz. . ." Byron's enjambments serve a like effect in both Beppo and Don Juan. For instance, to obtain a feminine rhyme for "Desdemona" and "Verona," he wrote, "Except that since those times was never known a/ Husband. . ." (Beppo, xvii). Or, the conjunction "but" ends a line to provide visual rhyme with "put" and "shut" (I, lii). Carrying license to an extreme, Byron even hyphenated a word at the end of a line for the sake of effect: "she'll be nice hence-/Forward" (I, cxx).

These comic enjambments illustrate one of several ways to complete an intricate pattern in a rhyme-poor language like English. Byron transforms what would be a severe problem in a serious poem into a source of amusement. His virtuosity with the language is such that his absurd rhymes seem deliberate choices rather than awkward necessities forced upon him by an uninflected language or a limited vocabulary. Byron's difficulties and our fun increase substantially because the verse form that he chose demands not merely pairs of rhyme words, but triplets. Shelley's shorter stanza resembles Byron's rather than Wordsworth's in demanding triplets, although he need provide only one per verse, while Byron required two.

Peter Bell reveals that Shelley had studied Beppo and what he knew of Don Juan with care. He experimented with numerous techniques that Byron had already brilliantly exploited. Of course, the humorous rhymes provide the most

obvious similarity between the poets' works. In addition to trying out comic enjambments, Shelley tried other ways of amusing his readers as he rhymed. Like Byron, he used feminine rhymes: "minute, in it" (I, xiii), or "prodigious, religious" (VI, xxxiv), for instance. Foreign languages also serve as mines for both poets' rhyme schemes. Byron constructs lines ending, "but I pass over that," "Verbum sat," and "but no matter what" (Don Juan, I, liii). Shelley tries for a similar effect with "praebens fumum," "when I and you, Ma'am," and "subter humum" (VI, xvii).

Shelley had used visual rhyme before (e.g., "anemone, one" in Prometheus Unbound, II, ii, 13-14). Here, like Byron before him, he uses it for comic purposes. One of Shelley's most Byronic rhymes exploits this device: He portrays Peter, "footman in the Devil's service!" then relies on our eye for the last line's rhyme, "prefer vice" (IV, i).

Likewise, Shelley had previously exploited the ambiguities of our language. For instance, a description of the natural phenomena that occur on the surface of Mont Blanc produced the analogy, "like vapour broods/ Over the snow" (Mont Blanc, 138-19). In these lines Shelley evidently wanted his readers to associate "brood" with two different types of action, each appropriate to his simile. The puns that occur in Peter Bell, of course, have a lighter quality. Peter, damned by the critics but not yet double-damned, hopes that his recent loss of principles will give him cause to celebrate, "As the

Prince Regent did with sherry,---/Ay---and at last desert me too" (VI, xxix). Byron likewise indulged in occasional puns: "Man's a phenomenon, one knows not what,/ And wonderful beyond all wondrous measure. . ." (I, cxxxiii).

In other words, both poets play many of the same games within the restrictions of similarly confining forms. One purpose of the game, obviously, is to demonstrate the poet's virtuosity as we watch him transform a rigid, demanding verse form into a plaything that seems capable of responding to his every whim. Beppo was Byron's first sustained attempt at this kind of verse. Don Juan signals his mastery of the form. Peter Bel' is analagous to Beppo, occupying a similar place in the Shelley canon. Shelley possessed one advantage over Byron; he had contemporary examples, written by a master, that he could study before making his own attempt. Shelley's comic poem demonstrates repeatedly that he had studied them attentively, and that he profited from Byron's examples. Shelley never attempted a Don Juan. Why? A number of probable reasons appear later. But Peter Bell testifies to Shelley's interest in such a mode.

Shelley did not merely borrow techniques from Byron's poem and write a similar preface. Numerous small details indicate further debts to Byron's works. For instance, Shelley serio-comically corrects our tendency to say "God damns" (III, xvi) in a manner reminiscent of Byron's observation, "'Tis strange---the Hebrew noun which means 'I am,'/

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The English always use to govern d--n" (I, xiv). Shelley's charge that Wordsworth is "a kind of moral eunuch" echoes Byron's "intellectual eunuch Castlereagh" (Dedication, xi). Shelley proceeds with a humorous description of Peter's sexual timidity that is virtually the only appearance in Shelley's poetry of such a comic, physical treatment of human sexuality---a treatment far more typical of Byron. Shelley's damaging observation on Coleridge parallels Byron's. In both Don Juan's Dedication and Peter Bell, the authors recognize Coleridge's great powers and regret his obscurity. Byron's persona wishes that the "hawk" would "explain his explanation" (Dedication, ii); Shelley observes Coleridge's powers more appreciatively but seems regretful that his mind "was a mist" (V, ii). Both poets attack the reviewers, implying that they are incompetent and stating even more directly that they are corrupt. Shelley's Devil avenges Peter's impertinence by sending a copy of Bell's latest book to the reviewers, accompanied by a five pound note and the words, "Pray abuse" (VI, ii). Byron's persona confidently claims a favorable reception for Don Juan because he has bribed "my grandmother's review---the British" (I, ccix). But, upon second thought, he suggests perhaps the reviewer is unprincipled enough to deny the rave, even though he received his money. When Shelley describes England's desperate plight he echoes a number of Byronic descriptions of contemporary Greece: like Greece, Peter's land implores aid

as she lies dying in her loveliness.

Of course, a number of similarities may be due to the poets' similar convictions about the Lake poets, about British politics, about morality and hypocrisy. Others could result from both poets' knowledge of the same sources---The Devil's Walk and The Dunciad, for instance.⁷ However, a number of the parallels are atypical of Shelley, while the same qualities are habitual in Byron's works, which suggests that Byron's usages governed Shelley's directly. The proximity of the two poets supplies another argument in favor of Byronic influence.

By 1816 Byron and Shelley agreed on their evaluations of Wordsworth in many essentials. Peter Bell III reflects an even closer similarity to Byron's judgment. Like Byron's Dedication, Shelley's work exposes Peter's faults, then admits that Peter/Wordsworth still possesses considerable powers. Unlike Byron, Shelley still analyzes his strengths, as well as his weaknesses, at some length. But in Peter Bell Shelley adds charges new to him, that Byron had made previously in Don Juan and elsewhere. To Shelley's disgust with Wordsworth's political opportunism and its political consequences, he here adds objections to Wordsworth's hypocritical self-righteousness and to his provincialism. These criticisms are more personal than Shelley's usual complaints. Their nature parallels Byron's criticisms in the Dedication.

Biblical allusions in both Don Juan and Peter Bell III indicate that both poets intended to scandalize their readers. This, of course, occurred in Shelley as early as Queen Mab. In Peter Bell his purpose is more frivolous. Where before he intended to shake his readers out of their habitual, complacent readings of the Bible, here his chief object is entertainment: he may strive to amuse his more enlightened readers by misapplying familiar passages, for instance. He appropriates Christ's description of his second coming like "a thief who cometh in the night," elaborating upon it, and playfully transfers it to the Devil (II, iii). In the early work he cited immoral episodes from the Bible to convince his readers that humanity needed a better religion than Christianity. Here he merely juxtaposes for comic effect. Byron does the same with his lewdly illustrated missal, Beppo's Carnival, or the literary commandments (Don Juan, I, cciv-vi), that rely upon the Bible while attacking contemporary poets.

This treatment of incongruities is much more characteristic of Byron's style than of Shelley's. Where the former typically presented his characters in all their complexity, Shelley most often subordinated character to a didactic purpose. His works are more highly wrought, the details chosen to reinforce the poem's message. A casual, throw-away allusion like the above description of the Devil occurs rarely in his earlier work. Peter Bell III shows a Byronic striving for immediate effect, even at the cost of unity.

Shelley's poem also demonstrates that he appreciated the chief benefit that such potential chaos conferred upon a master---an unprecedented opportunity to brilliantly sketch the fast-moving surprises that life affords to an observant participant. In such works, the observer's personality unifies otherwise random thoughts. It is a commonplace that this form of unity is central to Byron's major works, while more characteristically Shelley relies upon unity of idea. Peter Bell the Third exposes Shelley to us as, like Byron, he attempts to impose his personality on a poem.

In addition to unifying his work in a Byronic manner, other details reflect a debt to this man. Shelley's picture of contemporary British society in "Part the Third, Hell" has many Byronic elements. He describes features that Byron focused on in The Blues, the English cantos of Don Juan, and elsewhere.

Hell is a city much like London---
A populous and a smoky city;
There are all sorts of people undone,
And there is little or no fun done;
Small justice shown, and still less pity.

He then describes the negative glories of a literary lion, producing two lines prophetic of T. S. Eliot ("Crucified 'twixt a smile and whimper," III, x; and ". . . teas, / Where small talk dies in agonies," III, xii). In this section Shelley moves freely by association from one subject to another until we understand how he sees contemporary English society.⁸

The clearest evidence of Byron's influence yet remains--- the language, the character of the narrator, and the fact that Shelley largely restricts his poem to the human realm.⁹ In Shelley's 1818 "conversation" poems, one readily notes that the diction is simpler and more refined than in his previous works, but there is actually little change in his choice of words, beyond more overall restraint. As mentioned when discussing those works, it is possible, even probable, that Byron's example affected this change. It is difficult to produce tangible evidence, but in Peter Bell the Third Shelley's language clearly shows the effect of Don Juan. Like Byron, Shelley chose the colloquial speech of a contemporary gentleman. At times he relied upon repetition with varied inflection for an effect: "It neared as if the Devil was in it. The Devil was in it. . ." (I, xiii, xiv). Shelley's poetry rarely relied on this type of spoken inflection. Vocabulary reflects the same change: hen coops, sack, rheumatism, and slop-merchants appear, as well as words like "phiz" and "flams," alien to the tone of Shelley's earlier verse.

In keeping with the more relaxed language of Peter Bell, the persona who narrates plays a different role from Shelley's typical speaker. As in Beppo and Don Juan, intrusion of his personality is part of the poem's object; this personality, rather than unity of subject, determines what appears in the work.¹⁰ The self-image that Shelley chose to project in

this poem parallels that of Don Juan's narrator more closely than any in his own earlier works, largely because of this change in focus. In Peter Bell Shelley presents his narrator as a clever, socially experienced person who shares observations with his readers as he tells Peter's history. As in Byron's works, Shelley digresses to reinforce the narrator's image while offering his observations on various matters. Thus, his insistence upon the Devil's versatility (II, i-iv) shows a degree of acceptance for the narrator's own limitations. "He is---what we are," Shelley writes, then lightheartedly he proceeds to list various reprehensible occupations that the Devil assumes upon occasion, "living as he can," just as the narrator recognizes that he and his fellow-humans do. Byron likewise kept his readers' attention by this device---humorously owning the depth of his own depravity and seeming to assume naively that all his readers would accept the same evaluation of their own conduct. Obviously, one goal is to expose hypocrisy.

A number of critics regard this corrective satirical objective as Byron's central purpose in Don Juan; more, however, admit that this was only one of many motivations behind Byron's epic. Such satire is clearly one of Shelley's chief objects in Peter Bell. With the exception of the passage on English corruption ("Part the Third"), exposing hypocrisy seems the central feature, when he describes Wordsworth as well as the Devil. Because Shelley focuses the story on

one poet's corruption, exposure of Wordsworth's moral errors seems Peter Bell's chief raison d'etre. To reveal Wordsworth's hypocrisy Shelley's persona assumes the opposite character---an openness that freely acknowledges human defects. When Shelley wrote Peter Bell possibly he wished to produce enlightenment, followed by moral reform. Perhaps he hoped that by treating his subject lightheartedly he could make reform more palatable to his readers. Whether or not his purpose was anything this serious, this poem remains his longest experiment at publicly assuming the role of an imperfect, observant, witty man of the world.

Whatever his reasons, Shelley did not continue to write in this vein, and his subsequent work suggests at least two reasons. His awe of Byron's powers obviously inhibited him. He wrote to Mary, "I despair of rivalling Lord Byron" (August 8, 1821), a sentiment that probably slowed any inclination that Shelley might have had to continue experiments in Byronic poetic styles. A subsequent letter to Byron indicates the same thing. Commenting on Don Juan, Shelley says:

This poem carries with it at once the stamp of originality and a defiance of imitation. Nothing has ever been written like it in English---nor if I may venture to prophesy, will there be; without carrying upon it the mark of a secondary and borrowed light. (October 21, 1821)

He continues, on the moral significance of Don Juan: "You unveil & present in its true deformity what is worst in human nature, & this is what the wittlings of the age murmur at, conscious of their want of power to endure the scrutiny

of such a light."

