***~Rituparna Ray Chaudhuri.***

***“MY RESPECT TO MY AFGHAN MOM, A few days I had spent with her……………., in Tea-garden, a place of solemnity and soberness .I still, remember some of quatrains that I had learnt from The Mom, including Tantrums of Lord Shiva’s Tandav and Dance…I had, where made to know on The British Literature that I should deal in future (with what now I am) and on Persian Literature… (Later on I am writing quatrains of Omar...): Bengali Language and the Culture came to me later. ”***

***---Rituparna Ray Chaudhuri***

***“Omar , more desperate, or more careless of any so complicated System as resulted in nothing but hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal; and, pretending sensual pleasure, as the serious purpose of Life, only diverted himself with speculative problems of Deity, Destiny, Matter and Spirit, Good and Evil, and other such questions, easier to start than to run down, and the pursuit of which becomes a very weary sport at last!”***

***My thanks to Bodleian Library…. (WEB)***

***“Omar, known to us as a poet, was also a scientist and a learned man. In his own times and country his bold and unconventional views were often frowned upon. Having failed to find any providence by destiny and not believing in the next world, he turned to making the most of this life. Consequently his verse is filled with a live-for-today philosophy, a preference for sensual pleasures and a glorification of love that have made the Ruba` iyat delightful reading for many generations of admirers.”***

***“The quatrains of Omar have more admirers today than ever before. Lines form the Ruba`iyat, are immortal, but behind the mere beauty of Omar’s quatrains lie a wisdom, a philosophy of life and a controversial but intriguing code of ethics that have contributed at least equally to the enduring quality of these masterpieces.”***

***“His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayya` m) signifies a Tent-maker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before Niza` m-ul-Mulk’s generousity raised him to independence. For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own Country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad.***

***The MSS of his Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reached Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of Arms and Science. There is no copy at the India House, none at the Bibliothe` que Nationale of Paris.***

***We know but one in England: No. 140 of the Ouseley MSS. At the Bodleian, written at Shira` z, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Ruba` iya` t. One in the Asiatic Society’s Library at Calcutta (of which we have a copy) contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of Repetition and Corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of his Copy as containing about 200, while Dr. Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow MSS at double that number. The Scribes, too, of the Oxford and Calcutta MSS seem to do their Work under a sort of Protest; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not) taken out of its alphabetical order; the Oxford with one Apology; the Calcutta with one of Expostulation, supposed (says a Notice prefixed to the MS.) to have arisen from a Dream, in which Omar’s mother asked about his future fate. It may be rendered thus:***

***~~~~~***

***“Oh Thou who burn’st in Heart for those who burn***

***In Hell , whose fires thyself shall feed in turn;***

***How long be crying, ‘Mercy on them, God!’***

***Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn?”***

***……”***

***On The Legends: ~***

******

***"Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn." (Web: Illustration for The Rubayot of Omar Khayyam)***

***“With regard to the present Translation, the original Ruba` iya` t (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these Tetrastichs are more musically called) are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four lines of equal though varied Prosody; sometimes all rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank. Somewhat, as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Ruba` iya` t follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme- a strange succession of Grave and Gay.***

***Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the “Drink and make-merry” which (genuine or not) recurs over-frequently in the Original. Either way, the Result is sad enough: saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry: more apt to move Sorrow than Anger toward the old Tent-maker, who, after vainly endeavoring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of To-morrow, fell back upon To-day (which has outlasted so many To-morrows!) as the only ground he had got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his feet.”***

***…………..***

***THE QUATRAINS OF THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA, OMAR KHAYYA`-M AND PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, A PROPHET AND A REFORMER.....***

***“I think the Vessel, that with fugitive***

***Articulation answer’d, once did live,***

***And merry-make; and the cold Lip I kiss’d***

***How many Kisses might it take- and give!”***

***Desmond King-Hele has thus summed up the symbolism in Shelley’s poetry: “The main symbols can quickly be summarized. Water represents existence; streams or rivers are paths for existence. Boats floating on streams, or sometimes on the sea, are thus souls journeying through life. The water is calm if things are going smoothly, and rough if the soul is vexed. Whirlpools signify perils…Caves stands for minds which receive impressions from the external world, either as shadows or, if the caves has water in front, as in scientific or artistic creation or in philosophic thought, Veil usually refers to the veil between life and death, between the impermanent and the ideal. The statements above are dogmatic, but only for the sake of brevity: different interpretations sometimes apply; and often the words are innocent of symbolic nuance. This is to be expected, for Shelley is not producing a neat set of artificial equations. He is merely resorting to the same imagery, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps half-consciously, when faced with ideas and emotions which defy direct expressions.”***

***Even in philosophical poem he pours out all imagination and daring speculations. In Prometheus Unbound, in Act IV where lone and Panthea see bewildering forms in a forest, Shelley describes it as having white face, white feathers, a white body and white hair. Shelley’s style abounds in personification and metaphor and other of those natural figures which we all use, as best we may, to describe vividly what we see and feel, or to express what passionately moves us. The metaphors he uses for the Skylark, “Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun, combine both the abstract and the concrete qualities, which is a characteristics of Shelley’s manner. His act of comparing flowers to stars sounds ethereal. Though Keats is prominent for the use of synaeasthetic imagery, Shelley has used it in different combinations. In Triumph of Life, he portrays sound as “A silver music on the mossy lawn.”***

***“One Moment in Annihilation’s Waste,***

***“One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste-***

***The Stars are setting and the Caravan***

***Stars for the Dawn of Nothing- Oh, make haste!”***

***Shelley who apprehends the true and the beautiful asks the moon whether its paleness is due to its weariness of climbing the sky, or of gazing on the earth, wandering alone among the stars of a different nature and origin, or is it because the moon is ever-changing like the sorrowful looks that see inconstancy everywhere. Perhaps the moon wanes and waxes because she finds no objects worthy of her constancy.***

***Godwin’s idea of man is perfectible; that is, capable of moral improvement and the development of his character is subject more to nature’s environment than heredity. Godwin didn’t believe in the existence of Government and opposed the worship of wealth, religious tyranny and diseased law, but he believed in “free love” and advocated a universe where men could live happily together and in peace. Shelley too, influenced by his ideas, attacks wars, tyranny, commerce, wealth and religion-in short, all the existing vices of his present world- and describes a Utopian future in Queen Mab.***

***Shelley is much devoted to Godwin, Plato and Rousseau for his thought and poetry. Godwin’s book ‘Political Justice’ has profoundly influenced Shelley’s iconoclastic rationalism and his opinions on politics and morals.***

***Tinge of Godwinian theory is seen in Prometheus Unbound too, where he celebrates the perfectibility of human nature and foretells a golden age which too is bound by guilt or pain, “nor yet exempt from chance, and death and mutability.”***

***“And this I know: whether the one True Light***

***Kindle to Love, or Wrath consume me quiet,***

***One glimpse of It within the Tavern caught***

***Better than in the Temple lost outright.”***

***The ideas he borrowed from Plato falls under four groups: (i) General religious and Philosophical Ideas- Shelley’s religious system is more Greek and Platonic than Christian and Biblical. Like Plato, Shelley believes in a ‘Supreme power’ and is conscious of the unity of the world and of all life and the underlying spirit which he celebrates in most of his poems, especially in Adonais. “The one remains, the many change and pass”. The struggle between the powers of good and evil is the main theme of The Revolt of Islam, a concept of Plato. (ii) Cosmic Speculations: Plato’s teachings that the entire universe is the self-evolution of an absolute intelligence, is seen reflected in Shelley’s Hymn to Apollo where he considers the sun as the supreme source in the universe, not of light and force only, but also of intelligence. Even in Prometheus Unbound, he personifies Moon and Earth (kha` k, zameen). (iii) Social and Political Ideas: The concept of dualism between Prometheus who stands for the soul of man and Jupiter who represents the baser side of man which we find in Prometheus Unbound is based on Plato’s conception of a constant duel in man’s nature between the good and evil forces. (iv) Theory of Love: Plato’s teachings on theory of love have two aspects- his philosophy of beauty, and love, an inspiration in human life. Shelley’s idea of Intellectual Beauty’s departs; this world becomes a ‘dim vast veil of tears vacant and desolate’. On the other hand if human heart is its temple then man would become ‘immortal and potent’. Thus Platonism was a treasure-house from which he borrowed valuable ideas.***

***“Oh, Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin***

***Beset the Road I was to wander in,***

***Thou wilt not with Predestination round***

***Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?”***

***Just as Shelley is devoted to Godwin for political and moral ideas, so also he is devoted to Plato for his Platonism of “one Spirit”, the “supreme Power”. Just as Keats was a Hellenist without knowing any Greek, so also Shelley was a Platonist even before he had read Plato. To Shelley, Plato was not only a philosopher but a poet too. In his Defence of Poetry, he says, “Plato was essentially a poet- the truth and splendor of his imagery and the melody of his language are the most intense that is possible to conceive.”***