This letter contains an idea that Shelley did not accept wholeheartedly, as the opposite sentiment appears in an 1820 "Fragment: Satire on Satire." Where the letter to Byron implies that he approved of satire, Shelley's fragment denies its value. This fragment refers to Southey rather than to Wordsworth, but the objection that Shelley states applies to personal satire regardless of its object. "'Tis not worth while" to attempt public, satirical correction. Such criticism will not alter conduct for the better, although it may cause its object to suffer. The end of the fragment suggests how one should expose faults. Printed corrections are futile.

If any friend would take Southey some day,
And tell him, in a country walk alone,
Softening harsh words with friendship's gentle tone,
How incorrect his public conduct is,
And what men think of it, 'twere not amiss.
Far better than to make innocent ink
With stagnant truisms of trite Satire stink.
(Here the satire breaks.)

In short, the fragment objects to the approach of Don Juan's Dedication; it could be Peter Bell's palinode. For the same reason, Shelley wrote to Byron that despite their poetic strength he was not sorry when Murray refused to publish the stanzas that attacked Southey and Wordsworth in Don Juan and its Dedication (May 26, 1820).

We must not oversimplify Shelley's position. While he may have felt this way about attacking fellow poets, Swellfoot the Tyrant and miscellaneous political lyrics that he produced after Peter Bell testify that Shelley continued to write for

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general distribution works that mock the errors of public figures.

Don Juan and Other Works

Peter Bell the Third represents Shelley's longest attempt to imitate Don Juan's subjects and style. However, Don Juan's influence appears in other Shelley poems, as well as through his letters. As was also true in 1816, the strongest, most clear-cut evidence of Byron's influence did not appear immediately after Shelley first heard Don Juan. After Peter Bell (1819), echoes of Byron's "epic" appear in various Shelley poems.

Shelley chose Byron's meter for The Witch of Atlas (1820). The tone and language of Shelley's Witch are truly his own, but brief passages perhaps echo Byron's work. Shelley's Dedication picks up a favorite source of fun in Byron that Shelley also mentioned in Peter Bell. Both poets make fun of the length of time that Wordsworth claimed he spent laboring over some poems, and they oppose the more spontaneous quality of their own work to "the over-busy gardener's blundering toil" (Witch, "To Mary," iv). Thus Shelley suggests that his Witch surpasses Wordsworth's Peter Bell, although her creation was much faster (three days versus nineteen years). Like Byron, he defends himself in advance from criticism about his carelessness, suggesting that Wordsworth's laborious approach kills beauty. Besides, Byron and

Shelley claim to deal with slighter subjects---although they lightly suggest that their own work is equally moral. Thus Byron insists that Don Juan is indeed "a moral tale, though gay," regardless of who asserts the contrary (I, ccvii-viii). Shelley likewise claims that there is more to his Witch than meets the eye: unlike Wordsworth's Peter Bell, "If you unveil my witch, no priest nor primate/ Can shrive you of that sin,---if sin there be/ In love when it becomes idolatry."

The body of Shelley's poem contains a slight echo of Don Juan's similes on the beauties of Cadiz. Byron writes, these lovely women resemble, "An Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb/ New broke, a camelopard, a gazelle,/ No, none of these will do. . ." (II, vi). The Witch has related worshippers: "And first the spotted cameleopard came,/ And then the wise and fearless elephant. . ." (vi). There is very little similarity between these two passages, but it will serve as a random illustration of the poets' radical difference in approach. Byron's purely human Spaniards possess a natural grace that he claims is superior to his powers of verse; the description exists for its own sake and Byron then drops the subject. Shelley's beauty possesses powers that extend beyond mortal limits: "The magic circle of her voice and eyes/ All savage natures did imparadise" (vii). At this point Shelley diverges from Don Juan in a typical fashion, attempting to portray a realm beyond the human limitations

that most of Byron's works deal with. David Rubin notes that Shelley's perspective in the Witch radically affects its tone. "This is not the mortal eye confounded by a glimpse of immortality, but rather the immortal eye calmly contemplating the plight of mortality" (p. 216).¹¹

Elsewhere, Shelley regarded human problems from a more limited perspective. Human impotence formed the subject of a passage in Don Juan that Shelley admired, even as he condemned it, the shipwreck episode in Canto II. He wrote to Byron, "What a strange and terrible storm is that at sea, and the two fathers, how true, yet how strong a contrast! Dante hardly exceeds it" (May 26, 1820). "A Vision of the Sea" seems Shelley's failed attempt to overcome the negative aspects in Byron's picture.

Both men favor the traditional shipwreck metaphor throughout their careers. Byron, in particular, dwelt on how Nature's force runs counter to human moral judgments (e.g., the passage from Manfred, II, iii, cited previously). But surely his portrayal of human and natural savagery in Canto II of Don Juan represents the ultimate in pessimism. In Prometheus Unbound Shelley reacted to the shipwreck sung of by a spirit in Byron's Manfred and attempted to soften it (discussed above, p. 98). A year later Shelley reacted to the harsher episode in Don Juan. "A Vision of the Sea" appears as a fragment, its last line inconclusively reading, "Whilst---." But Shelley chose to publish it in the volume

with Prometheus Unbound, rather than leaving it in a notebook to complete later. Consequently, the ending looks deliberate, as if he would involve the reader at this point rather than choosing between two endings himself---giving us a "lady or the tiger" ending instead of committing himself by either having the woman and babe drown or live. Even if the ending was less deliberate than it seems, Shelley's inability to "correct" Byron's version indicates a new, transitional phase in his reaction to the cosmic pessimism of Byron's poetry.

Don Juan's shipwreck focuses on two matters---the unfeeling cruelty of Nature (or, at least, her lack of response to human needs) and the fundamental bestiality of most men when their survival is threatened. Shelley borrows enough from Byron to demonstrate that he was reacting to this scene, and yet he deliberately omits the unbecoming human deeds and instead focuses on the relationship between Nature and a lovely woman who wishes to save her child. We never learn whether they perish, like the sickly son in Don Juan, II, 89-90, or whether they survive.

Shelley rarely used certain images that appear here. Their scarcity shows how alien this poem is to much of his work. He does not ordinarily choose beasts of prey, for instance. According to F. S. Ellis' concordance, tigers, leopards, and lions occur rarely. Where they do appear,

they often relate to the Actaeon myth and thus represent something other than mere natural savagery. Sharks are even rarer, only occurring in three Shelley poems. Significantly, the earliest ("Similes for Two Political Characters of 1819") dates from the year of Don Juan, II; the others appear in 1820 (the poem under discussion and "Arethusa"). Such creatures personify Nature's cruelty, which Shelley regularly attempted to soften.

What Shelley wants to say about Nature in this poem is clear; but he is too honest to deny the inconvenient facts. Clearly the child is in a state of innocence. He perceives what Nature does, but he is unaware of the power or the danger; he expresses amusement at the storm, the tigers, and the sea. The woman recognizes the dangers and fears their consequences for her child. Doubtless, Shelley would like to vindicate the child's faith, but he cannot; he acknowledges that the mother's fear is justified. He would also like to give a satisfying answer to the woman's frightened question as she expects to drown with her child: "Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we, / That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?" (ll. 82-83).

Shelley's poem borrows much from Byron's description of the shipwreck, although Shelley adds two of his own characters. As in Don Juan, Nature appears at her most malicious, whether or not she acts deliberately. The storm following a calm is the unique combination of circumstances likely to

be most destructive, as was the opposite order in Byron's poem. As the living beings aboard the ship try to save themselves, events frustrate all, which causes us to echo the lady's question. After all other humans perish, Shelley poses the same problem at a different level in the struggle between the tiger and the sea-snake. Whichever animal wins, the ultimate victor is the shark, who will become "the fin-winged tomb of the victor." Thus, the admirable struggle seems futile. One tiger swims for the shore, but just as he approaches it the boatmen shoot him; this resembles the shark's carrying off Don Juan's companion when he thought he was safe (II, ci). Thus, destructive power permeates both works. It is difficult to imagine under what circumstances Shelley could save his heroine and the child.

Shelley does not often portray Nature in these terms, although Byron frequently does. This need not mean Shelley was unaware that nature and man do not always cooperate; he clearly shows, in numerous poems, that he recognized the lack of harmony.¹² Shelley is actually more skeptical than Byron. While Byron persistently stacks the deck so that he can expose Nature's unfeeling malice, Shelley is more likely to portray her amorality, leaving the question of purpose open. However, in "A Vision of the Sea" he clearly attempted a change, and he was not able to end his correction of Byron in the manner he desired.

Byron's influence likewise glimmers here and there in the materials associated with Epipsychidion. Taking imagery used by Byron in Cain, a draft of Shelley's Preface echoes the painful lesson, "The tree of knowledge is not that of Life." Epipsychidion clearly posed some difficulties for Shelley. Wasserman points out the considerable difference between the tone of Shelley's first draft and the final version (Critical). As Wasserman indicates, the early attempt shows that Shelley first thought of adopting a lighthearted, Byronic stance toward his subject and only later developed his subject more seriously. Although Shakespeare's sonnets and other literary sources affected Shelley's draft treatment, Don Juan clearly had a more profound effect on the first opening. Several of the rhymes show a similarly comic aspiration, although they rarely succeed completely.

More significant than the rhymes, Shelley attempted to imitate the character of Don Juan's narrator, treating similar subjects in the same ways. Thus, he seconds Byron's expressed views of critics and, in humorous defiance of the moralists, asserts that he will enjoy this life even if it endangers his afterlife: "I'll pawn/ My hopes of Heaven--- you know what they are worth. . ."

Shelley also attempts Byron's abrupt changes of mood. After rhapsodizing for some dozen lines on the joys of friendship, he laments, "If I had but a friend!" Rather than continuing in this mournful fashion, he immediately undercuts

the complaint: "Why I have three. . ." The subsequent lines clumsily attempt lightness. Acknowledging his awkwardness, Shelley admits, "My muse has lost her wings," and forges onward a few more lines before giving up this attempt.

Before the fragment ends, the Byronic attempt fizzles. If one analyzes where Byron's signature lies heaviest, the reason seems clear. Don Juan's prevalent mode is most suited for poetry that good-naturedly acknowledges the limitations and ambiguities of human life. When this is Shelley's subject, he attempts Byron's mode, with varying degrees of success. For instance, when he acknowledges that the poem's subject is an imperfect human, he attempts this tone briefly, but two subjects interfere---other persons who interrupt their relationship, and speculations about human life and the meaning of love. The lighthearted, Byronic opening makes its last attempt with the "spirit," "near it" rhyme and then collapses, as both tone and subject veer in another direction.

From Epipsychidion's drafts, it seems clear that once more Shelley began with a fairly strong Byronic influence, found his own voice, and developed his own subjects in his own manner. However, in Epipsychidion, unlike Julian and Maddalo, Peter Bell the Third, and other previous works, Shelley discarded most of the evidence for Byronic influence before the final version opens. In Epipsychidion he again

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seems to react against Byron's assertions of human limitations. Again, he acknowledges that his own hopes to the contrary may be illusory; but he plainly feels his stance is more productive than the more Byronic one with which he began the draft. In Epipsychidion, unlike his earlier works, Byron's influence started Shelley on a poem, but Shelley assumed his own voice from the beginning of the final version, effacing Byron's.

Hellas contains many Byronic echoes, but the majority of them display a filial relationship with works other than Don Juan. The spirit of the whole, of course, corresponds with Byron's hopes for eventual Greek freedom, as expressed in Childe Harold, the Oriental tales, the "Isles of Greece" lyric in Don Juan, and elsewhere. Hassan's description of defeat briefly recalls Don Juan's shipwreck scene, as Shelley writes of the victims' last moments, followed by "the dogfish hastening to their feast" (l. 522). But Don Juan's method is not central to this work, although Byron's influence is greater than appears here. In Hellas, Shelley unequivocally accepts the fact that life is ambivalent, that one can never know what is truly real. As Ahasuerus says:

What thou see'st
Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream.
A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that
Thou call'st reality. . . (ll. 841-44)

Yet, even as Shelley admits his fears for the future, he closes by expressing a limited hope for positive change: "The world is weary of the past, / Oh, might it die or rest at last!"¹³

Joseph Raben exposes "The Boat on the Serchio" as a disjointed series of fragments Mary so garbled that Robert Browning could conclude Shelley would have converted to Christianity eventually. Still, portions of it show Byron and Shelley's relationship. Not only is Melchior's language Byronic; the exchange between the men parallels Byron's method. In Don Juan the narrator would have assumed both roles, first indulging in a daydream and then pricking his own bubbles. Thus Byron skips from Juan's heartrending farewell to Spain and the Spanish coast to seasickness. Shelley uses the same method and the same technique of interrupting a "digression" with a return to reality; but he uses two characters to accomplish this.

This difference in technique relates to a basic contrast between their approaches. Shelley and Byron were both aware of the contradictions that human life exposes. In one work Byron tended to treat both aspects of the conflict simultaneously. Shelley preferred to separate the two, now elaborating upon one, treating the other in a second poem. Shelley's preference has resulted in more misreadings, because many readers assume that Shelley's stance as an individual corresponded completely at any given time to what a particular poem or passage expresses. In fact, Shelley's skepticism runs through his works, early and late. He never produced a Don Juan, where balanced contrasts dominate the structure.

Instead, it was more characteristic of his artistic goals to work simultaneously on separate works that offer opposite views of human life---Prometheus Unbound and The Cenci, for instance.

Chapter V. SHELLEY'S LATEST WORKS

In Shelley's early Italian works, those that show significant Byronic influence generally follow a set pattern: Shelley begins with ideas and phrasing from his source. As his work proceeds it shows his reaction to and correction of Byron's position. As this occurs, the number of Byronic echoes diminishes, and Shelley's own voice dominates the later position and wording. In the poems of Shelley's last two years, this pattern of development disappears.

Instead, Shelley's late poems show that Shelley mined Byron as a source of felicitous phrases, when Byron's expressions fit the needs of his own work. Shelley seems to depend on Byron much less as a source of either inspiration or structure. Some widely mocked lines by Shelley can illustrate the difference. In his "Ode to the West Wind" Shelley asks:

Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
.
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

These lines bear an obvious affinity to one of his favorite Byronic sources:

Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted,---they have torn me,---and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from
such a seed.
(Childe Harold, IV, x)

Obviously, the authors projected different self-images in their lines. While Byron asserts and accepts his own guilt, Shelley passively awaits assistance and implies that his pain results from external causes.

This borrowed image reverses the approach that Shelley developed in earlier works. A Julian and Maddalo would expand Byron's own ideas to contradict the original Byronic assertion of human impotence. But where Shelley formerly encouraged his readers with declarations that human capacities equalled the power of human will, he is now the passive individual who needs outside encouragement; Byron is the individual with greater self-reliance and less self-pity.¹

This is not to suggest that Shelley suddenly changed from a blithe optimist to a passive, weak pessimist. In reality, his position shows relatively little change. The ideas that his works express demonstrate that, early and late, he remained skeptical about actual human improvement. Alastor, The Revolt of Islam, even Prometheus Unbound, illustrate how difficult and improbable individual and social amelioration can be, as surely as do Shelley's later works. The philosophical position alters little; what changes is the tone. Shelley's earlier choice to impose a positive emphasis upon his material decreases. Alastor illustrates the self-centered waste of a life; the Preface implies that Shelley designed this dark picture as "instruction to actual

men" of his belief that "those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave." However little the poem itself convinces a reader of this, Shelley repeated the moral in his Preface to The Cenci. Although by 1819 he asserts, "There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose," he continues:

The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind.

By 1822 such didactic attempts waver. The bulk of Shelley's last poetry is as dark as Alastor or The Cenci would be without their prefaces. Alastor is an anomaly among Shelley's early works, virtually the only poem that ends without hope. While The Revolt of Islam ends with society murdering its protagonists, it portrays their temporary triumph first, and the work's frame implies that eventually men will evolve to the state where they can sustain the triumph. The first canto informs the reader that, from the vantage-point of history, Laon and Cythna's efforts are part of an immortal power for good. Prometheus Unbound portrays the triumph of good, even though it also acknowledges that such victories are rare, difficult, and perhaps temporary as well. The "Ode to the West Wind," published with Prometheus Unbound, portrays the same suspended hope, although it is

more tentative: Shelley summarizes his hopes and asks if hope is valid, rather than closing with an assertion.

The victories become less glorious in Shelley's last poetry, and perhaps this explains on one level why Shelley used Byron less frequently. In 1818 and 1819 Shelley frequently gained inspiration for his own work by exorcising the darkness in Byron's poetry. As he came increasingly to express Byron's views, Byron inspired less reaction. As his own verse grew more pessimistic, perhaps he found that he reacted less to Byron's negative pronouncements, while he simultaneously found forms of his own to express the less hopeful emotions. At any rate, Shelley's poems of 1821-1822 show a marked decrease in Byronic influence. Where there are numerous links between Byron's works and Julian and Maddalo (1818) or Prometheus Unbound (1818-1819) or Peter Bell the Third (1819), Byron's works play virtually no role in The Witch of Atlas (1820), Adonais (1821), or The Triumph of Life (unfinished at Shelley's death in 1822).

Shelley continues to show that he knew his Byron, by occasional quotations or by direct reference to Lord Byron. But Shelley's last works no longer react directly to recent Byron works; instead, occasionally Shelley echoes phrases from earlier works, that he probably had not read for some time. Such usage, although it shows less influence, attests that several passages impressed Shelley deeply.

Shelley borrows from Childe Harold more than any other of Byron's poems. He prefaces the 1820 Ode to Liberty with lines from Canto IV, xcvi: "Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying,/ Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind." Ginevra (1821) uses material from the same work. Shelley describes the wedding feast in terms that recall Byron's celebrated stanzas on Waterloo.

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
 And in the lighted hall the guests are met;
 The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
 Of love, and admiration, and delight
 Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes,
 Kindling a momentary Paradise.

.
 How many meet, who never yet have met,
 To part too soon, but never to forget.
 How many saw the beauty, power and wit
 Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet;
 As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,
 And unprophetic of the coming hours,
 The matin winds. . .

.
 As if the future and the past were all
 Treasured i' the instant. . .

(Ginevra, ll. 106-11, 118-25,
 130-31)

Byron's doom is more immediate.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
 And Belgium's capital had gathered then
 Her beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
 The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men:
 A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
 Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
 And all went merry as a marriage-bell;---

But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a
 rising knell!

(Childe Harold, III, xxi)

Byron then proceeds to describe the rapid arming, after sad partings, then he moves to the battle-field to wonder at the

sudden changes that death wreaks.

Toward the close of Childe Harold the narrator wishes, "Oh, that the Desert were my dwelling-place,/ With one fair Spirit for my minister. . ." (IV, clxxvii). When the author of Epipsychidion (1821) invites Emily to flee society with him, his is less a desert; it includes "some pastoral people native there," relics of the Golden Age who still inhabit the island. Still, Shelley's description parallels Byron's earlier one, as well as recalling a description in The Giaour of the Edenic Greek islands, on which human pirates intruded:

And every charm and grace hath [Nature] mix'd
Within the paradise she fixed,
There man, enamour'd of distress,
Should mar it into wilderness. . .
(The Giaour, ll. 48-51)

So wrote young Byron. Shelley's ideal spot resembles this picture. Also Greek,

It is an isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
This land would have remained a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there.
(Epipsychidion, 422-26)

Byron's descriptions of Greece resemble this, be they in Childe Harold, an Oriental tale, or Don Juan. But even if Byron directly influenced Shelley's passage, Epipsychidion shows significantly less Byronic influence than earlier works. Even a close parallel between Shelley's lines and some of Byron's reflects less reliance on the older poet than occurred when an earlier Shelley poem reflected Byron in its

structure as well as in phrasing.

The final appearance of Epipsychidion may be deceptive, however. Cancelled passages reveal that when Shelley began to write, he sought a courtly-ironic tone similar to Byron's in Don Juan.² Later he obviously realized that such a tone clashed with what he chose to express. Consequently, the final version appears before us in an entirely different mode, one that owes little, if anything, to Don Juan. And yet, had this style not moved him, Shelley might not have begun Epipsychidion at all. Byron's work did indeed affect Shelley's, but indirectly and in ways that we can only guess. As we do not know what passed through Shelley's mind before he committed his various works to paper, what he and Byron discussed in every conversation, or how many Epipsychidion-like beginnings may be lost to us, it is possible that Byron's work continued to influence Shelley's poetic output in ways that we do not know. At the utmost, though, all that we can say is that by attempting Byron's style Shelley learned that it was inappropriate to Epipsychidion, and he then devised a poem that satisfied him more fully, abandoning the Byronic mode.

Adonais likewise contains Byronic echoes; here, too, they affect the poem less radically than one might expect. The final poem may reflect a deceptively low level of influence: This poem, too, may owe more of its inspiration to Byron than seems apparent at first glance.

Where Byron once affected the pattern, he now more frequently appears as a mere verbal echo. This increasing independence parallels Byron's own use of Shelley. Late in their careers both poets relied increasingly on their own voices, which they had developed into distinctive vehicles. Still, when convenient and appropriate, they also borrowed appealing material from various sources, including each other. Biographical considerations complicate the picture in the case of Byron and Shelley. Basically, from 1820 until the end there is evidence of various kinds of influence and interaction, but Shelley's poetry shows decreasing reaction to Byron.

In 1820 Shelley's reputation as a poet remained insignificant beside Byron's, but by this date he was no longer the apprentice poet of 1816. During the intervening years he produced The Revolt of Islam, Prometheus Unbound, and The Cenci, plus numerous less ambitious works and experiments in various modes. While Shelley continued to esteem Byron's poetry more than his own, his letters and his own work reveal that he came increasingly to develop his own distinctive style, even as he realized that his works might never sell. He wrote Peacock:

In my accounts of pictures & things I am more pleased to interest you than the many: & this is fortunate, because in the 1st place I have no idea of attempting the latter, & if I did attempt it I shd. assuredly fail. A perception of the beautiful characterizes those who differ

from ordinary men; & those who can perceive it
would not buy enough to pay the printer.

(letter of January 23-24, 1819)

He expresses the same independence of popular opinion when he tells Ollier, "I believe that the truth is, I write less for the public than for myself" (September 6, 1819).

Even as Shelley's awe of Byron's powers grew, his own style became increasingly distinctive. His self-assertion produced as a side effect a tendency to "mine" Byron only occasionally. Instead of reacting to a Byronic work or attitude and using his poem to correct it, Shelley began with what he himself chose; Byron appeared only when convenient. Byron's effect thus became casual, not radical, the source of effects rather than of poems.

At this point, for the first time, the two men can meet almost as equals,³ and it becomes profitable to focus on interrelationships. Both men's works begin to show occasional sharing. Occasionally one can only guess which poet was the source of material that both use, or whether both men arrived at the same point independently.

For instance, a scene in Werner (1822) resembles one in Charles I (1818, 1822). Byron and Shelley both lived in Pisa and saw one another frequently between November 1821 and April 1822. For this reason, there is less written evidence than usual on which works Byron and Shelley shared with one another before completion or publication. Neither Werner nor Charles I stands as a finished piece, and it is possible

that neither poet ever saw the other's work. Still, two scenes are remarkably similar. Shelley's scene occurs after a masque at the Inns of Court and portrays the reactions of two citizens and a youth to the festivities. In this scene and Byron's the masque occurs off-stage and the characters' reactions reflect other conditions as well. The Youth's reaction is simplest in Shelley's version: "Yet, father, 'tis a happy sight to see,/ Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden/ By God or man;---'tis like the bright procession/ Of skiey visions in a solemn dream/ From which men wake as from a Paradise. . ." (scene I, ll. 15-19). The Second Citizen responds, "How young art thou in this old age of time!/ How green in this gray world," and both adults reveal that current political and religious questions affected their reactions to the same masque. Byron's scene is less historical and more psychological (as befits his subject). But here also a play contrasts reactions of persons who possess different degrees of sophistication. Byron's scene also, like Shelley's, emphasizes that the play was an interlude in the main flow of events. His characters are women, separated (like Shelley's men) by a generation of living. Josephine thanks Heaven that the play is finally over. Young Ida, on the other hand, returns to the earth with a jolt, having partaken of the illusion. She responds to Josephine's relief at returning to real life: "How can you say so! never have I dreamt/

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Of aught so beautiful. . . .and the celestial hymns,/ Which seem'd as if they rather came from heaven/ Than mounted therethe world/ At peace! and all at peace with one another!" (V, i, 18-26). Whether the germ of the scene rested in something that both poets read, or a discussion that both men participated in, or a scene that one man created and the other copied is difficult to say,⁴ but both poets chose to portray illusion's charm and power in the same manner at the same time.

Byron's Preface to The Prophecy of Dante (1819) claims that this work is the first in English to use terza rima, "except it may be by Mr. Hayley, of whose translation I never saw but one extract." And yet Shelley had attempted the rhyme scheme as early as 1817 (the fragments of "Prince Athanase"). Raben points out that in 1818 Shelley translated passages from Virgil's pastorals into terza rima. Byron may have known of Shelley's translations, or he may not; at any rate, he clearly believed that he was the first English poet to use it in an original work. Byron and Shelley evidently discovered the same form independently. Upon arrival in Italy, each man began reading the great literature of that country, and understandably they both responded favorably to the same material. This may have occurred with Tasso. Byron used it first, but both men studied Tasso's work and the history of his life and time. Before the Shelleys even left England for

Italy, Byron wrote and Shelley read The Lament of Tasso, a poem using biographical material that also appealed to Shelley.⁵ By April of the next year Shelley projected a play on the same subject. We will probably never know how strongly Byron's example influenced the choice. Shelley only left a few fragments of that work, but he evidently reworked other pieces of it and fitted them into Julian and Maddalo (See Matthews' articles on this).