 ***Rousseau too has influenced Shelley much, for Harold Bloom believes, “Without Rousseau, Shelley would not have written the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty and perhaps not Mont Blanc either. Rousseau, more than even Wordsworth, was the prophet of natural man, and the celebrator of the state of nature.” Shelley not only fights for the natural man and against religion but against his desire in Prometheus Unbound. Shelley’s spirit and his temperament made him more a disciple and heir of Rousseau than of Godwin or Wordsworth. Rousseau’s ideas are vividly seen in Shelley’s Ode to the West Wind and even in his lyrical drama.***

***As Desmond King puts it “His skill in poetry was a gradual growth”. Shelley’s first poem Queen Mab (1812-13) has a considerable biographical and psychological interest as the starting point of his later development. It is a strange poem, a confused yet eloquent record of a confused state of feeling through which a young poet who never quite understood either himself or other men, was passing. This poem is an exposition of Godwin’s doctrines and his French atheistic and revolutionistic teachings and in imitation of Robert Southey’s works. This piece of work foreshadows the two great themes of Shelley- belief in the existence of Heaven and development of man towards perfection. Thus, from the beginning we see Shelley as a poet with the belief in the existence of goodness, a Heaven, (Jeha` n va ana` ser-i-oo) and the possibility that the world can be transformed into the likeness of Heaven.***

***“The Vine had struck a Fibre; which about***

***If clings my Being-let the Su`fi flout;***

***Of my Base Metal may be filed a Key,***

***That shall unlock the Door he howls without.”***

***J.C. Smith writing on Shelley, says: “No poet suffered severer reprobation in his life and none perhaps has evoked more ardent sympathy and admiration in later years than this strange offshoot from an otherwise undistinguished aristocratic family.” In such a poor state and circumstances, Shelley began writing both verse and prose at a very early stage. But of, his boyhood writings are of little importance for they are more of imitation than of originality.***

 ***“I tell Thee this- When, starting from the Goal,***

***Over the shoulders of the flaming Foal***

***Of Heav’n Parwi`n and Mushtara they flung,***

***In my predestined Plot of Dust and Soul.”***

 ***Queen Mab (1813) had foreshadowed faintly the subject matter of his mature poetry, but it has hardly any of its wonderful music. That music is heard for the first time in the first of his great works, Alastor (1815). Alastor is a poem of an idealized version of Shelley himself. It is about a tragic idealist who vainly pursues the perfect beauty until his death which is described at the conclusion of the poem in lines of solemn beauty. The value of Alastor lies not in its story but in its mood of ardent aspiration, its magnificent descriptions of nature, and noble music of its blank verse which owes much to Wordsworth. This is the beginning of Shelley’s apprenticeship to his art.***

***“Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,***

***And with Eden devise the Snake;***

***For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man***

***Is blacken’d, Man’s Forgiveness give-and take!”***

***Mont Blanc and Hymn to Intellectual Beauty belong to the memorable period of Shelley’s friendship with Byron in 1816, and express the Shelley -idealism.***

***Next comes The Revolt of Islam (1818) a still more ambitious, revolutionary, allegorical poem modeled on Spenser’s work. This piece is a combination of Shelley’s two invariable motives-a passionate philanthropy and an equally passionate eroticism. He feels the liberation of mankind is to be achieved by eloquent persuasion. It contains individual passages of very great beauty with the use of language in an entirely new and distinctive manner. The chief and sole beauty of the poem lies in the music of the blank verse and poetic imagery, where his characteristic style appears fully developed for the first time.***

***Prince Athanese is a fragment where the eternal warfare of the idealist seems to have been the theme and it pictures a philosophic converse between a young disciple and a ‘’divine old man’’. With The Revolt of Islam and this beautiful unfinished fragment of Prince Athanese, Shelley’s apprenticeship may be said to an end.***

***“Listen again, One evening at the Close***

***Of Ramaza`n, ere the better Moon arose,***

***In that old Potter’s Shop I stood alone***

***With the clay Population round in Rows.”***

***The first works of his maturity are the great lyrics, Lines Written in Euganean Hills and Julian and Maddalo, composed after his arrival in Italy. In Julian and Maddalo, he celebrates his friendship with Byron, a masterpiece of a kind rarely achieved. It is a perfect example of verse which is at once familiar and even colloquial and yet highly poetical. What is remarkable in this mastery is that Shelley carries it over into his major achievement, the great lyrical drama, Prometheus Unbound.***

***Prometheus Unbound (1818-1819) is the most ambitious and central attempt of the poet to render his reading of life, the mystery of good and evil and to give adequate embodiment to his own ambition as poet and reformer: “I have what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, “a passion for reforming the world.”***

***To Shelley, Prometheus is the embodiment of the wisdom and heroism of humanity while Jupiter of tyranny and superstition where he is the representative of the whole machinery of legalism and respectability which Shelley considered to be the burden under which the world was groaning. He portrays eternity overpowering tyranny and tyranny is removed by the spirit of love and beauty and thus a regeneration of the world. But of, in the Fourth Act, he portrays a magnificent lyrical vision of a new heaven and a new earth, where time itself has been replaced by Eternity and man has become “One harmonious soul of many a soul/Whose nature is its own divine control/ Where all things flow to all , as rivers to the sea.”***

***“They say the Lion and the Lizard keep***

***The Courts where Jamshy`d gloried and drank deep;***

***And Bahra`m, that great Hunter-the Wild Ass***

***Stamps o’er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.”***

***The central theme of Prometheus Unbound, is again that of Godwinism- an enslaved world of evils regenerated by their sudden overthrow. But in, here, the abstractions of Godwinism are not that of a political philosopher, but of creator of mythology. Macaulay rightly comments on this: “He turned atheism into a mythology, rich with visions as glorious as the gods that live in the marble of Phidias or the virgin saints that smile on us from the canvas of Murillo. The spirit of Beauty, the principle of good, the principle of evil when he treated of them, ceased to be abstractions. They took shape and colour. They were no longer mere words, but ‘intelligible forms’, ‘fair humanities’, objects of love, of adoration, or of fear.”***

***“I sometimes think that never blows so red***

***The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;***

***That every Hyacinth the Garden wears***

***Drop in its Lap from some once lovely Head.”***

***The Cenci (1819) is a work in a different manner where Shelley shows his skill in handling any subject and mastering an uncongenial style. It is a tragedy of the Italian life and displays his lack of knowledge of human nature, for a play on such a theme is seldom successful. Shelley’s treatment of the tragic horror as tragic dignity with a restraint and a delicacy, gives the play a unique place among tragic dramas of modern times. “He does not…reproduce with modifications the style of Shakespeare, but does what Shakespeare did… idealise without describing the language of contemporary speech”, A.C. Bradley.***

***“Ah, my Belove`d, fill the Cup that clears***

***TO-DAY of past Regrets and future Fears-***

***To-morrow? - Why, To-morrow I may be***

***Myself with Yesterday’s Sev’n Thouand Years.”***

***His last achievement is The Triumph of life (1821) which is a fragment as he died before completing it. Here, he states his philosophy of life that “Life is what triumphs over Nature, triumphs over imagination. Life is death-in-life, cold, common hell in which we wake to weep.” It is in the form of Italian ‘terzarima’, strongly influenced by Dante and Petrarch. Some are of the opinion that had this work been finished, it might have been one of the greatest English poems.***

***“Myself when young did eagerly frequent***

***Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument***

***About it and about: but evermore***

***Came out by the same Door as in I went.”***

***Some may claim that Shelley’s poetry stands less high in recent English estimation than it did even before the war. But at, to Saintsbury, he is nevertheless the quintessential poet and to Herford as to A.C. Bradley and Gilbert Murray, he is still both poet and prophet.***

***“And we, that now make in the Room***

***They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,***

***Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth***

***Descend, ourselves to make a Couch-for whom?”***

***To comment upon Shelley’s sarcasm, Peter Bell The Third is an apt example. It is a satire on Wordsworth, a “dull” poet and recalls the earlier Wordsworth, a man of false ideals who composed poems on ‘moor and glen and rocky Lake/And on the heart of man’. Shelley criticizes the reactionary politician who once welcomed revolution and dull poet, Wordsworth himself, who was very famous.***

***“Ay, make the most of what we yet may spend,***

***Before we too the Dust descend;***

***Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,***

***Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and-sans End.”***

***Though Shelley had not much natural aptitude for satire, yet he was successful in his attempts. In Mask of Anarchy (1819) and Swellfoot (1820), he shows his skill in handling the theme of politics also.***

***“Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and best***

***That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,***

***Have drunk their Cup a round or two before,***

***And one by one crept silently to Rest.”***

 ***The Letter to Maria Gisborne (1820) displays his ability to write an easy, natural, yet poetical conversation. The Witch of Atlas (1820) composed in ottava rima like that of Byron’s best poems, is a contrast to his other works for it is a long poem of pure escape to fancy weaving a myth of deliverance from Shelley’s imagined troubles, personal and human, where he gives his imagination free play.***

***In The Sensitive Plant, he finds out a new symbol for his own ‘love of love’. In Adonais (1821), the great elegy on Keats, he reincarnates the Greek pastoral lament and reveals his faith in the spiritual reality.***