Throughout his career Byron's poems demonstrate that history moved him strongly. Childe Harold and subsequent works reveal that he habitually responded directly and personally to historical events. Similar material had less appeal to Shelley, who earlier wrote (with a book order) to Hookham:

I am determined to apply myself to a study that is hateful & disgusting to my very soul, but which is above all studies necessary for him who would be listened to as a mender of antiquated abuses.---I mean that record of crimes & miseries---History.⁶

(December 17, 1812)

In 1812, Shelley clearly had his doubts about Godwin's advice to study history, as he especially requested that Hookham purchase all of the histories in "the cheapest possible editions. With respect to metaphysical works I am less scrupulous about price"(December 17, 1812). Subsequent study plainly did not change his evaluation of the discipline: Queen Mab and many of his later works as well use history as if it were a mere catalog of atrocities and of human

suffering. The Cenci is his only complete work where Shelley claims that he attempted to recreate actual long-past events. Significantly, this was the only major effort that Shelley detached from the body of his works by labeling it a piece designed for popular success.⁷

Byron, on the other hand, had attempted to recreate historical events from Childe Harold onward, and his feeling for history animates passages that appear through his career. Perhaps his example influenced Shelley, when Shelley himself sought a popular success. It is also possible that Shelley earlier chose Tasso as a subject so that he could challenge Lord Byron in an area where he felt Byron's success was limited. But, at the same time, it is obvious that upon settling in Italy both men independently brushed up their knowledge of the history and literature of that country, both in Latin and Italian. Had Byron never written about Tasso, the mistreatment of a great poet by a tyrant would doubtless still have appealed strongly to Shelley.

In Sardanapalus (May 1821), Byron drew one of his most complex female characters, Myrrha, a free-born Greek, now a slave who must struggle with her love for an effete tyrant. Shelley evidently admired this creation, for he paid Byron the compliment of borrowing from her. While his Indian Maid in Hellas (fall 1821) is a simple, pallid character next to Byron's heroine, her scene bears an obvious affinity to one

in Byron's drama. In Act IV, as Sardanapalus sleeps, Myrrha watches over him, asking that somehow he receive the boon of peaceful slumber. The Indian slave of Hellas expresses the same wish for her beloved, in the same terms. Both women hang lovingly over a tyrant's slumber, and both tyrants wake from bad dreams, after the women express their loving concern. Myrrha's speech is briefer, but she already has had three acts to define her feelings for Sardanapalus. In this scene she appears to wake him, regrets that she must, and sorrows that his sleep is so convulsive, rather than being calmer rest, closely resembling death. The Indian likewise wishes that Mahmud's sleep could be "soft as love, and calm as death" (l. 11). Shortly after, each tyrant wakes, still believing that his nightmare is true. From there the scenes diverge.

In this case, Byron is the source, since he finished Sardanapalus before Shelley began Hellas. Shelley's Preface acknowledges that Hellas is not purely original, but the source that he acknowledges is Aeschylus' The Persae. While he doubtless owes something to the Greek,⁸ his opening scene owes still more to Byron. The chorus of Greek captives may imitate Aeschylus, but Shelley lessens its role by introducing the Indian. Even the Chorus' love for liberty and nation could come from Byron. However, where Byron combined in Myrrha the conflicting emotions of love, patriotism, and desire for liberty, Shelley simplified by having the Indian

express love, while his Greeks express the other emotions.

Sardanapalus demonstrates that Shelley could be a lender as well as a borrower. While Byron's scene lies behind Hellas' opening, Sardanapalus likewise borrowed a scene from Shelley. Myrrha and Sardanapalus realize that political defeat is inevitable, and to avoid capitulation they first build then ignite their own funeral pyre. This finish strikingly resembles the death of Laon and Cythna in The Revolt of Islam, as well as echoing the decadent urge of Count Cenci to destroy his family, and then as his last act:

When all is done, out in the wide Campagna,
I will pile up my silver and my gold;
My costly robes, paintings and tapestries;
My parchments and all records of my wealth,
And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave
Of my possessions nothing but my name;
Which shall be an inheritance to strip
Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,
My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign
Into the hands of him who wielded it.

(The Cenci, IV, i, 55-64)

Both these scenes, that which Shelley borrowed and that which Byron borrowed, demonstrate the independence of both men. Although the debts both occur at critical points (beginning and end), neither slavishly copies his source. Instead, each man adapted the source freely to his own purposes. Sardanapalus' personality more directly causes his fate; he is consequently less a passive victim than Laon. Shelley's Indian appears for only one brief scene, then her role evaporates, unlike Myrrha, whose conflict frames

Byron's play. In each case the differences are characteristic of the author, and they fit the needs of their plays.

Byron's influence on Shelley after 1820 was greater than these few isolated borrowings might indicate. Anyone who reads the two poets' letters can readily see that Shelley's involvement with Lord Byron was far deeper than I have suggested so far, while Byron showed considerably less interest in Shelley. There are also bits and pieces of poetry where Byron becomes the subject rather than a source for Shelley's own work. Taken together, as discussed below, this material hints that Shelley became obsessed with Byron's poetic gifts and his own shortcomings. Shelley found his relationship with Byron increasingly odious for personal and poetic reasons. These problems, combined with the necessity of maintaining superficially friendly intercourse with Byron, plus his own frustration over being unappreciated as a poet increasingly occupied Shelley's energy during his last years.

Had Shelley's finances enabled him to support Claire, Allegra, and the Hunts, his relationship with Byron would doubtless have been more pleasant. His letters to Claire and the Hunts reveal growing dissatisfaction with Byron as a man, combined with acceptance of the fact that to help his friends he must continue to see Byron. Shelley was painfully aware of his inferior financial position, and he resented the fact that to support his friends he had to accept a subordinate position in his relationship with Byron, because of

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the fateful disparity between their incomes. From the time the Shelleys left Switzerland for England in 1816, Shelley's letters to Byron express his regrets at having to mediate between Byron and Claire. As he wrote Byron in May of 1820:

It would give me the greatest pleasure to come into your part of the world and see you in any other character than as the mediator, or rather the interpreter, of a dispute. At all events we shall meet some day in London, I hope auspicio meliore. (May 26, 1820)

When the Hunts decided to join Byron in Italy and produce the ill-fated Liberal, Shelley's position became even more painful. On March 2, 1822, he wrote confidentially to Hunt, who was preparing to leave England:

Particular circumstances,---or rather I should say, particular dispositions in Lord B's character render the close & exclusive intimacy with him in which I find myself, intolerable to me; thus much my best friend I will confess & confide to you,---No feelings of my own however shall injure or interfere with what is ever nearest to them---your interest, & I will take care to preserve the little influence I may have over this Proteus in whom such strange extremes are reconciled until we meet.

An earlier letter to Mary explains some of Shelley's complex reasons for these feelings. In the same pages that contain the famous praise of Don Juan where Shelley penned the words, "I despair of rivalling Lord Byron," he moves to a discussion of his awkward relationship with Byron. After praising Don Juan, telling Mary that Murray bought Byron's Life for two thousand pounds, and bringing up the Hunts' need for money, he continues:

Lord Byron & I are excellent friends, & were I reduced to poverty, or were I a writer who had no claims to a higher station than I possess (sic)--- or did I possess a higher than I deserve, we should appear in all things as such, & I would freely ask him any favour. Such is not now the case---The demon of mistrust & of pride lurks between two persons in our situation poisoning the freedom of their intercourse.---This is a tax and a heavy one which we must pay for being human---I think the fault is not on my side; nor is it likely, I being the weaker. I hope that in the next world these things will be better managed.

(August 8, 1821)

In short, Shelley reacted to Byron on many levels: as a great poet, as a social equal, as a moral or immoral human being, as a wealthy man, as a wrong thinker. The complexity of this relationship explains much of the seeming inconsistency that Shelley's letters express. He simultaneously admired and deplored different aspects of the Byron he knew. A verse fragment that Shelley wrote well before 1821 expresses some of Shelley's ambivalence: "O Mighty mind, in whose deep stream this age/ Shakes like a reed in the unheeding storm,/ Why dost thou curb not thine own sacred rage?" (attributed to 1818). Here we see both the awe of Byron's powers, that Shelley's letters so often expresses, and Shelley's criticism of his human limitations, which Shelley frequently experienced.

In 1821 the poet Shelley used Byron directly as a subject three times. All three cases, showing different aspects of their relationship, are more interesting for their biographical significance than as poetry. Byron appears in his most public role in Adonais, xxx, where his major purpose is to

lend authority: if the chief poet of the day mourns Adonais' loss, surely it is a grievous one.⁹

The fragments that we know as "The Boat on the Serchio" show a more personal relationship. The lines treat a conversation and the preparations for an outing combining a picnic and a day of sailing. As in Julian and Maddalo, the persona who represents Shelley begins with high-flown fancies (more playful here than before), that Byron pricks. In this case, he "impatiently" uses language appropriate to Don Juan to mock Shelley's fantasies on what the boat imagines. But contrasting views do not become the poem's subject, as in Julian and Maddalo. Instead, Byron/Melchior agrees to play Shelley's game and the poem then moves to other matters. Although Melchior previously dismissed Lionel's speculations on the boat's thoughts, he joins in:

Weaving his idle words, Melchior said:
'She dreams that we are not yet out of bed;
We'll put a soul into her, and a heart
Which like a dove chased by a dove shall beat.'
(ll. 69-72)

Shelley proceeds with the preparations for a picnic that recalls carefree schoolboy escapades. Melchior reappears to "steady" Lionel in navigation, which he effects without breaking the cheerful mood. These poetic fragments demonstrate that Shelley could still enjoy Byron's society this late in their relationship despite the generally unfavorable reactions to Byron in his letters of the time. However, we should recognize that this poetic depiction is far simpler

than the relationship that Shelley's letters discuss: no awkward financial or third-party problems intervene, and the men forget their unequal statures as poets in their enjoyment of the water.

Another piece illustrates Shelley's feelings of inferiority at its starkest. The "Sonnet to Byron" attempts to deal with his own inadequacy as a poet when Shelley compares his own poetry with Byron's accomplishments. The sonnet develops analogies between Byron and God, and between Shelley and a worm. Byron possesses powers so great that his works "rise as fast and fair/ As perfect worlds at the Creator's will." Shelley abjectly feels his inferiority, to the extent that he plays only a passive role. He does not portray himself as a creator at all; rather, he is "like a worm whose life may share/ A portion of the unapproachable" when he appreciates Byron's works. The utmost luxury that such an inferior being can allow himself is to "lift itself in homage of the God"---the purpose of the sonnet.

Shelley managed to make this sonnet more moving than the summary implies. In addition to expressing acceptance of his own inferiority, the poem is a partially successful attempt to overcome his own envy of Lord Byron's powers. Shelley opens with the admission that his esteem for Byron just barely prevents envy from destroying his enjoyment of Byron's masterpieces. The poem claims that Shelley cares

so much for Byron that he can enjoy his triumphs without envying them. However, this assertion rings hollow, for the envy and regret fill an undue proportion of the poem. Shelley was too keenly aware of his own aspirations toward poetic fame to enjoy Byron's triumph in the face of his own failure. "The worm" clearly still suffered when he measured his own "unhonoured name" against Byron's attainments.

Toward the end of Byron and Shelley's association Shelley's feelings of poetic inferiority clearly poisoned their relationship on Shelley's side as definitely as did his financial inferiority and the continued necessity to intercede with Byron for friends' economic needs. Shelley's letters trace the complex changes in their relationship. Considering the circumstances of their association, it is amazing that Shelley succeeded in separating his evaluations of Byron's poetry and Byron's character as well as he did. Shelley was one of the few contemporaries who appreciated Don Juan for the reasons that recent generations enjoy it. He realized quickly that Byron's Marino Faliero was inferior to his other productions, and he feared lest Byron continue to pervert his talents. Shelley could separate poetic judgments from judgments of behavior. About the Italian play, he wrote to Mary:

We talked a great deal of poetry & such matters last night: & as usual differed & I think more than ever.---He affects to patronize a system

of criticism fit only for the production of mediocrity, & although all his fine poems & passages have been produced in defiance of this system: yet I recognize the pernicious effects of it in the "Doge of Venice", & it will cramp & limit his future efforts however great they may be unless he gets rid of it.

(letter of August 7, 1821)

Of course, Shelley's judgment did not accord entirely with posterity's. For understandable personal reasons, he seemed extravagantly fond of certain works---most significantly, Manfred and Cain.

Considering how strongly Shelley admired Cain and Don Juan, why are there so few Byronic echoes in his own last works? Many factors could have produced in Shelley a conscious effort to write "unbyronic" poetry. My previous discussion of Shelley and Don Juan brings up a major reason why he ceased to imitate that work: He decided that public mockery could not achieve the correction that satire claimed was its objective. Even had Shelley never reached this decision, however, there is another excuse, besides the most obvious of all (that Don Juan's mode might have been ungenial to him). Shelley knew that he never could compete with Byron. Furthermore, he knew that no one could. On October 29, 1820, he wrote to Marianne Hunt at some length on the subject of Byron's imitators:

Is not the vulgarity of these wretched imitations of Lord Byron carried to a pitch of the sublime?---

His indecencies too both against sexual nature & against human nature in general sit very awkwardly upon him. He only affects the libertine; he is really a very aimiable (sic), friendly & agreeable man I hear. But is this not monstrous? In Lord Byron all this has an analogy with the general system of his character, & the wit & poetry which surround, hide with their light the darkness of the thing itself. They contradict it even; they prove that the strength & beauty of human nature can survive & conquer all that appears most inconsistent with it. But for a writer to be at once filthy & dull---is a crime against gods men & columns.

Shelley's letters, when read chronologically, reveal a major shift in emphasis that seems to reflect Byron's effect on him. The letters of 1819 barely mention Byron; instead, they overflow with Shelley's interest in current politics and his own literary projects. The 1820 letters begin with Shelley's hopes for a popular success with The Cenci, and even after they are dashed, his projects continue to flow. Discouragement asserts itself toward the end of the year, especially in letters to Peacock and Ollier. He write his friend: "I am, speaking literarily, infirm of purpose. I have great designs, and feeble hopes of ever accomplishing them. . .To be sure, the reception the public have given me might [go] far enough to damp any man's enthusiasm. They teach you, it may be said, only what is true. Very true, I doubt not, and the more true the less agreeable" (November 8, 1820). He later informs his published, "I doubt whether I shall write more," attributing this to public indifference (January 20, 1821).

From the spring of 1821, his letters increasingly mention Byron, and after Shelley completes Adonais the letters hardly ever mention his own literary projects, while praise of Byron's works increases.¹⁰ Significantly, Shelley produced only one complete work of any length after Adonais; he wrote Hellas rapidly in the fall of 1821.¹¹ Some months later he wrote to John Gisborne about the two works:

Tell me how you like Hellas & give me your opinion freely. It was written without much care, in one of those few moments of enthusiasm which now seldom visit me, & which make me pay dear for their visits.---I know what to think of Adonais, but what to think of those who confound it with the many bad poems of the day, I know not.

(April 10, 1822)

Whether or not his obscurity as a poet is the direct cause of Shelley's declining production and of his more frequent praise of Byron, he repeatedly emphasizes both factors. In January, 1822, he confesses to Leigh Hunt: "My faculties are shaken to atoms & torpid. I can write nothing, & if Adonais had no success & excited no interest what incentive can I have to write?" (January 25, 1822).

In Shelley's 1822 productions his discouragement shows through clearly, especially in the fragment that we know as The Triumph of Life.¹² If one reads the lyrics of 1822, they seem atypical of Shelley's early work, especially in their lack of range when taken together. As late as 1821, Shelley's shorter works and fragments express a variety of

moods and treat a variety of subjects; in total, they seem the work of a man who retained a lively interest in the world about him. If one classifies only these short works, temporarily forgetting the longer ones, in 1821 Shelley's verse includes essays into narrative ("The Fugitives," "Ginevra"). He wrote on conventional, general poetic themes ("To Night," "Time," etc.); he imitated traditional forms (dirge, epithalamium); he tried a form new to him ("From the Arabic: An Imitation"). He also wrote verse epistles ("To Emilia Viviani," "To Edward Williams") and he responded to current political events ("Lines Written on Hearing the News of the Death of Napoleon"). "The Boat on the Serchio," whether intended as one poem or several, attempts an easy, conversational portrait of a lazy day. And, of course, Shelley produced works that we inadequately classify as "lyrical"---"Rarely, rarely comest thou," "The flower that smiles today," "I pant for the music which is divine," and others. I must also include two works that show Shelley's painful fears that he was not a true poet---the "Sonnet to Byron" (discussed above) and "The False Laurel and the True." In the latter the poet responds to a judge who classifies him as "one of the crowd. . .without a name" by sadly acknowledging that his critic is right.

Beside the variety of these lyrics, plus Epipsychidion, Adonais, Hellas, and various fragments, Shelley's 1822 works seem dark and sadly limited in subject and in scope, as well

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as seriously limited in number. Even compared with his least public works of earlier years, these seem surprisingly private. One can readily believe that Shelley meant the note on the wrapper of "The Magnetic Lady to Her Patient": "To Jane. Not to be opened unless you are alone, or with Williams."¹³ Unlike his earlier works of a similar type, here Shelley no longer sought a wider audience. Where he sought to modify Julian and Maddalo and Epipsychidion for public consumption and had them published, we have no evidence that he would have sent his 1822 lyrics to Ollier, or to any other publisher. Shelley's own unhappiness forms the chief subject of the 1822 works, and he seems careless of their effect beyond his audience of three.

The Triumph of Life may be an exception to these generalizations; perhaps when Shelley began he designed it for a wider audience. However, we will never know for sure what he might have made of it. As the poem stands, we receive a bleak picture indeed of human life. The dream-vision of Queen Mab and The Revolt of Islam still molds Shelley's poem, but this pageant yields no hope. In form and vision it seems closer to Dante's Inferno than to Shelley's earlier works. Whether consciously or not, Shelley's nightmare also seems closer to the spectre that affected Byron's stance, from before Childe Harold on through Don Juan. More than any other work, it seems to me that Shelley's Triumph resembles Cain, which Shelley lauded highly, at one point

calling it "apocalyptic. . . a revelation not before communicated to man" (letter of January 26, 1822). However, The Triumph of Life contains virtually no Byronic echoes, and it belongs to a genre that Shelley had favored from the beginning of his career.¹⁴ Furthermore, Shelley's poetry expressed this dark view from early in his career, as discussed earlier in this study. In Bostetter's view:

Withdrawal from society or the world is the end toward which most of the major poetry of Shelley moves. It provides the focal climactic image for his conception of the millennium in Prometheus Unbound, of love in Epipsychidion, or death in Adonais. It reveals that his psychological response to each of these was the same, and that in fact they tended to blur together in his mind. The endings of these poems have usually been taken as indications of his 'fundamental optimism,' but certainly they show a much more complex attitude for which 'optimism' is at best a shallow and misleading term. (Ventriloquists, p. 192)

Just where does Byron fit into all of this? It is not directly obvious that he had any effect on Shelley's last poetry. One could make a stronger argument that Byron had a negative influence---Byron's successes determined what types of poetry Shelley could no longer bear to attempt, lest Byron's efforts overshadow his own too greatly. Doubtless, one would oversimplify if he blamed Byron's burst of creativity for Shelley's declining output, but it does seem to be one significant factor.

Other than this negative development, Shelley's late poetry shows several other trends that Byron probably affected---although they are less demonstrable than parallels

between Manfred and Prometheus Unbound or between Don Juan and Peter Bell the Third. Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, and Prometheus Unbound are openly didactic; The Witch of Atlas, Epipsychidion, Adonais, Hellas, and surviving fragments of Charles I and The Triumph of Life are definitely not.

Shelley produced works prior to 1820 that did not preach (Alastor, "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," etc.), but this tendency was not dominant. Byron was always chary of sermons; he preferred to focus on characters and action. Perhaps his successes, ever before Shelley in his last years, encouraged Shelley to express fewer doctrines in verse.

Another major difference between Shelley's early and late poetry is the diction. He always utilized his extensive vocabulary, and he rarely wrote as informally as Byron. Yet the language of the late poetry differs from the early so greatly that it seems he consciously chose simpler words.¹⁵ Although Shelley continued to use rhymed stanzas, his late works demonstrate a masterly simplification. Compared with his early poetry, the rhymes obtrude less. His vocabulary changes from words of the artificial, preromantic "high" style to words more natural in the speech of an educated gentleman of his day. In short, his late diction approaches the type that Byron's example kept before his eyes. Lacking detailed, authoritative, chronological studies of both poets' diction, one cannot claim outright that Byron was the major

cause of this change in Shelley's verse, although it is possible.¹⁶

Ultimately, it is impossible to declare exactly how far Byron's influence affected Shelley's works. We know that Shelley respected Byron highly as a poet; we can see that Shelley's poetry developed greatly between the summer of 1816, when he met Byron, and his death in 1822. In some cases, Shelley's work directly echoes or parallels Byron's earlier productions; there we can definitely assert Byronic influence. But no one will ever be able to determine just how Shelley would have developed as a poet had Lord Byron never lived.

NOTES

Chapter I

1. In his doctoral dissertation Charles E. Robinson treats possible influences of the poets upon one another before their first meeting. Byron's fame virtually guaranteed that Shelley knew at least some of his works. This dissertation presents evidence that Byron also knew Shelley's works. Because Robinson has treated this material and because I feel that such influence was slight, I do not discuss it.
2. There is actually little evidence that Byron knew and reacted to all of Shelley's major works. Shelley's letters, Shelley biographies, and other sources indicate that he usually only showed Byron his later poems if Byron asked to see them---which did not always happen.
3. However, W. Paul Elledge, Robert F. Gleckner, Robert D. Hume, Michael K. Joseph, and Jerome J. McGann argue for reading Byron's works as a unit. Elledge, for instance, objects to dividing Byron's works into different phases and instead reads his work as a whole, as one man's effort "to reconcile the antithetical impulses of his being" (p. 8).
4. Critics from Byron's day to the present approach the biography and poetry simultaneously. Claude M. Fuess, G. Wilson Knight, and Jerome J. McGann, among others, discuss the reason for this at some length. In Byron and Shakespeare, Knight tries to explain why Byron's poetry and his life so often appear in the same discussions: "Any of his greater poems can, like all poetry, be read in and as itself alone; but if we choose to relate it to his life there is no danger whatsoever of reducing it to a lower order since his life exists in the poetic dimension, and is itself poetically authoritative" (pp. 17-18).
5. In Gleckner's words, "The ruin is at once the reminder of past greatness, glory, even a kind of Eden on earth, and an assertion, all the more powerful for its immortal associations, that the paradisiacal past is irretrievable" (p. 31). In the same sense, many of Byron's protagonists are themselves human ruins.

Such figures in the landscape abound. See nearly any travel book from the period, as well as painted

landscapes. A random example is Batty Langley's "View of Ruins after the Old Roman Manner. . ." from his New Principles of Gardening (1728). Overgrown ruin, sky, plain, and ridge dominate the print. Human figures exist, but they are minute in the scale of the whole.

6. Michael G. Cooke recognizes this strain in Byron: "Byron goes beyond Coleridge and Wordsworth in recognizing the will, the individual's conscious deeds, as thwarting the potential reconciliation between man and nature, man and his existence in altering time. This recognition constitutes a special contribution to the philosophy of the romantic lyric, or indeed to romantic philosophy."

7. This is a major contention of the introductory chapter, subtitled "Feeling as He Writes: The Genesis of the Myth." The balance of Fiery Dust traces the inclination through later works.

8. quoted from letter of June 22, 1821. His letters to Ollier (June 11) and Leigh Hunt (June 22) object to republication on the same grounds. Here he writes to Hunt: "I have not seen this production for several years; I doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the cause of freedom." Shelley repeats this idea in June 16 letters to John Gisborne and Claire Clairmont.

It is important to recognize that, had Shelley lived, we would not know some of the lines that we now attribute to him. As G. M. Matthews (1969) points out, much of Shelley's reputation for shoddiness comes from fragments that Mary pieced together after his death: "Mary Shelley was right to print what she could find, but it meant salvaging the equivalents of doodlings on the telephone-pad" (p. 198).

Of course, Shelley wrote The Wandering Jew, a long poem, before Queen Mab. However, it is largely a "gothic" narrative and shows comparatively few affinities with his more philosophical later works.

9. first in The Anxiety of Influence and further in A Map of Misreading.