***“Ay, make the most of what we yet may spend,***

***Before we too the Dust descend;***

***Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,***

***Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and-sans End.”***

***Shelley’s famous and short poems The Ode to the West Wind, The Cloud, The Skylark are written in verse forms of his own innovation, about the divinity of Nature and the Supreme Power.***

***“Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,***

***And those that after a To-morrow stare,***

***A Muezzi`n from the Tower of darkness cries***

***“Fools! Your Reward is neither Here nor There!”***

***The Letter to Maria Gisborne celebrates his intellectual friendship without any imitation and it is poetry of fun with human thought and common sense.***

***“AWAKE! For Morning in the Bowl of Night***

***Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight:***

***And Lo! The Hunter of the East has caught***

***The Sulta` n’s Turret in a Noose of Light.”***

***Epipsychidion (1821) is a poem inspired by his admiration for Emilia Viviani, an Italian girl who was imprisoned in a convent at Pisa. It is also an expression of that “high, sweet, mystic doctrine of love” taught by Plato in the Symposium and Dante in the Vita Nuova though marred, as Swinburne has justly pointed out, by ”such mere personal allusions as can only perplex and irritate the patience and intelligence of a loyal student.” It’s a personal poem which demonstrates his weaknesses and strong points more than any other poem does.***

***“Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and best***

***That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,***

***Have drunk their Cup a round or two before,***

***And one by one crept silently to Rest.”***

***Most of the critics are tempted to consider the characters of Prometheus Unbound as inhuman. They are inhuman, because they represent mythical and elemental beings and no men and women. Otherwise it can’t be judged as a drama. Shelley wrote to Peacock: “It is a drama, with character and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted.” This poem is noted for its vast orchestrated lyricism representating a series of visions of an ideal world. From this piece, it is understood, he has risen to the highest line and it is seen that his original ideas of a perfect world and of regeneration are now deepened and transformed by the study of Plato, of Spinoza, and of Dante and the existing power is no longer Reason but love.***

***“With me along some Strip of Herbage strown***

***That just divides the desert from the sown,***

***Where name of Slave and Sulta` n scarce is known,***

***And pity Sulta` n Ma` hm` d on his Throne.”***

***Hellas (1821), the lyrical drama is described by Shelley as a sort of imitation of the Personae of Aeschylus. He wrote this to celebrate the outbreak of the Greek war of Independence. Though much slighter than Prometheus Unbound, it is marked for Shelley’s most beautiful and finished lyrical verse. The lyrical movement of the “Chorus”, marks the highest form of Shelley’s rhythmical invention.***

***“Then said another-“Surely not in vain***

***My Substance from the common Earth was ta’en,***

***That He who subtly wrought me into Shape***

***Should stamp me back to common Earth again.”***

 ***In 1821, a slight change came over the tone of the shorter lyrics, but the achievements of 1821 were scarcely inferior to those of 1819.***

***“Look to the Rose that blows about us-“Lo,***

***Laughing’’, she says, “into the World I blow:***

***At once the silken Tassel of my Purse***

***Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.”***

***In 1821, Peacock wrote The Four Ages of Poetry, attacking the poetry of his own age and to defend it. Shelley wrote his greatest prose A Defence of Poetry which ranges far beyond the scope of literature. It expresses a profound philosophy of art, and is equally valuable as a critical work of universal application, and as a revelation of Shelley’s own theory and practice of poetry. It reveals the extraordinary power and beauty of the language.***

***“Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,***

***And those that after a TO-MORROW stare,***

***A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries***

***“Fools! Your Reward is neither Here nor There!”***

***Grierson did rightly say, “Classic and Romantic are terms no attempts to define which will ever seem entirely convincing to ourselves or others.” So everyone tries to attributes one’s own views to ‘Romanticism.’ For, to Hein and Beers, Romanticism is synonymous with Medievalism; to Elton it is “thought confounding words”, to Victor Hugo “Melancholy” is the distinguishing mark of romantic art; to Abercrombie “Romanticism is a withdrawal from outer experience to concentrate upon inner experience”; to Pater it is “an addition of strangeness to beauty”; to T. S. Eliot Romantic signifies, “the individual” and even “revolutionary”; to Herford “liberty of imagination”. So in short, we can say anything novel is romantic.***

***“For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,***

***I watch’d the Potter thumping his wet Clay:***

***And with its all- obliterated Tongue***

***It murmur’d- “Gently, Brother, gently, pray!”***

***In brief, we can say every bit of Shelley’s poetry is romantic-in temper and style. Whether they are short or long, whether they are lyrical or odes, with Shelley’s element of imagination they rise to an expectation which is far beyond our reach. No wonder Shelley is heralded as the best Romantic poet of his age.***

***“And lately, by the Tavern Doo agape,***

***Came stealing through the Dusk an Angel Shape***

***Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and***

***He bid me taste of it; and ‘twas-the Grape!”***

***Shelley’s poetic style is also romantic. The series of gorgeous similes in The Skylark show the romantic exuberance of Shelley. He never uses any ornamental word and every word fits in its place and carries its own weight. They express the diverse feelings of the poet with the notes of music which appeal to every human being’s ears.***

***“Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!***

***That Youth’s sweet-scented Manuscript should close!***

***The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,***

***Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!”***

***For Pater, classic signifies measure, purity and temperance, whether romantic signifies an addition of strangeness to beauty. Abercrombie says Romanticism is an attitude of mind-an element of art. Classicism is not an element at all but a mode of combining elements in a just proportion. For him there is no antithesis between Romanticism and Classicism. Classicism includes the romantic element in its balance, for all good art is first romantic, then becomes classical. Of all Romantics, Shelley is the one who most obviously possessed the quality of genius- quickness, grasp of intellect, the capacity for learning languages rapidly, ability to assimilate and place scientific principles and discoveries. Yet he is more criticized for his ‘falsity’ and ‘lack of grasp’.***

***“And we, that now make in the Room***

***They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,***

***Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth***

***Descend, ourselves to make a Couch-for whom?”***

***Beauty, to Shelley, is an ideal in itself and a microcosm of the beauty of Nature and he calls it ‘Intellectual Beauty’. He celebrates Beauty as a mysterious power. In the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, he says that when Intellectual Beauty departs, this world becomes a “dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate” and if human heart is its temple, then man would become immortal and omnipotent.***

***“Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,***

***A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse- and Thou***

***Beside me singing in the Wilderness-***

***And Wilderness is Paradise enow.”***

***Though Shelley was a man of hope and expectations and spiritualistic about the future of mankind, yet he represents himself in his poems as a man of ill luck, subject to evil and suffering. He expresses this in the poem, ‘Ode to the West Wind’. He experienced these sufferings because being a man of imagination, he was easily disappointed by any obstacle which stood in his way of a golden age. Again he always imagined himself as the target of critics and common people. So in Adonais, he explains his state as “a phantom among men, and a lonely man companionless.”***

 ***“Do you, within your little hour of Grace,***

***The waving Cypress in your Arms enlace,***

***Before the Mother back into her arms***

***Fold, and dissolve you in a last embrace.”***

 ***Shelley not only believed in the eternity of love and beauty but in the eternity of thought too. The form that Shelley gave to his thought was ideal and at times extremely visionary. Even Brooke admits that he is a poet of certain distinct human ideas and these ideas are not many. That world, “though its substance is grave and weighty, is often too idealised into a world of woven dreams. Substances are thinned out into a shadowy expression of them or seem to disappear in a multitude of fancies added to them.’’***

***“Ah, Love! Could thou and I with Fate conspire***

***To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire.***

***Would not we shatter it to bits-and then***

***Re-mould it nearer to the Heart’s Desire!”***

***Like the other Romantic poets, Shelley too was an ardent lover of Nature. Like Wordsworth, Shelley conceives of Nature as one spirit, the Supreme Power working through all things “The one’s spirit’s plastic stress/Sweeps through the dull dense world.” Again he personifies each object of nature as an individual life, a part of that Supreme Power, Nature. He celebrates nature in most of his poems as his main theme such as The Cloud. To a Skylark, To the Moon, Ode to the West Wind, A Dream of the Unknown.In his treatment of nature, he describes the things in nature as they are and never colours it. It is true, he gives them human life through his personifications, but he does it unintentionally for he felt they are living beings capable of doing the work of human beings. His mythopoeic power had made him the best romanticist of his age. In Ode to West Wind, he personifies Nature as the Destroyer and the Preserver, and in The Cloud, the cloud is a possessor of mighty powers. He also believed in the healing aspect of Nature and this is revealed in his Euganean Hills in which he is healed and soothed by the natural scene around him and also the imaginary island. In The Recollection, we see the same idea of healing power of Nature.***

***“Heav’n but the Vision of fulfill’d Desire,***

***And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire,***

***Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,***

***So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.”***

***Shelley’s idealism falls under three subheadings: Revolutionary Idealism- His revolutionary idealism is mainly due to the French Revolution. Through his Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, and Prometheus Unbound he inspired people to revolt against tyranny by scoring at the tyranny of state, church and society and hoping for a golden age which too is not immune from pain or death. His political idealism makes him a prophet. Religious Idealism- Though Shelley was a rebel, he wasn’t an atheist. He believed in the super power of God, and he imagined God as Supreme ‘Thought’ and infinite Love. His Platonic conception of Love was the base of his metaphysical idealism. He believed in the faith of one mind, one power and one all-pervasive spirit. Erotic Idealism- Just as he is a revolutionist and a pantheist, so also he is a theologist. He believed in the abstract quality of love and beauty-love as infinite and beauty as intellectual. He celebrates love as a creator and preserver in his Symposium, and beauty as Supreme Spirit with which man becomes immortal in his Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.***