10. Milton's influence on the Romantic poets is the subject of a recent book-length study by Leslie Brisman, as well as of Bloom's recent studies.
11. Baker (MLN) feels that there is more Miltonic influence than Havens found, and he cites parallel passages; most of Milton's come from Paradise Lost. He does not deal much with Queen Mab. Jones (1952) cites numerous passages from Milton that Shelley used. In an earlier study of Spenser's influence on Shelley, Jones concludes, "Milton, more than any other English poet, was Shelley's master" (p. 669). I have already mentioned Bloom's treatment of this subject.
12. Melvin M. Rader long ago indicated that Shelley was less naive about instant reform than most people assumed. On another level, Shelley considered the kinds of evil connected with mortality (death, pestilence) to be the permanent lot of mankind, although he asserted that the human mind could escape other ills. In his edition of Shelley's prose, David L. Clark insists upon Shelley's political realism. Wasserman centers his recent book on Shelley's lifelong dualistic attitude toward evil---Shelley saw that it was a very real part of human life, and yet at the same time he could imagine perfection, which, he hoped, indicated that perfection also existed. In short, Wasserman claims that from Alastor onward Shelley's poetry personifies the struggle of "ideal versus real" that critics traditionally take as a crux of Romanticism.

Chapter II

1. For instance, Medwin notes that Shelley read a good deal of Wordsworth in that year. Shelley "drenched" Byron in Wordsworth; the result was a new profundity in Byron's poetry. More reputable later sources make the same observation---Edward Dowden, for instance, and Newman I. White. Mary's Notes to The Revolt of Islam (quoted below) provide one of the earliest suggestions that Shelley inspired Byron in 1816. Numerous later critics take this for granted.
2. Robert R. Harson's study of the "Epistle to Augusta" as a reply to Tintern Abbey indicates that Byron read this poem closely while in Switzerland. Despite verbal echoes and parallels of situation, Byron emphasized differences between his and Wordsworth's positions.

- 3. Butter (p. 127) suggests that by showing the disharmony between mankind and nature, three of Byron and Shelley's 1816 poems are deliberately anti-Wordsworthian. He cites Mont Blanc, Manfred, and Darkness, as well as Shelley's later Prometheus Unbound.

Assuming that Shelley's own attitude toward Wordsworth was wholly favorable at this time oversimplifies. He and Byron agreed that by the time they met Wordsworth's poetry betrayed degeneration. In the Alastor volume (March 1816) Shelley published a sonnet, "To Wordsworth," where he blamed Wordsworth for ceasing to write "songs consecrate to truth and liberty." Byron clearly objected to Wordsworth's subject-matter as well, and Shelley may well have tried to change his mind about that.

- 4. As Bloom, among others, points out, this theme is central during the period. "Romanticism, or the internalization of quest" occurs throughout literary history (SIR, 1970). That Byron and Shelley both wrote quest poems is a fact too unremarkable in itself to indicate that one poet influenced the other. If one argues that Shelley presented the actual quest theme to Byron, it becomes difficult to explain where the first cantos of Childe Harold came from. Admittedly, it is still easily possible that Shelley affected Byron's treatment of this theme in Manfred.

- 5. Medwin's claim is one of the more exaggerated. In his Shelley biography he says:

Fortunate it was for Byron that he had Shelley for a friend and fosterer of his genius. How much does not the world owe to the noble poet's emancipation from the fetters of Hobhouse and release from the leaden mantle of his paralising (sic) dulness." (p. 359)

Earlier, he had stated that for Byron, "Shelley was an Eldorado, an inexhaustible mine" (p. 160).

Edmund Blunden's claim is more moderate:

At once, then, the presence of Shelley had produced new feelings about great subjects, new purposes in poetry, which Byron's first real biographer did not overlook. Thomas Moore was not constituted for Shelley's intellectual company, but even he has to admit the effect of a few weeks of it on his eminent friend. . . . In truth Shelley

educated Byron as nobody had done and induced him to conceive his poems with the earnestness of a seer and a nature-worshipper. For once, even though not for long, Byron seemed steadily poised in a scheme of things.
(pp. 125-26)

- 6. I feel that the influence was greater than I make it sound. However, I cannot find enough concrete evidence to go beyond Butter's statement:

Though I do not think there is any specific borrowing, the general line of feeling expressed in the fourth stanza of Mont Blanc and Darkness is similar; it was new in Shelley, but habitual in Byron. Not only Byron's ideas, but also his personality greatly affected Shelley, who tremendously admired the creative vigour of his mind, and was thus perhaps the more inclined to believe in the creativeness of the mind in general. Contact with Byron made him realise more fully both the strength of evil and the potentialities of the mind. (p. 128)

Alastor obviously undermines part of Butter's claim.

- 7. There seem to be numerous echoes of Southey throughout Shelley. Although Byron's esteem for his work was lower, his heroes also occasionally seem to echo Southey. For instance, the doomed Southey hero proclaims to his unfortunate beloved:

Alas, I must not rest!
The star that ruled at my nativity
Shone with a strange and blasting influence.
O gentle Lady! I should draw upon you
A killing curse! (Thalaba, X, 268-72)

A number of Byronic heroes play similar parts, most notably Manfred, who uses the same imagery to describe the way he destroyed himself and Astarte.

- 8. Interestingly, Shelley did not name Byron to Peacock as his companion on the journey. He wrote Peacock again the next day, making his famous evaluation of Byron at the end, abruptly changing from the subject of commissioning Peacock to find him a house in England to say, "Lord Byron is an exceedingly interesting person, and as such is it not to be regretted that he is a slave to the vilest and most vulgar prejudices, and as mad as the winds."

9. Also, Byron's judgments of Rousseau here reappear in Shelley very sketchily in his July, 1816, letters and much more fully in 1822, in The Triumph of Life.
10. Most biographers mention Shelley's interest in Wordsworth during this period. In addition, there are several critical studies of Wordsworth's influence. See, for instance, Paul Mueschke and Earl L. Griggs on Alastor or B. R. McElderry on Shelley's Defense. Bernard Blackstone sees a Los-Urizen conflict in Shelley's works of this period, with Wordsworth playing Urizen to Shelley's Los.

Several critics argue that Coleridge's influence was more profound. Shelley, however, could not readily borrow narrative action from much of Coleridge, and that is what I discuss here. See G. Wilson Knight (Dome, including pp. 189, 196, 202), Hector Munro, and Joseph Raben (NES). J.W. Archer points out that a number of "Kubla Khan" images appear in Shelley's 1813 version of Queen Mab, before Coleridge's poem was published. Archer makes the reasonable suggestion that this is coincidental similarity due to common eras, literary backgrounds, and choices of poetic type.

11. See Shelley's September 8, 1816, letter to Byron. See Brian Wilkie (Romantic Poets) for a discussion of The Revolt of Islam as an epic.

Chapter III

1. A majority of the interpretations are biographical. In addition to the comments by Byron's and Shelley's biographers, many critics take this type of approach. For instance, John H. Smith, N. I. White, and Elizabeth Nitchie read the poem as a reflection of Shelley and Mary's domestic problems. G. Wilson Knight (1952, 1956) and J. E. Saveson contend that Byron's domestic affairs inspired the poem, especially the character of the Maniac. Seymour Reiter argues that the poem contains both Byron and Shelley biography. Of course, since the title characters have transparent identities, most of the speculation involves the madman and his story. Raymond D. Havens (SP), and later Carlos Baker (1947), then G.M. Matthews (1960, 1963) produce evidence that Shelley's "Tasso" fragments inspired the Maniac.

Donald Davie treats Julian and Maddalo as the ultimate example of Shelley's "truly lean and bare prosaic" style (in Abrams, p. 312).

James L. Hill finds the Maniac's lack of faith, rather than of patience and restraint, the source of

his madness. Patricia Ball's interpretation is similar to Wasserman's. She sees the primary movement of the poem as one from abstract argument of two opposing ideas to acceptance of an actual case by both parties.

"Entering into the nature of the individual, experiencing his being and so becoming inhabited by him: this creative expansion supersedes the theorizing of the isolated intellect, and draws together into common vision those who otherwise remain unable to reach each other across a gulf of disagreement and incomprehension" (p. 136).

2. Such skeptical readings of the Romantic poets' works are currently fashionable. For example, both Lionel Stevenson (1971) and Larry J. Swingle (1971) discover that poets in this period utilized the same technique. They cultivated a degree of incompleteness, attempting to involve their readers in the poem's process. Swingle observes, "The main product of Romantic poetry is the question, and its main effect on a reader is disturbance" (p. 976). Stevenson feels that Shelley failed to accomplish this involvement: "We enjoy his poems by submerging our imagination in his rather than by proceeding to imagine anything for ourselves" (p. 35).
3. See, for instance, Shelley's letter of December 17 or 18, 1818, to Peacock, that condemns the fourth canto's spirit while admitting Byron's power as a poet.
4. I do not claim that one should read the poem entirely as autobiography. The details that Shelley took from life provided him with a point of departure. As Chernaik observes: "The framing devices, then, even when they are false clues, are plain obstacles to a simple autobiographical reading. But even where there is a single voice, as in the shorter lyrics, the tone is heightened to suggest that the poet is assuming a literary role as elegist or bard, prophet, or dreamer" (p. 20).
Reiter observes, "The poem does not exist as a subjective expression of isolated pain; rather it records a state that is common to humanity in personal experience and connects that state to public experience" (p. 76).
5. Godwin urged the young Shelley to study history, on the grounds that it reveals "whatever of noble, useful, generous, and admirable, human nature is capable of designing and performing" (quoted by F. L. Jones in his edition of Shelley's letters, Vol. I, pp. 340-41).
6. In an interesting, if rather self-contradictory article, Karl Kroeber focuses on the Romantic artists' fondness

for the specific. He objects to our recent tendency to make apocalyptic readings of Romantic works. Concerning Shelley's description of Venice in the Lines, he believes "that Shelley strives to recreate a vision in and of time" (p. 337, n.). Yet, at the same time, as in an "apocalyptic" reading, he claims that perception, or point of view, remains the fundamental experience. The poet gains his power by changing our perspective: "For Shelley, to the contrary, 'all things exist as they are perceived,' and the poet reorients the world by apprehending in it what does not yet exist in it, revealing 'the gigantic shadows of futurity' within the luminous not-yet-perceptible the poet may determine what will be perceived" (p. 338).

7. Chernaik notes Shelley's tendency in Mont Blanc and the Lines to make "nature appear to be contingent upon thought" (p. 62) in his nature poetry. This seems true of the Lines' last section, as well as of Mont Blanc.
8. Milton Wilson (1974) reminds us that some of Byron's and Shelley's descriptions have been traditional since the late seventeenth century: the hearse-gondola, palace and prison, Venice's magic, the sea marriage, etc. He observes, "Venetian images do not begin, they just persist" (p. 93).
9. Significantly, Byron expresses a similar desire in Childe Harold, IV, clxxvii-clxxviii. However, Byron's wish is in the subjunctive mood, indicating that he only wishes for such a life; he does not expect it ("Oh that the Desert were my dwelling-place. . ."). Typically, Shelley's hope is more ambitious than Byron's; he would save humanity as well as himself and his beloved.
As it is not probable that Shelley knew Byron's work before he composed his Lines, I have not discussed them above; however, they clearly show how Shelley's vision differed from Byron's.
10. See, for instance, Shelley's letter to Peacock, dated December 17 or 18, 1818. Here he strongly objects to Childe Harold, IV, for expressing "a kind of obstinate & selfwilled folly in which he hardens himself."
11. Traditionally, critics praise the structure of this poem. Oliver Elton, for instance, praises the Lines as "perfectly put together" (p. 194).
12. Richard H. Fogle makes an analogous observation about Keats and Shelley, also helpful in distinguishing

between Byron and Shelley: "Keats is content to accept things in their complexity, and he endeavors to express in his poetry the essence of this complexity, whereas Shelley strives to attain to a final simplicity by resolving wholes into their component parts. For this reason Keats's images are generally static and reposeful, as he concentrates intensely upon establishing the unique and peculiar quality of the object he contemplates, while Shelley's are restless and mobile" (p. 57).