***“Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and best***

***That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,***

***Have drunk their Cup a round or two before,***

***And one by one crept silently to Rest.”***

 ***‘Facts’ said Shelley, ‘are not what we want to know in poetry, in history, in the lives of individual men, in satire of panegyric. They are many diversions, the arbitrary points on which we hang and to which we refer those delicate and evanescent hues of mind, which language delights and instructs us in precise proportion as it expresses.’ Shelley calls poetry “the expression of Imagination,” because in it diverse things are brought together in harmony instead of being separated through analysis. In this he resembles Bacon and Locke, but differs from them in his idea of imagination of man’s highest faculty through which one realizes noblest powers. Shelley made a bold expedition into the unknown and he felt reason should be related to the imagination. His expedition was successful when he made the people understand that the task of the imagination is to create shapes by which reality can be revealed to the world and this is heralded as the best romantic note by his successors.***

***“And much as Wine has play’d the Infidel,***

***And robb’d me of my Robe of Honour-well,***

***I often wonder what the Vintners buy***

***One half so precious as the Goods they sell.”***

***Shelley is not only a successful Romanticist but also an inspiring philosopher. He was enough of a philosopher, not merely to enjoy ideals for their own sake, but to make them a starting-point for bold speculations in which he found the thrill of a wild adventure. Whether he derived his notions from Plato or from Godwin, he was equally enthralled by them and much of his inspiration came from them.***

***“Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!***

***That Youth’s sweet-scented Manuscript should close!***

***The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,***

***Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!”***

***Many critics who consider Shelley’s poetry as wanting in substance refuse to take seriously the philosophy it professes to preach, and do not regard him as a philosophic poet at all. But of, a systematic study of his poetry reveals the fact that Shelley was a truly philosophic poet and we cannot arrive at a proper appreciation of his poetry if we dismiss his philosophy as frivolous. Baker remarks: “Yet Shelley has not been taken seriously as a philosophic poet, and one often gathers from remarks of his critics, whether inimical or worshipful, that his philosophy does not matter. Yet it does matter and vitality so because it is always either the central matter of his poetry, or the frame of reference in terms of which his poetry has been written.”***

***“Indeed the Idols I have loved so long***

***Have done my Credit in Men’s Eye much wrong:***

***Have drown’d my Honour in a shallow Cup,***

***And sold my Reputation for a Song.”***

***Shelley had an inextinguishable faith in the imperishable greatness of the human soul which warms and colours almost every line he wrote. In Adonais, he says that the spirit of Adonais will return to the Eternal, from where it came and is immortal but to Symonds, Shelley was no materialist and didn’t believe in the extinction of the spiritual element by death. For he says, Shelley did not acknowledge a formal and precise belief in the immortality of the human soul: “We know nothing; we have no evidence; we cannot express our inmost thoughts; they are incomprehensible even to ourselves.” Symonds says that what Shelley believed was the absolute and imperishable existence of the universal as perceived by us in love, beauty and delight. Though the destiny of the self be unknown, these things exist permanently. The “conclusion” of The Sensitive Plant expresses the quintessence of his hope upon this most baffling riddle: “For love, and beauty and delight/ There is no death nor change; their might/ Exceeds our organs, which endure/ No light, being themselves obscure.”***

***“Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before***

***I swore-but was I sober when I swore?***

***And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand***

***My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.”***

***Like Plato, Shelley believed that the world possessed a soul. One mind, one power, one all-pervasive and informing spirit- that is cardinal principle of Shelley’s philosophy and faith. In Adonais, he expresses his faith more passionately.***

***That ev’n my buried Ashes such a Snare***

***Of Perfume shall fling up into the Air,***

***As not a True Believer passing by***

***But shall be overtaken unaware.”***

***Shelley’s idea of death is seen throughout his works. In Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples, Ode to Liberty and Alastor, he expresses his wish to die. His Adonais can be considered as a prophecy of his own death by drowning.***

***“So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,***

***One spied the little Crescent all were seeking:***

***And then they jogg’d each other, “Brother, Brother!***

***Hark to the Porter’s Shoulder-knot a creaking!”***

***He believed that love and beauty were not concrete things but ideal and abstract. He was in pursuit of love and beauty throughout his life. And this became the sole aim of his life. He describes the vain search of Beauty in Hymn to Intellectual Beauty and meeting with that false image of pure beauty which awakens sensual love.***

***“Dreaming when Dawn’s Left Hand was in the Sky***

***I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,***

***“Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup***

***Before Life’s Liquor in its Cup be dry.”***

***Like Plato, Shelley believed love leads to the highest wisdom, the lover proceeds by grades and stages until he achieves the supreme vision. In Sensitive Plant, Shelley celebrates Platonic love; and shows love is evident in all parts of nature, and individualizes itself in the individual flowers.***

***“None answer’d this; but after Silence spake***

***A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:***

***“They sneer at me for leaning all awry;***

***What! Did the Hand then of the Potter shake?”***

***In Prometheus Unbound, the opposition of Prometheus (Good) and Jupiter (Evil) represents, “the fundamental antithesis of good and evil, liberty and despotism, love and hate.”***

***Said one-“Folks of a surly Tapster tell,***

***And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;***

***They talk of some strict Testing of us-Pish!***

***He’s Good Fellow, and ‘twill all be well.”***

***Shelley’s philosophy mainly deals with the problem of evil. To him this world is a combination of both evil and good, and a conflict exists between them. Shelley was interested in finding out the causes of the evil and wanted to eradicate them to bring in a regenerated golden world. In Shelley’s view, the forces of evil always have the upper hand and hence he felt the good people suffered. A.G. Strong says though Shelley had such a view still he believed that evil, “if it is positive and deep rooted, is also eradicable. It can be made to disappear from life and given the necessary condition of the changes, there need be little transformation of the present order.” Throughout his work, we see Shelley’s portrayal of the conflict between Good and Evil. In The Revolt of Islam, the fight between the snake and eagle depicts the fight between good and evil. Shelley speaks of the Eagle’s victory as a temporary one.***

***“With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,***

***And with my own hand labour’d it to grow:***

***And this was all the Harvest that I reap’d-***

***“I came like Water, and like Wind I go.” ‘’***

***The poet watches the pale moon in the murky east and tries to account for its paleness. He wonders if the moon is pale because it is tired of climbing the heavens and of looking down at the earth. The poet fancies that perhaps the moon is pale because it feels lonely amidst stars that have a different origin and widely differ from her in nature. Lastly, the poet imagines that the moon is pale because she cannot find anybody worthy of her devotion and love, just as a man’s eyes may be restless because he cannot fins a beloved worthy of constant love.***

***Shelley is not only a revolutionist but a pantheist too. He believed in God, the Supreme Power of the world but to him, Love and Beauty are the two means to attain that Supreme Power. Like Plato, he believed that the universe possessed a soul, and that the soul of man is pure in its nature, and though soiled by earth is capable of its original perfection.***

***Among the Romantic poets, Shelley is marveled for his inimitable abstract ideas, but he is less of an artist. He was aiming not at the poetry of art, but at the poetry of rapture. Keats advised him to be “more of an artist” and to “load every rift with ore”, but Shelley was aiming at a different effect from that of Keats’s richly decorated and highly finished poetry.***

***“Another said-“Why, ne’er a peevish Boy,***

***Would break the Bowel from which he drank in Joy;***

***Shall He that made the Vessel in pure Love***

***And Fancy, in an after Rage destroy!” ‘’***

***Rabindranath Tagore’s comment on the genius and philosophy of Shelley strikes at the keynote of his philosophy of life: “In Shelley we clearly see the growth of his religion through periods of vagueness and doubt, struggle and searching. But he did at length come to a positive utterance of his faith though he died young. Its final expression is in his ‘Hymn to Intellectual Beauty’. By the title of the poem, the poet evidently means a beauty that is not merely a passive quality of particular things, but a spirit that manifests itself through the apparent antagonist of the unintellectual life. Religion in Shelley grew with his life. It was not given to him in fixed and ready-made doctrines; he rebelled against them. He had the creative mind which could only approach Truth through its joy in creative effort.”***

***Shelley was essentially a poet of love. His idealism was the Platonic conception of love- the love of the soul. From the lowest order it rises and reaches the supreme beauty which is the highest form of love that leads to virtue, wisdom, happiness, and is subject to its power only. He speaks of love as: “The desire of the moth for the star, / Of the night for the morrow, / The devotion to something afar.”***

***“And, strange to tell, among the Earthen Lot***

***Some could articulate, while others not:***

***And suddenly one more impatient cried-***

***“Who is Potter, pray, and who the Pot?”***

***Shelley was as much a revolution as Byron. From his boyhood days, he was a rebel and was inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution. He revolted against the authority at Eton school and was expelled from Oxford. Later on he revolted against the society itself regarding his marriage difficulty. Thereafter, he became a true revolutionist and thereby a reformer through his poems. From Godwin he got the twin ideas that social institutions and conventions were the sources of tyranny and corruption, and laws, customs and authority are the hindrances to man’s liberty and happiness. From Queen Mab onwards, his poems were meant to express his concept of the future- a future which is free from war, tyranny and corruption. In Queen Mab, he asserts the ideas of revolution and prophesies a golden age in the end. In a note to Queen Mab, he wrote “The state of Society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilization.” In The Revolt of Islam, he has a vision of mankind which could be liberated from the present tyranny and corruption through the power of love, beauty and thought. In Rosalind and Helen, Shelley disagrees with a loveless marriage. It is in Prometheus Unbound that his revolutionary enthusiasm is best revealed. In this poem, he shows how Mankind is saved from the cruel hands of tyranny and corruption and attains Shelley’s ideal world through love and goodness in nature. Shelley’s idea of the regeneration of mankind through suffering, endurance of all pain, and hope is well portrayed in this poem. His vision of the future world is a world with the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity.***

***“Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,***

***And wash my Body whence the Life has died,***

***And in Winding sheet of Vine-leaf wrapt,***

***So bury me by some sweet Garden-side.”***

***Shelley as a prophet with penetrating vision of reality is evident in his own sentence on Dante in A Defence of Poetry.***

***“And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before***

***The Tavern shouted-“Open then the Door!***

***You know how little while we have to stay,***

***And, once departed, may return no more.”***

 ***His very words are instinct with spirit, each is as a spark, a burning atom of inextinguishable thought and many yet be covered in the ashes of their birth and pregnant with a lightning which has as yet found no conductor.***

***Now the New Year reviving old Desires,***

***The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,***

***Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough***

***Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.”***

***As a true reformer, he tries to deliver himself, as well as humanity from evil and darkness. He preaches that the solution is the Universal spirit of love. Love within sheds its rays and illuminates the whole universe. He looked forward to that world when the ‘plastic stress’ of this Power shall have mastered the last resistance and have become all in all, and when both Nature and mankind shall have been fully redeemed. This is the most striking quality of Shelley-to awaken public hope and to enlighten and improve mankind.***

***Ir`am indeed is gone with all its Rose,***

***And Jamshy`ds Sev’n-fing’d Cup where no one knows;***

***But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,***

***And still a Garden by the Water blows.”***

***Shelly’s devotion to liberty made him a violent reformer. Seeking to overthrow our present institutions and to hurry the millennium out of its slow walk into a gallop, to renovate the world, to bring about utopia-this was his constant aim.***

***“And David’s Lips are lock’t; but in divine***

***High piping Pehlevi`, with “Wine! Wine! Wine!***

***Red Wine!” –the Nightingale cries to the Rose***

***That yellow Cheek of hers to incarnadine.”***

***Shelley is a poetical angel who saves us from the cruel hands of dejection and suffering and shows us the brighter way to success. For that, he says, what is important is ‘hope’; we should not lose our hope at any time, for destruction is to regeneration, night is to day, unhappiness is to happiness, slavery is to freedom, end is to beginning as he points in Ode to West Wind. So the golden age, in Shelley’s view, lies not in past but in the future.***

***“Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring***

***The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:***

***The Bird of Time has but a little way***

***To fly-and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.”***

***He prophesies a world which is attainable. But of, he reveals the truth that it is not easy to attain such a virtuous world. Centuries will pass before the goal is attained and it is possible only through the efforts of wise virtuous and heroic human beings. But of, in his imagination, Shelley leaped over centuries. He sings in the ‘Ode to the West Wind.’***

***Shelley was much influenced by Godwin’s revolutionary theories. He was in rebellion against the institution of marriage too, which he proposed to substitute the doctrine of elective affinity. A few years later, Shelley showed his belief in the revolutionary theories preached by Godwin by eloping with his daughter, Mary. This proves that he is not only a dreamer but a reformer too. He was a true revolutionary, perpetually at war with the present world, a martyr and exile, fighting and crying defiance to the end.***

***“The Palace that to Heav’n his pillars threw,***

***And Kings the forehead on his threshold drew-***

***I saw the solitary Ringdove there,***

***And “Coo, coo, coo,” she cried; and “Coo, coo, coo.”***

***Some critics are of the opinion that the world cannot understand his ideas. Even if the world fails to understand him, like a prophet, he will lead them to his future world. For, Prometheus Unbound, he dramatizes the defeat of evil by the spirit of life. He is not shy to deal with such an enormous subject and is ready with the solution for the problems which it raises. The answer is that evil is subdued by love. Shelley suggests that this reappearance of evil is a possibility in a remote future. To Shelley, the prophecy is to begin and end, and the prophecy is love. He prophesies: once human goodness is aware of love and touched by it, marvelous things may happen, which is the main theme celebrated in his Prometheus Unbound.***

***Shelley is one of the subtlest and profoundest thinkers among English poets, a prophet with a penetrating vision of reality, whose words can only be thoroughly understood after long and careful study. They are well described by Browning as, “a sublime fragmentary essay towards a presentment of the correspondency of the universe to Deity, of the natural to the spiritual, and his poetry is largely the medium of his prophetic message. He is not only a poet; he is a prophet and a reformer.”***

***The idea of Love and Beauty in Shelley is greatly influenced by Plato. Love to Shelley, as to Plato is perfection of all that is good and noble in life. In Episychidion, he says that love is not bound to one object at a time and when love fades away, we need not be faithful. He adds that love conquers death and beauty, and even goodness and truth originate in it. In fact, Shelley was in love with love itself, “I love Love, though he has wings/ And like light can flee.”***

***Shelley never believed in life as it is lived; so he made people realize and aspire for the absence of the necessities. He hated and condemned the tyranny of State, Religion and Society which stand in the path of a heavenly blissful life. The calamities, he refers to are not natural calamities but man-made calamities; aspiration of man for Power pollutes the whole nation like a ‘devastating pestillence’. So people suffer under such people’s tyranny. So he longs for a golden age which is free from such calamities yet immune to pain and death.***

***“Look to the Rose that blows about us-“Lo,***

***Laughing”, she says, “into the World I blow:***

***At once the silken Tassel of my Purse***

***Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.”***

***It is the imagination which makes Shelley’s poetry the best. His mind was abstract and imaginative, that he sometimes wondered if he were fitter for metaphysics or poetry. His natural mode of thinking was too abstract to isolate some element in Nature of man, and then being a poet, to body it forth in imagery. He gives life to every object in Nature through his imagination in current words, in a new and striking manner and forms new compounds, always a fresh shoot in every living language.***

***Ordinary things are lifted to the higher plane by his imagination. The Cloud is a wonderful example of Shelley’s imagination. He imagines the cloud as the fairy child that runs about everywhere and laughs at all things. He speaks of its immortality in : “I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,/And out of the caverns of rain,/Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,/I arise and unbuild it again.” He imagines the wind in Ode to the West Wind as the destroyer destroying useless and evil creeds. Also, the wind blowing through the forest and producing noise is a common thing, but Shelley imagines the forest as a lyre on which the West Wind plays different tunes.***

***“And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,***

***And those who flung it to the Winds like Rain,***

***Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn’d***

***As, buried once, Men want dug up again.”***

***Shelley fuses intellectual ideas with the images, and the result is that the idea has a new appeal. Shelley thought that the abstract ideas which meant so much to him could be presented only in symbols and images. In his Preface, he says, “The imagery which I have employed will be found in many instances to have been drawn from the operations of human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed.”***

***“Think, in this batter’d Caravanserai***

***Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,***

***How Sulta`n after Sulta`n with his Pomp***

***Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.”***

***George M. Ridenour observes: “Shelley’s optimism is based on chances for extracting benefit from an order of things not obviously concerned with man. As he himself observes at the beginning of his ‘proposals for an Association of Philanthropists’, Man cannot make occasions, but he may seize those that offer.” This is classical, as Shelley knew. He expanded a cynical epigram of the palatine Anthology; “Under the heaving High Cope/ Fortune is God, all you endure and do/ Depends on circumstances as much as you.” But of, it is possible to reverse the emphasis and point out that it depends on you as much as circumstance and this is Shelley’s usual way. He assumes that while man’s mind and what it experiences concur only imperfectly, the extent of disproportion can at least be reduced. Art, science, and social organization can reshape the experienced world nearer to the heart’s desire but as we have noticed, Shelley’s emphasis falls on what, for want of better terms, we must call the spiritual or psychological. He hopes it is possible to exercise the mind in such a way that, without deception the elements favourable to man may be strengthened, the hostile reduced, and man finds the good he seeks. The strategy is a delicate one involving a complex interplay of active and passive, inner and outer, mind and experience, as in the intricate gearing of Alastor, Intellectual Beauty or Mont Blanc. The movement upward of the mind, often involves an imaginative projection of what ought to be, which is itself to some extent received –e.g., the vision in Alastor. The passive aspect involves an inner disposition that Shelley usually calls love, roughly the affective correlative to the more consciously shaping power. Together they make up man’s capacity for integrated experience, i.e., imagination. Shelley points out that even limited success is evidence that the non-human world is at least amenable to human purposes and he hopes that it may suggest an ultimate identity in Nature.***