13. Robinson's book treats this subject in a very stimulating manner, relating it to Shelley's attempt to challenge Byron as England's premier poet. See especially pp. 205-09.
14. Robinson's dissertation discusses Byron's influence on Prometheus Unbound for an entire chapter. He notes several structural parallels between Manfred and Shelley's poem (all discussed below in this note): Demogorgon and Arimanes are similar, although only Arimanes remains unchallenged. Several songs are similar. He also points out other connections with Byron's works, especially Childe Harold, Canto IV. Shelley first uses "immedicable" in this play (Childe Harold, IV, 126). Robinson notes a similarity between Childe Harold, IV, 135, and Prometheus Unbound I, 24-30 (discussed below). He sees a connection between Shelley's "Methinks I grow like what I contemplate" (I, 450) and Byron's similar statement (Childe Harold, IV, clviii). Both poets express like ideas in Childe Harold, IV, cxvii, and Prometheus Unbound, IV, 483-87.
Robinson's thesis includes the assumption that Shelley's work of this period was uniformly, atypically optimistic. He skips from Prometheus Unbound to Adonais, ignoring the more personal lyrics of the period between.
15. Bloom goes so far as to claim, "The supernatural or spiritual world does not enter into the poem" (Visionary, p. 252). This is surely true of Byron's message.
16. Chew would disagree: "To understand and appreciate Manfred one must see that its chief message is one of encouragement and hope. It tells of the triumph of mind over matter, of soul over body, in that conflict which a dualistic conception of the universe implies" (Dramas, p. 84). While Manfred clearly triumphs in the end, I do not see in his death the "encouragement and hope" that Chew claims Byron offers.
17. Wasserman summarizes the play's action thus: "This simple formulation---the retraction of evil by Demogorgon upon being awakened by Love, and the immediate

release and guarantee of the 'natural' order of events by Love---is the heart of Shelley's millennial vision. It obviously accounts for the large design of his narrative: Prometheus' revolutionary withdrawal of his curse in winter is directly followed by the journey of Love to Demogorgon's realm at the very moment of spring; and Demogorgon's revolutionary flight to withdraw Jupiter is immediately followed by Love's flight to reunion with Prometheus" (p. 324).

18. White (II, p. 134) notes this without going into any but technical details. He shows that Shelley's four spirits and his Furies borrow the stanza form of Manfred's first and seventh spirits; Byron's second, fourth, and fifth spirits provide the source for the verse form of "The Cloud".
19. The torturing Furies in Shelley's play (I, 550, ff.) also recall the scene in Byron's 1816 poem Darkness. Shelley takes from there a picture of the last survivors in large cities gathering around dwindling embers.
20. In Shelley's Annus Mirabilis, Chapter 4, Stuart Curran illustrates Robert F. Whitman's and Wasserman's earlier suggestions about the complementary nature of The Cenci and Prometheus Unbound.
21. Cameron (1974) discusses Byron's significance to nineteenth century drama and where Shelley did or did not rely on Byron's innovations: "In England the only serious attempt at innovation came from Byron, who wrote two types of drama---heroic romantic plays centering around a Byronic figure (Marino Faliero, Sardanapalus), and philosophical or psychological drama (Manfred, Cain) ---neither of which became part of the living stage. Shelley particularly admired the second type, especially Cain with its powerful anticlericalism, and some of Manfred, with its brilliant alternation of chorus and dialogue, wove its way into Prometheus Unbound, but he rejected both types when it came to writing his own play for the stage" (p. 398). Cameron argues that the lack of living models caused Shelley's heavy reliance on Shakespeare.
22. Steffan (SEL, 1969) has traced Shelley's varied sources, substantiating Shelley's claim that the Cenci family's story was popular legend based upon historical fact.
23. Throughout his career Byron mocks those who labor at crafts, and he exclaims against literary hacks with special ferocity. In his opinion, the Lake poets

deserved the worst treatment---especially Wordsworth and Southey.

While Byron professed scorn of those who labored at poetry, of course, Steffan's Variorum Don Juan, among other sources, demonstrates that in fact Byron made a significant number of revisions.

It is a truism that the Romantic poets always preferred spontaneity to polished effects. "Oh! how I hate the nerveless, frigid song,/. . .Whose labour'd lines in chilling numbers flow," Byron protests in 1806 and through the balance of his poetic career.

While occasionally Shelley owned that his writing also lacked polish, such admissions are rarer; despite low opinions of his own works, he rarely claimed that he wrote casually. He regretted that The Revolt of Islam lacked polish. The reason for its crudeness is characteristic of the period. As revision continued, "I found that, if I should gain something in exactness by this method, I might lose much of the newness and energy of imagery and language as it flowed from my mind" (Preface to The Revolt of Islam). But in the earlier work, Shelley clearly at least attempted revision. In The Cenci he came closer to flaunting his carelessness, as Byron often did. Still, Shelley's reasons are not Byron's, and although the sentence that proclaims his lack of care sounds Byronic, the context is more Wordsworthian.

24. Curran (1970) notes that Byron's works and Shelley's often focus on the same themes. Discussing The Cenci, he notes: "By invoking Manfred, Shelley suggests his common accord with Byronic pessimism. The 'sad reality' documented in Shelley's version of Hell is also the theme Byron explored in charting the genesis of mortal Purgatory in Cain, 'the inadequacy of man's state to his conceptions.' Indeed, as a theme common to the mature works of both poets, it is never probed more deeply than in the triangular warfare between the self-defeating, absolute conceptions of Cenci, Beatrice, and the Pope" (p. 151).
25. Bertrand Evans and Peter L. Thorslev trace the gothic stage villain as he developed into the Byronic hero, but Shelley's biographers quote from friends' memoirs, Shelley's letters, and other sources to show that Shelley knew very little about contemporary theater. Of course, we know that in youth he devoured gothic novels, but Byron's works provided a more direct connection with the current stage.
26. Melvin R. Watson points out that she also differs from Shelley's earlier heroes, who suffered in the faith that their cause would eventually triumph. Beatrice develops

beyond that stage: "Her faith here in the quick triumph of truth when it is brought before the bar of human justice is as innocent and positive as that of the young Shelley when he scattered pamphlets upon the heads of passers-by in Dublin. Her real test will come with the realization that truth is more often on the scaffold than on the throne" (p. 19).

26. Admittedly, Byron's later works portray the developments that cause his characters to become what they are. But in the works prior to this date, such protagonists are nonexistent. They appear later, in Cain and Don Juan, for instance.

Chapter IV

1. From Shelley's letter to Horace Smith of June 29, 1822, we know that he saw no more in time for the later cantos to affect his poetry. Shelley knew that Byron had completed Cantos VI and VII, but if he saw or heard them, his death followed within days, and Shelley could never make use of the experience.
2. Ridenour (PMLA) suggests why Canto V may have appealed so strongly to Shelley: "T. C. Steffan recognizes that the canto is Shellevan, and this last point in fact recalls the relationship between mind and circumstance in Prometheus Unbound. After exposure to the most ruthless ironies, then, the concept of human freedom is still a compelling ideal" (p. 445).
3. Robinson observes that Shelley's acceptance of Byron's late works, with their "consistent denial of human perfectibility" gives evidence "that Shelley was doubting his own vision of human perfectibility" (p. 205, diss.). I agree with his observation up to a point, but (with Wasserman) I doubt that Shelley was ever as confident of human improvement as Robinson implies.
4. There are, of course, many studies of Shelley's literary sources. In some cases, there are so many possible originals for a Shelleyan line, action, or concept that their profusion hints Shelley was treating a common theme of his era. Peck points this out in a note that lists possible analogues and sources for Adonais. His list of works and authors includes: Thalaba, Gebir, Endymion, Rhododaphne, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, The Curse of Kehama, and some Wordsworth, Drummond, and Dante. However, while one or two parallels with another work do not necessarily imply influence, similarities

as striking as those between Peter Bell the Third and Byron's comic works suggest that there really was a relationship between them.

5. Ridenour discusses Byron's objections to the Lake poets at length in The Style of Don Juan.
6. As Bloom observes of Shelley's Dedication to The Witch of Atlas, Wordsworth's loss of power is a basic subject. "The underlying point about Wordsworth's 'Peter Bell' is that it was once vision" (Mythmaking, p. 173). Shelley's poem focuses more on how Wordsworth lost his power than do Byron's attacks.
7. Byron's The Devil's Drive (first published in 1804) imitates the former. Like Peter Bell, it insists upon the parallels between modern urban life and Hell. Byron, of course, knew Pope. Shelley's poem probably shows Pope's influence in the triumph of dullness portrayed through the poem's final section. Also, the reviewers' boredom with Peter's poesy perhaps derives from the epic games in The Dunciad. Shelley, in turn, may have influenced Byron's The Vision of Judgment.
See Marius Bewley for a discussion of other antecedents to Byron's mode. He argues that some of the Caroline poets have the same type of detachment as Byron, while none of the Augustan poets possess it.
8. Grabe claims: "The description of Hell as London is not wholly pertinent to Shelley's purpose of satirizing Wordsworth. It is brought in because Shelley cannot avert his mind from the cruelty and tyranny of life even in a poem with a lighter theme" (Magic Plant, p. 295). However, the section definitely relates to Shelley's exposure of greed, cruelty, and hypocrisy, even though it impairs the unity of Shelley's attack on Wordsworth.
As Ridenour (Style) points out, this associational method is typical of Don Juan. He observes, "It is always extremely important to notice what he is associating with what. For Byron achieves some of his finest effects by simple thematic association" (p. 115).
9. Allan Rodway feels that Peter Bell is one of Shelley's finest works precisely because of its limitation. He considers it, unlike the bulk of Shelley's poetry, "anchored to earth, the proper place for attacks on society" (p. 190). Whether or not one agrees with Rodway's evaluation, it is certainly true that it differs significantly from the works that Shelley produced both earlier and later.

10. As McGann observes of Beppo, expression of the author's personality is essential to the poem. "The very style of Byron's poetry defines what individuality means. . . Everything in Beppo orbits around Byron; it is the figure of Byron, both as an artist and (more importantly) as a human being, which determines both the form and significance of the details. Ultimately, then, the poem defines the nature of personality, demonstrates what it means to be sui generis" (p. 288). Shelley attempts to don an equally striking personality in Peter Bell the Third, with limited success. As Shelley's poem focuses on a more unified subject, fortunately for him the persona is less important than in Don Juan.
11. Bloom recognizes both Shelley's debt to Don Juan and The Witch's distinctive qualities (Visionary, p. 326). He points out that Shelley's verse moves at a slower pace, both his main subject and his digressions are visionary, and Shelley's tone is more "courtly".
12. Shelley's conditions complicate Byron's opposition between man and Nature. By portraying animals struggling to live as well as men, Shelley implies that Nature is no harmonious entity to which human life seems alien. Rather, man and beast suffer from the same capricious cruelty, inherent both in natural phenomena (the storm) and their own natures.
13. Obviously, I assume that "it" refers to "the past" rather than to "the world".

Chapter V

1. As Byron wrote these lines prior to Shelley's Julian and Maddalo, obviously no significant change has occurred in Byron. Rather, Byron regularly alternated between the two stances, even in his most "public" works. Shelley, on the other hand, seemed to feel that it was his duty to be as encouraging as his honest skepticism would permit. Although his skeptical attitudes remain essentially unchanged in his last years, the poetry begins to express more of his discouragement.
2. Wasserman (Critical) discusses this passage at some length. See above, pp. 140-42.
3. Letters and biographical details reveal that Shelley continued to feel inferior as a poet and that he resented his financial inferiority, but that his esteem for Byron as a man declined. These matters are discussed below.

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4. Both were written at Pisa. Shelley resumed work on Charles I in January of 1822, and Byron began Werner in February. Thus, either man could have originated this scene. It is also possible that Shelley wrote this scene in 1818, when he first expressed an interest in Charles I as the subject of a play. However, Cameron (1945) argues that Shelley probably did not begin the play until 1822. The 1818 letter (September 22) does not definitely say that Shelley began the project, and Mary's Note (to the 1822 poems) implies that at the earlier date Shelley still encouraged her to write on this subject. Shelley's letter of June 5, 1821, to the Gisbornes implies that he had at least begun the play before that time, although it is impossible to guess which scenes he had sketched out by then.
 5. This information comes from Baben (PQ, 1967).
 6. Shelley also discussed the subject with Godwin. For a quotation, see Note 16 to Chapter II.
 7. Had he completed them, his dramas on Tasso and Charles I would also belong to this category, of course.
 8. Wasserman (Critical) discusses this fully.
 9. Byron's pronouncements on Keats reveal that this grief was purely invention on Shelley's part.
 10. Robinson feels that Adonais is a major exhibit in the continuing philosophical debate between Byron and Shelley. Richard Ackermann cites three parallel passages between Adonais and Childe Harold: Childe Harold, I, lxxxiii, and Adonais xxxiv; Childe Harold, IV, lxxviii, and Adonais, xlviii-xlix; Childe Harold, IV, clxxi, and Adonais, xl. I do not feel that Adonais shows as much Byronic influence as many of Shelley's earlier works. Considering Shelley's early fascination with Cain, I doubt the first of Ackermann's parallels, although the other two passages could well echo the lines that he cites. Peter J. Manning demonstrates that a draft version of Adonais echoed Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. Thus, as with Epipsychidion, Byron seems to have provided the impetus for a work, but its subsequent development caused Shelley to modify his original stylistic intentions.
 11. Shelley's letters to Ollier urging its publication, as well as other correspondence, makes it plain that he wrote Hellas rapidly, and that he considered it a work that would have no public interest once fate decided the issue of Greek independence.