***“The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon***

***Turns Ashes- or it prospers; and anon,***

***Like Snow upon the Dessert’s dusty Face***

***Lightning a little Hour or two-is gone.”***

***R.H. Fogle says: “Shelley‘s imagery is symbolic to an unusual degree.” Most of his characters are symbolical. Alastor is psychological allegory of the pursuit of the ideal, and is concerned mainly with conflict of body and spirit, dealing with the romantic conflict’s inner aspect. He often uses eagle and serpent as symbols of good and evil respectively. We come across this eagle-serpent conflict in The Revolt of Islam and the symbol of veil too is often repeated. Veil represents the veil of Eternity in his former poetry, followed by the veil of time in his later works. The symbol of veil denotes the concealment of good. In The Revolt of Islam, this symbol of veil is used to conceal truth and beauty from man. Cythna says: “For with strong speech I tore the veil that hid/ Nature, and Truth, Liberty, and Love.” In Epipsychidion, too, he uses the same image: “I knew it was the vision veiled from me/So many years-that it was Emily.” In Prometheus Unbound, he uses the same image as ‘a symbol of life’: “The painted veil, by those who were, called life/Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,/All men believed or hoped, is torn aside/The loathsome mask has fallen.” Boat as the symbol of human soul and stream as the symbol of unveil stream of thought are also handled by Shelley in his various poems. In Adonais, the boat is described as human soul. Even in The Song of India and The Revolt of Islam, the same image is repeated. Moon symbol is also used as a planet of magic calm and hope.***

***“Then said another- “Surely not in vain***

***My Substance from the common Earth was ta’en,***

***That He who subtly wrought me into Shape***

***Should stamp me back to common Earth again.” ‘’***

***Shelley’s language is pure and transparent and free from archaism and Latinism. Far-stretched images and contrived phrases and expressions are not part of his style. Most of his thoughts are coloured by imagination and are expressed in figured speeches.***

***He is the master of using blank verse too. For the blank verse of Alastor substituted the Spensarian Stanza which Shelley masters at once in his own more lyrical fashion. The music of the verse and the poetic imagery are the chief and whole interests of this poem: “the visions of a dream/ Which hid in one deep gulf the troubled stream/ of mind…” In Rosalind and Helen, he blends self-pity, eroticism, anticipation of death, the protest against cruelties of society, all in the metre of Scott, Coleridge and Byron’s tales. In Julian and Maddalo, Byron’s influence on Shelley is revealed. It shows how well Shelley could write, as in translations. He curbed his genius and wrote as one who can talk as well as think. The first part of the poem where he describes the day with Byron, is admirable in diction, and management of the couplet with overflow and varying pause. This poem is notable for its conversational and descriptive manner.***

***“And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,***

***End in the Nothing all Things end in-Yes-***

***Then fancy while Thou art, Thou art but what***

***Thou shalt be- Nothing-Thou shalt not be less.”***

***His skill in using undulating verse is well seen in his Epipsychidion, in the description of the ideal poetry and aspects of the Italian scenery with which Shelley had become familiar- all blended in the poet’s liquid and undulating verse.***

***“For in and out, above, about, below,***

***‘Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show***

***Play’d in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,***

***Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.”***

***In the love sons, the tone of a singer blends with that of one who talks in gentle winning accents: “One word is too often profaned/ For me to profane it”***

***“Khayya`m, who stitched the tents of science,***

***Has fallen in grief’s furnace and been suddenly burned;***

***The sheds of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,***

***And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing!”***

***Shelley, it may be said, loves to see Nature in all its forms; but there is no doubt that the doings of Nature are more important to him than merely those forms.***

***“Art thou pale for weariness***

***Of climbing heaven, and gazing on the earth,***

***Wandering companionless***

***Among the stars that have a different birth,-***

***And ever-changing, like a joyless eye***

***That finds no object worth its constancy?”***

***This is the main reason for the defects and weaknesses of his poems. His sentences often trail and his meaning is not infrequently obscure, but such faults can be forgiven in the effect of the whole. Unlike Wordsworth and Byron, he never writes versified prose. His voice is always the singing voice, never that of the talker or speaker. Hence, minute criticism, as of faulty rhymes or as occasional vagueness of meaning is of no avail when applied to the poems of unique beauty, spiritual and formal and of entire originality.***

***While Wordsworthian is fond of the static and quiet aspects of Nature, Shelley is fascinated by the dynamic. He himself has admitted: “I take great delight in watching the changes of the atmosphere.” this explains his great love for the sky and the resultant composition of his sky-lyrics- Ode to the West Wind, The Cloud, and To A Skylark. The West Wind never rests and it moves speedily and continuously to perform its functions over land and sea and in the sky. The Cloud and the Skylark show an equally intense restlessness. Shelley is ever conscious of the changes in Nature and her periodic regeneration; these lines in Adonais may be quoted as an illustration.***

***“Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,***

***A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse-and Thou***

***Beside me singing in the Wilderness-***

***And Wilderness is Paradise enow.”***

***The Masque of Anarchy is fraught with hard thought, deep feeling and a sense of purpose. Its street-ballad form and chipped un-Shelleyan rhythm help in compressing and condensing.***

***“For “IS” and “IS-NOT” though with Rule and Line***

***And “UP-AND-DOWN” without, I could define,***

***I yet in all I only cared to know,***

***Was never deep in anything but-Wine.”***

***As Shelley’s poetic style has its merits, it also has its own demerits. He was aiming not at the poetry of art, but at the poetry of rapture, and he achieves it as no other poet has ever done. Macaulay too comments, “The words ‘bard’ and ‘inspiration’ which seem so cold and infected when applied to other modern writers, have a perfect propriety when applied to him. He was not an author, but a bard. His poetry seems not to have been art, but an inspiration.”***

***Like other Romantic poets, Shelley is an ardent lover and worshipper of Nature. Nature is to Shelley, as it is to Wordsworth, a spiritual reality. Shelley looks upon Nature, as a never-ending source of solace and inspiration. Like Wordsworth, he believes that there is in Nature a capability for communicating with the mind and emotions of man. Yet there is a fundamental difference between these two poets in their treatment of Nature. Wordsworth endows Nature with a spirit, Shelley goes much further to provide it with an intellect. He also lends a dynamic quality to the forces of Nature in a way that the other Romantics have never been able to do. J. A. Symonds remarks: “Shelley is one with the romantic temper of his age in ascribing to Nature a spiritual quality and significance and in regarding man’s life as dynamic and progressive. But he goes beyond romanticism in his idea of a vigorous dynamic life of Nature.” Shelley loves Nature and can extract joy in its company and rid himself of his sufferings and feelings of loneliness. His admiration for Nature, thus finds expression in his essay On Love: “There is eloquence in the tongueless wind and a melody in the flowing brooks and the rumbling of the reeds beside them, which by their inconceivable relation to something within the soul awakens the spirit to a dance of breathless rapture and brings tears of mysterious tenderness to the eyes, like the enthusiasm of patriotic success, or the voice of one’s beloved singing to you alone.”***

***Shelley considers Nature to be a companion endowed with a power of ridding human beings of their pain and agonies. This view of Nature has its origin in Shelley’s personal experience. Whenever he is sad, he turns to Nature and succeeds in drawing comfort from it. During his days in Italy, the worst days in his life, he keeps trying to find joy in the beautiful Italian landscapes. In Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills, Shelley displays a mystic involvement with Nature. He finds in Nature a never ending source of delightful images. The sun is to him not just a nature phenomenon, but something, “broad, red, radiant, half-reclined on the level quivering line of the waters crystalline.” The surrounding scenic beauty of the Euganean Hills succeeds in soothing his melancholy for the moment and fills him with a radiant optimism heightened by his musings on the so-called island of Delight.***

***Images drawn from Nature are abundant in Shelley’s poetry. His images often produce a pictorial quality not to be derived even from paintings. His portrait of the Cloud is more vivid, more picturesque than the cloudscapes painted by Constable or Turner. The image of the sunrise in The Cloud is unequalled in its splendor.***

***In To A Skylark, image after image has been piled up in quick succession to give an idea of the bird-a “Cloud of Fire”, an “unembodied joy”, a “poet hidden in the light of thought”, “a golden glow-worm”; a rose “embowered in green leaves” and yet “scattering its scent.” The changing aspects of the West Wind are also illustrated through a series of images. In Adonais, the imagery is particularly rich in the Stanzas depicting the advent of spring.***

***Shelley has a natural talent for binding such images at will. When Wordsworth comes across an image, he takes care to ponder upon it until the poetry flowing from it is exhausted; he is miserly in his use of images because he does not find many of them. Shelley, on the other hand, is often seen to use one image for a moment and then to throw it away for another; unlike Wordsworth, he can afford to do so.***

***Shelley frequently goes outdoors to look for symbols to give concrete shapes to his abstract thoughts and emotions. Having a stronger insight into Nature than other poets, he finds in it an inexhaustible source of such symbols. His poetry becomes more meaningful and more vigorous whenever he finds in Nature a symbol to suit his purpose. In his West Wind, Shelley finds various symbolic meanings. To him the wind is at once a destroyer and a preserver, and hence a symbol of change. He uses the wind as a symbol of his own personality- “tameless, and swift, and proud.” Finally, the wind is made the symbol of the forces that can help bring about the golden millennium in which the sufferings of mankind will be replaced by pure happiness. Similarly, the cloud which changes but never dies is regarded by Shelley as a symbol of his belief in immortality and his yearning for some kind of supernal status, and the Skylark symbolizes his hopefulness of the liberation of mankind through the efforts of poet prophets. In Adonais, “pansies’’ have been used to symbolize the fate of Shelley’s poetry while “violets’’ stand for his modesty and innocence. The sky, stars, sun, moon, wind and the river have frequently been used by Shelley as symbols of eternity. In Adonais, we find such a reference to the immortality of stars.***

***“How sweet is mortal Sovranty!”-think some:***

***Others- “How blest the Paradise to come!”***

***Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest;***

***Oh, the brave Music of a distant Drum!”***

***Edmund remarks: “No man ever taught the triumph of the spiritual over the material more eloquently than he.” S.A. Brooke points out that Shelley’s poetry is an embodiment of youth-like vigour and that middle-aged men can regain their youth by going through it. Few poets have done more than Shelley to shake the foundations of injustice, superstition, cruelty and tyranny. His greatest contribution to mankind is, however, an unbound optimism- an overwhelming hope for regeneration.***

***“And, strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot***

***Some could articulate, while others not:***

***And suddenly one more impatient cried-***

***“Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?”***

***Another aspect of Shelley’s Nature poetry is his tendency to make myths out of Nature. His profound insight into Nature and his capacity to feel it intensely account for his unique myth-making power. In his poetry, he personifies the forces of nature and gives to each one of them an individuality, feelings and capacity to act. In Adonais, for instance, morning, thunder, ocean, winds, echo, spring and others are all impersonated and made to participate in the mourning for Keats. Clutton-Brock writes: “His myths were not to him mere caprices of fancy. They expressed by the only means which human language provides for the expression of such things, that sense, which he possessed, of a more intense reality in nature than is felt by other men. To most of us, the forces of nature have but little reality….But for Shelley these forces had as much reality as human beings have for most of us…There is this difference between Shelley and primitive myth makers- that they seem to have thought of the forces of nature as disguised beings more powerful than themselves but still in all essentials human, or else as manifestations of the power of such beings. But to Shelley, the West Wind was still a wind, and the Cloud a Cloud, however intense a reality they might have for him. In his poetry, they keep their own character and do not take on human attributes, though their own qualities may be expressed in imagery taken from human beings.”***

***“If I myself upon a looser Creed***

***Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,***

***Let this one thing for my Atonement plead:***

***That One for Two I never did mistread.”***

***Shelley was a keen student of science during his youth. This is why most of his descriptions of Nature are based on the popular science of his day. The Cloud is the most finished illustration of Shelley’s knowledge of science. The poem most seems to be written by a meteorologist. “Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers, / Lightning my pilot sits-‘’ clearly shows his knowledge of the relationship between clouds and electricity. Another line: “I change, but I cannot die…” is again based on a significant scientific truth-the undying circulation of the water particles which form the clouds. The image in the poem ‘Sunbeams with their convex gleams’ can also be cited to show that Shelley knows all about the atmospheric refraction of the sun’s rays. Desmond King-Hele writes: “Writers who figure in the history of science, like Bacon and Goethe, are rare; but Shelley’s gift of expressing in his verse a scientific outlook which ‘permeates it through and through’ is even rarer. It is difficult to define this special scientific flavour. Probably its most important component is a persistent analysis of Nature: being eager to delve beneath the surface of appearance, instead of seeing things whole like Keats and Shakespeare, searching out the casual chain between one facet of Nature and another, and linking those facets imaginatively or metaphorically to interpret the scene describes. It is in his command of this last technique that Shelley scores.”***

***“And look- a thousand Blossoms with the Day***

***Woke- and a thousand scatter’d into Clay:***

***And this first Summer Month that brings the Rose***

***Shall take Jamshy`d and Kaikoba`d away.”***

***Most of Shelley’s poems are sad in tone and as such he is regarded as “the singer of endless sorrows.” But of, this is not true of all his poems. Whenever he writes of the future of mankind, he turns ecstatically optimistic.***

***“But come with old Khayya`m, and leave the Lot***

***Of Kaikoba`d and Kaikhosru` forgot:***

***Let Rustum lay about him as he will,***

***Or Ha`tim Tai cry Supper-heed them not.”***

***In Ode to West Wind, the poet begins his invocation in a buoyant mood. He looks upon the Wind as the destroyer of the present order and usherer of a new one. In the course of the poem, he suddenly remembers his own plight: “I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!” And the tone turns pessimistic. But in, the subsequent thought of the future at once turns his melancholy into ecstatic rapture and he ends the poem with one of the most optimistic and memorable prophecies about the future of mankind.***

***“But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me***

***The Quarrel of the Universe let be:***

***And, in some corner of the Hubub coucht,***

***Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.”***

***The ecstasy arises out of his ardent belief in the imminent regeneration of mankind and the end of all evils. He hopes that all forms of tyranny and oppression will be replaced, in the millennium to come, by all-round happiness.***

***“The mighty Mahm` d, the victorious Lord,***

***That all the misbelieving and black Horde***

***Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul***

***Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.”***

***In Hellas, Shelley has a clear and sublime vision of the future of mankind. His prophecy of the gold millennium, envisaged in Ode to the West Wind, finds a more elaborate and rapturous expression in his poetic drama, Hellas. In the poem, he imagines an age of mental light with the law of love and beauty for its guiding principle. The joyous rapture at the end of the play is born of an intense feeling of optimism.***

***Shelley’s attitude towards life is on the one hand immensely pessimistic, and, on the other, extremely optimistic. He is pessimistic about the present and bears optimistic hopes for the future. Contemplation of the corruption, tyranny and social problems of the present fills him with despondency. But at, he believes in the imminent dawning of a new era- a golden millennium-when all evils will disappear giving place to a reign of love, beauty and happiness. He is, by nature, a hypersensitive person-reacting to all kinds of sentiments and passion with an extreme intensity of feeling. He is a man of many moods, and his poems, depending on the moods, are either expressions of ebullient ecstasy or revelations of an extreme despair.***

***“With me along some Strip of Herbage strown***

***That just divides the desert from the sown,***

***Where name of Slave and Sulta`n scarce is known,***

***And pity Sulta`n Ma`hmu`d on this Throne.”***

***Stanzas Written in Dejection near Naples, illustrates a mood of extreme despair on the part of Shelley. The poem was composed at a time when the poet had already faced a series of personal misfortunes and was left extremely lonely and sad. He had the feeling that he was one “whom men love not”. The happy surroundings of the Bay of Naples are contrasted with his personal agonies making them sharper and more poignant. It is, therefore, natural that the poem becomes an expression of an intense pessimism on the part of the poet. A Lament (O World! O Life! O Time!) is another poem depicting Shelley’s characteristic mood of genuine despair. The poet now finds joy in nothing. His twice-repeated expression of hopelessness arising from his contemplation of the prospect of joy returning to him-“No more-O, never more”- reveals a genuine and deep-felt mood of dejection and despondency. The Indian Serenade is one of Shelley’s most beautiful lyrics written in the white heat of passion. The tone underlying the poem is one of gloom and intense pessimism. The sadness of the lovelorn poet in this poem borders on morbidity.***

***The poet’s concept of love here arises from a sense of frustration and his personal agonies. He looks upon love not as a source of comfort, but as a disease of the mind which slowly and steadily leads the victim to his ruin. The lines quoted from the poem remind us of a similar expression of the poet’s sufferings in his famous Ode to the West Wind: “Oh! Lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!/I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!”***

***A Window Bird Sate Mourning is a short song also characterized by an intense feeling of pathos. The poet describes a widow bird in a scene of wintry desolation where the wind is frozen, the stream is freezing and there is no leaf or flower in the forest and upon the ground. There can be no doubt that the poem is inspired by Shelley’s own feelings in the wintry scene. The picture of the desolation is only a concrete expression of the poet’s own melancholy. The appeal of the poem lies in the genuine emotion underlying it.***

***“The Grape that can with Logic absolute***

***The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:***

***The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice***

***Life’s leaden Metal into Gold transmute.”***

***Hymn to Intellectual Beauty also is an expression of the poet’s melancholy. The poet is depressed because this Intellectual Beauty which gives joy to human hearts comes so rarely. At the moment in which the poem is written, the Spirit of Beauty is gone, leaving the poet in a mood of absolute despair. The world for him has now turned into a “dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate.” Despondency shines through the subsequent questions he asks. Adonais originates from Shelley’s intense feeling of sadness at the premature death of a fellow poet, John Keats. The sadness underlying the poem is greatly enhanced by the blending of the occasion with the poet’s own characteristic feeling of loneliness. This accounts for the subjective, pessimistic elements in the poem. His description of himself:”He came the last, neglected and apart; /A herd-abandoned deer, struck by the hunter’s dart…” comes straight from a wounded and agonized heart. He refers to himself as “companionless” and gives an extremely pathetic expression to his helplessness and insufficiency by calling his own spirit. Shelley’s pessimism reaches its peak when in the last stanza of the Elegy, he forecasts an early death for himself: “…my spirit’s bark is driven/ Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng/Whose sails were never to the tempest given.”***