- 12. Obviously, I disagree with Curran, who sees in Shelley's 1822 works other than The Triumph of Life a positive change after The Cenci's darkness. Curran comments on "a new creative phase. . . a serene and worldly lyricism in which he humanizes the supernatural and transfigures the numdane" (1970, p. 154). It seems to me that this "creative phase" produced pathetically little output, and that this production takes as its subject Shelley's suffering. His most cheerful poems parallel the Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills in giving thanks for a brief respite from pain.
- 13. Chernaik is the source for this quotation.
- 14. See Baker (Shelley's Major Poetry), who suggests that Byron's The Prophecy of Dante affected The Triumph of Life.
- 15. I can only agree with Kroeber's generalization with reservations. He feels:

Whereas Byron's and Scott's language became progressively simpler and more colloquial as their subjects became more realistic, the language of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats became progressively richer and more literary as their subjects became less realistic (Narrative, p. 84).

I agree with his statement that Byron's language became more colloquial (but not necessarily "simpler"). Likewise, Shelley's late language seems richer, and his poetic associations seem more literary; but his use of language seems to me more relaxed, almost conversational, in his latest work.

- 16. Josephine Miles (Eras and Modes, ELP) has distinguished the Romantic mode from the pre-Romantic, but there are no detailed developmental studies of Byron's and Shelley's poetic techniques. Baker's book makes some suggestions about Shelley. Postetter expresses a view of Shelley's poetic development similar to mine:

Many of his last poems, including The Triumph, show that as he became less concerned with his public function he became more concerned with poetry as a craft, with conscious elaboration of images and symbols, with pattern and structure. . . They reveal an increasing effort to express in informal, economical language a detached and even ironic contemplation of men and things as they are---and in this possibly

they reflect the influence of Byron. Shelley had always possessed the gift for trenchant, concrete expression. He possessed also a gift for epigrammatic delineation of character and an ear for natural speech rhythms. But he had obviously refused to cultivate these gifts because he did not think them proper for poetry of the highest order. He saw them as fitting only for satire or the political song or the informal epistle. And so we find them in Peter Bell, Oedipus Tyrannus, or the Letter to Maria Gisborne. . . In the poems of 1821 and 1822 are indications that he had come to take his gift for informal language seriously and was deliberately cultivating it as a vehicle for poetry. (Ventriloquists, pp. 238-29)

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Appendix

Shelley's Influence on Byron

Beginning shortly after Shelley's death, numerous Shelley biographers have suggested that Shelley had great influence on Byron's works. I do not feel that the evidence is as strong as they imply. As discussed in an earlier chapter, the contention that Shelley strongly influenced the development of Byron's thought in 1816 seems especially questionable. By 1821, when the two men again lived nearby and could see one another daily, Byron's style was even more self-confident than in 1816. Shelley was even less likely to become a major influence on the author of Don Juan than on Childe Harold's creator. Yet, even in Shelley's own lifetime, we know that one or two concerned persons felt Shelley had indeed encouraged the most perverse (and least marketable) aspects of Byron's art. Byron read Shelley some letters from Thomas Moore that caused Shelley to write Horace Smith an assurance that Cain expressed Byron's ideas, not Shelley's.

Amongst other things, however, Moore, after giving Lord B. much good advice about public opinion &c. seems to deprecate my influence over his mind on the subject of religion, & to attribute the tone assumed in Cain to my suggestions.---Moore cautions him against my influence on this particular with the most friendly zeal, & it is plain that his motive springs from a desire of benefiting Lord B. without degrading me.---I think you know Moore. ---Pray assure him that I have not the smallest

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influence over Lord Byron in this particular;
if I had I certainly should employ it to eradicate
from his great mind the delusions of
Christianity. (April 11, 1822)

It would be naive to accept Shelley's self-evaluation outright. The evidence that we have in the form of letters and reminiscences indicates that Byron enjoyed talking with Shelley. Although he was not overawed by Shelley's poetry, he thought highly of him both for his courage in defending his beliefs against all comers and for his concern for others. Shelley's letters to Byron often judge literature, and they also make it plain that the two men often discussed poetry. Shelley read Byron's new works as soon as he could obtain copies; in some cases he saw them well before completion or publication. Byron showed less interest in Shelley's works, but we know that he read some of them.

There is evidence that Byron admired passages in Shelley's works, although no work by Shelley influenced Byron as fundamentally as Manfred did Prometheus Unbound. During the last two years of Shelley's life, several works by Byron pay Shelley the occasional compliment of echoing lines or events. I have already mentioned the end of Sardanapalus. Also, Myrrha echoes a line from Queen Mab: "Or deep, deep sleep, so as to be unfathom'd,/ Look like thy Brother, Death. . ." (IV, i, 5-6). This is not the first time Byron echoed Shelley's "How wonderful is Death,/ Death and his brother Sleep" (Queen Mab, I, 1-2). Later Myrrha also seems

to echo lines from Adonais, which Shelley sent to Byron, rather apologetically, on July 17, 1821 (See Shelley's letter of that date to Byron). Shelley wrote, ". . .From the world's bitter wind/ Seek shelter in the tomb./ What Adonais is, why fear we to become?" (li). He then moved to the famous stanzas opposing the transient many to the One, where Shelley nerved himself to continue the quest for the Eternal. Myrrha's speech follows a similar progression, atypical of Byron. She elaborates on Sardanapalus' thoughts about suicide:

Save one deed---the last
 And greatest to all mortals; crowning act
 Of all that was, or is, or is to be---
 The only thing common to all mankind,
 So different in their births, tongues, sexes, natures,
 Hues, features, climes, times, feelings, intellects,
 Without one point of union save in this,
 To which we tend, for which we're born, and thread
 The labyrinth of mystery call'd life.

(V, 228-36)

Byron, typically, cannot let such a lofty statement stand: Sardanapalus' next speech brings suicide back to a more mundane realm; having lost the war, "let's be cheerful. . ." and smile at what we once feared, "as children at discover'd bugbears" (V, 237-40).

Despite Shelley's declaration that he had no influence on Byron's Cain, several details in that play seem related to Prometheus Unbound. Admittedly, the paternity becomes confused here, for Prometheus Unbound owes a significant debt to Byron's Manfred. Still, two details seem to develop

logically from Shelley's play rather than from Byron's own earlier work. All three are ultimately about self-discovery; all three protagonists question outside forces in attempting to understand their own situations;¹ in the end, the chief victories are over self rather than external foes. Until late in the play when he murders Abel, Cain resembles Prometheus more than Manfred, as he is an innocent victim who seeks to understand why he must suffer. His questions to Lucifer resemble Asia's to Demogorgon more closely than any dialogue in Manfred. Like Asia and unlike Count Manfred, Cain's curiosity goes beyond his own narrow, human concerns. Where Manfred's relationship with Astarte obsesses him, Asia and Cain ask abstract questions about the ultimate nature of the Power that rules their universe. In both cases they receive the same answers, responses that throw them back on their own experience of what men commonly call "God" and "good," and of what they have found corrupt. Asia puts detailed questions to Demogorgon about the source of human ills. Demogorgon answers, "He reigns." Asia responds, "I feel, I know it! who?" (II, iv, 31). Demogorgon gives the same response again and Asia learns enough of herself to conclude, ". . .of such truths/ Each to itself must be the oracle" (II, iv, 22-23). Immediately after this discovery, she learns that the hour has come when Prometheus shall be freed, and she joins the triumph.

Cain asks similar questions. While Lucifer supplies more information about the universe than Demogorgon did, it is of the same order. Ultimately Cain learns that no one can answer him, although he realizes this only late in the play. When Lucifer first appears, Cain asks about the nature of God and of Lucifer; he receives answers similar to those that Demogorgon gave to Asia.

Cain.	Ah!
Thou look'st almost a god; and---	
Lucifer.	I am none:
And having fail'd to be one, would be nought	
Save what I am. He conquer'd; let him reign!	
Cain. Who?	
Lucifer. Thy sire's Maker and the world's.	
	(I, i, 128-31)

Neither Manfred nor Cain expresses the power of Good that rests at the heart of Prometheus Unbound. Prometheus, like Blake, might well have addressed "Lord Byron in the Wilderness." Yet, although Byron's view of human potential is darker than Prometheus', he and Shelley explore man's lot through characters that express similar viewpoints: Prometheus (the innocent victim), Lucifer/Demogorgon (all-knowing but impotent), and God/Jupiter (a perverted power that rules over nobler inferiors). There were perhaps hints of all three stances in Manfred, if one stretches the significance of Astarte's standing outside the other values of the play. But nowhere in Manfred does Byron work out all three. In Cain, he attempted this ambitious feat, although his success is limited. Nowhere does he arrive at the depth

and sophistication of Shelley's work---that suggests Jupiter was Prometheus' alter-ego and hence that the evil past, as well as the ideal future, potentially emanate from the same source.² Still, Cain's three levels parallel those in Prometheus Unbound far more closely than those of Manfred. Here we see the pattern of interaction that also produced Myrrha and the Indian Slave. In one way Cythna's death scene was the ultimate source of these heroines. Manfred's characters influenced those in Prometheus Unbound; Cain continues to develop the same type of characters in a similar philosophical situation.

The wrecked past worlds that Cain and Lucifer visit bear a kinship to Panthea's picture:

. sepulchred emblems
 Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!
 The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
 Whose population which the earth grew over
 Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,
 Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
 Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes
 Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
 Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,
 The anatomies of unknown winged things. . .
 (Prometheus Unbound, IV, 294-302)

The passage later refers to the "bones of enormous and unknown animals, something Byron mentions in his Preface to Cain. Shelley introduced Byron to Cuvier's theories of progressive degeneration; thus these descriptions could emanate from that source as well as from Prometheus Unbound. But, in either case, Shelley affected Byron's treatment, whether directly or indirectly.

Perhaps Byron also borrowed a setting in Heaven and Earth (1821) from Prometheus Unbound. Part I, scene iii, occurs in "a cavern, and the rocks of the Caucasus" in preference to his more customary alpine scene. Whether or not he owes this to Shelley, Anah's first invocation to her beloved bears an obvious kinship to Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" (1819). Whether coincidentally or not, she gives Azazel wind-like attributes: "Though through space infinite and hoary/ Before thy bright wings worlds be driven. . ." (I, i, 41-42). Anah continues, using a refrain that varies Shelley's, "Oh, hear!" Byron's speaker implores, "Yet hear!" and then, "Oh, hear!" and finally "Appear, Appear!" His stanzas keep these sounds before us, repeating them elsewhere through the intricately varied rhyme and metrical schemes. Although Shelley repeats, "Oh, hear!" and Byron varies the refrain, Byron's pattern gains added prominence through the device of isolation, as he gives these words separate lines.

Shelley's lines beginning, "Chameleons feed on light and air" appeared with Prometheus Unbound in 1820. Such material seems at first glance to be exceptionally unbyronic, especially as the verses go on to develop the analogy between the unearthly existences of poets and this unique form of reptile. Both beings must guard against becoming too ordinary. In the case of chameleons, if they "should devour/

Any food but beams and wind,/ They would grow as earthly soon/ As their brother lizards are." While Byron is an earthier poet, the metaphor evidently interested him, for he departs from it in Werner. Ulric passes off an attack of guilt with the jest,

'T is nothing; but if 't were, the air
Would soon restore me. I'm the true chameleon,
And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
My spirit; I'm a forester and breather
Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all
The eagle loves. (IV, i, 218-24)

But before the pattern ends, Byron characteristically must settle on a harsher simile, more appropriate to Ulric. He brings up the eagle at the end of this speech. Ida immediately picks up the critical separation between the two animals, although she does so without knowing Ulric's true history. She responds to the above speech, "Except his prey, I hope."

On another subject, Byron could not accept Shelley's interpretation at all, and Shelley's influence takes the form of a humorous rejection. Shelley twice wrote to Byron (April 17 and May 4, 1821) that the critics killed John Keats, and Byron responded with incredulity, first in prose and then in verse. The first rhymed instance occurs in Byron's July 30, 1821, letter to John Murray, that contains the hastily-written lines "Who Kill'd John Keats?" Byron returned to the subject after Shelley's death in Don

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Juan, XI, lx. This one stanza, written to produce an incredulous smile in the reader, seems Byron's only deliberate attempt to "correct" Shelley---a negligible product indeed when compared with Shelley's earlier reactions against Byron's works.

Notes

1. In Prometheus Unbound Asia does this before she and Prometheus reunite. Prometheus' temptations in Act I reveal that he had to face the same questions, although by the time Shelley's play began he had resolved them.
2. Among others, see Bloom (Mythmaking) for a fuller discussion of this, especially page 93. This possibility, of course, contains the threat that the evil past can resume. As Bloom says, "Like all of Shelley's important poetry, 'Prometheus' is misread because it is not read closely enough" (Mythmaking, p. 95).