***Arnold finds Shelley’s poetry wanting in “truth and seriousness.” While commenting upon the visionary aspect of his poetry, Arnold remarks: “It is his poetry, above everything else, which for many people establishes that he is an angel. But of his poetry I have not space now to speak. But let no one suppose that a want of humour and a self-delusion such as Shelley’s have no effect upon a man’s poetry. The man Shelley, in very truth, is not entirely sane, and Shelley’s poetry is not entirely sane either. The Shelley of actual life is a vision of beauty and radiance, indeed, but availing nothing, effecting nothing. And in poetry, no less than in life, he is a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain.”***

***We can trace both intense despair and bright optimism in Shelley’s poetry. The growth of these two opposing views can be traced as more or less separate developments. The optimism resulting from belief in the impending regeneration of mankind develops through Alastor, Prometheus Unbound and Hellas. His mood of despair spreads through his first individual lyric to his last poem. These two opposing moods are, of course, seen together in a few poems, particularly in Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills. The poem opens in a morbid contemplation of death, but ends in the joyous dream of a land where music and moonlight and feeling are one. He recognizes misery and happiness as two aspects of human life. The poem is basically a sad poem, but an intense optimism, accepting the presence of islands of Delight in the sea of Misery, runs through the entire length of the poem. On this aspect of the poem, Elton comments: “The course of Shelley’s genius may be regarded as an effort to attain this coalescence, and to find a form that should express at once all he dreamed of for humanity and all, he knew about himself. Cut-off at twenty-nine, he hardly achieved this, but a sort of race between these competing impulses can be traced in his poetic progress.”***

***It would be sheer injustice to pretend that Shelley’s poetry, unsubstantial and vague as it is, has taught us nothing. He has taught us the lessons of love, forgiveness and patient suffering through his poetry. In Prometheus Unbound, he has taught the world: “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.”***

***“How long, how long, in definite Pursuit***

***Of This and That endeavour and dispute?***

***Better be merry with the fruitful Grape***

***Than sadder after no new, or bitter, Fruit.”***

***Arnold’s criticism of Shelley has led to much controversy. Many critics have taken an unsympathetic attitude similar to Arnold’s towards Shelley. They have all alike dismissed Shelley’s poetry as unsubstantial, unreal and visionary. Hazlitt remarks: “Bubbles were to him the only realities, touch them and they vanish,” and that “nobody was ever wiser or better for reading Shelley.” According to Lamb, Shelley’s poetry is “thin sown with profit or delight.” ‘’Shelley’s creed,” says Leslie Stephen, “means only a vague longing.” Arthur Symons has criticized Shelley for “he teaches us nothing and leads us nowhere but cries and flies round us like a sea-bird.” Shelley is ‘’a sentimentalist, pure and simple, incapable of anything like inductive reasoning” is the verdict of Kingsley, Prof Grierson has thus abused him: “Shelley can neither comprehend nor create.” T.S.Eliot too has dismissed Shelley’s poetry as absurd and has called it “an affair of adolescence.” The admirers of Shelley, on the other hand, have been equally vehement in their defence of his poetry. Olive Elton has summarily dismissed Arnold’s criticism of Shelley; he says: “Arnold is wrong about Shelley, wrong beyond recovery, and without qualification.” Quiller- Couch asserts, “Ineffectual is the falsest word that has been applied to Shelley.” Sir Walter Raleigh, George Ridenour, Carlos Baker and A. C. Bradley have found ample meaning and substance in Shelley’s poetry. S.A.Brooke condemns Arnold for his criticism and points out that Arnold has proved to be a critic with wrong judgement by predicting that Shelley’s prose will outlive his poetry. Clutton-Brock is of the opinion that Shelley had an intense faith “in mankind and the future of the universe; but it remained always abstract, and he hated all facts that seemed to him to contradict it.”***

***Arnold’s charge against Shelley seems to be a mixture of truth and illogicality. There is no doubt that Shelley’s poetry, to a great extent, suffers from a lack of concreteness and a want of substance. His friend, Hogg, once remarked that Shelley’s feet were seldom planted on earth and that he “flew aloft to heaven with singing robes around him, or the mantle of the prophet on his shoulders.” Shelley had been haunted by visions since his boyhood. In his Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, Shelley himself describes his boyhood when he looked for ghosts through “many a listening chamber, cage, and ruin,” and “musing deeply on the lot of life” would see ethereal visions. Referring to this characteristic of Shelley’s personality, Symons observes: “At no period of his life was he wholly free from visions which had the reality of facts. Sometimes they occurred in sleep and were prolonged with painful vividness into his waking moments. Sometimes they seemed to grow out of his intense meditation, or to present themselves before his eyes as the projection of a powerful inner expression. All his sensations were abnormally acute, and his ever active imagination confused the borderlands of the actual and the visionary.” His visions fill him with aspirations that cannot be defined; they are like: “The desire of the moth for the star, / Of the night for the morrow, / The devotion to something afar/ From the sphere of our sorrow.” It is obvious that such abstract aspirations cannot be fulfilled in this matter-of-fact world inhabited by human beings. So Shelley is often found soaring like his skylark far into the ethereal world out of the reach of human beings. The poetry composed in that ethereal sphere must inevitably be somewhat vague and lacking in human touch. His sky-lyrics-Ode to West Wind, The Cloud, To A Skylark-are beautiful poems, but they all deal with their subjects as far away from ordinary human experience.***

***When we discuss the charge of “unsubstantiality’’ against Shelley, we must recall to our mind a few facts about the art of poetic communication. The relationship between a poet and his poetry differs from that between a mechanic and his machine. A mechanic can run his machine only if he knows the technique of doing so. But of, mere poetic technique cannot produce poetry; poetic inspiration must accompany technique for doing so. The inspiration in Shelley’s case has ever been so intense and all-pervading that it has often swept him off the ground and taken him into an ethereal world to find images and objects for its expression. The inspiration of the poet, by its intensity and great range, becomes vague and incomprehensible to ordinary men, and this vagueness passes on to everything it touches. Clouds, Skylarks, the moon, the stars are all familiar to us; they become vague only when Shelley’s superhuman genius touches them. Shelley belongs to the rare category of the men of vision who have that magnificience of perspective, that depth of experience, that poignant touch of the soul that escape one who lives on the surface. Shelley’s experience is, therefore, larger and deeper than ours and his heart more capable of responding to the remotest murmurs of things. Poets like Shelley can find far-off truths, often called poetic truths, not easily visible to the ordinary eyes. If we want to enjoy Shelley’s poetry, we must not look for information in it; we must try to insinuate ourselves into his moods, feel with his heart and judge with his mind to get to the poetic truths that he has expressed in his poetry. If we look through the whirling obscurity of thought and fancy in his poetry we can find this remaining constant and steady throughout. It is the truth propounded by Plato twenty five centuries earlier, one that states that man is essentially good.***

***The Cloud is a wonderful illustration of Shelley’s myth-making power. In this poem, Shelley personifies the Cloud which is a familiar sight to all of us and then goes on to give a new significance to all its changes. The autobiographical and scientific presentation of the myth has lent it immense credibility and has created a new romance of the sky.***

***Shelley shows no sense of history and cannot put forth the cause and remedies of the evils he finds in human society. He has an intense belief the regeneration of mankind is imminent but cannot tell us why and how it is coming. His West Wind is a symbol of the forces that will bring about this regeneration: it is nothing more. He has never told us what these forces symbolized by the wind are in Written Among the Euganean Hills, is merely a product of an unfounded optimism and has no logical bearing. Shelley’s faith is no doubt genuine and intense, but it comes from his abstract visions, not from sound logical reasoning.***

***Similar artistry can be traced in To A Skylark which is not simply a poem but the bird’s song itself translated into Stanzas. The Stanza used in the poem indeed corresponds, in its first four lines, to the crescendo of the bird’s song, and, in the prolonged last line, to the ‘rain of melody’ which is its climax. The rhythm of the poem, The Cloud, beautifully suggests the hurrying movement of the Clouds before a tempestuous wind. Such blending of sense and versification is wonderful and unique, and it is this quality in particular which has made Shelley’s lyrics so musical. On his lyrical poetry Charles Morgan remarks: “His instrument was unique. There is no poet, not even Shakespeare in his lyrics, who has Shelley’s effect of bird-song pouring and pouring out. His lyrics are not written; they burst from the hedgerow, the sunshine, the air; they give to the hearer the life of the heart, the sense of penetrating rapture which is given by Nature and by love.”***

***Melancholy is found to be the dominant note in most of Shelley’s lyrics. He becomes sad and often despondent whenever he thinks of the evils of the present, or of personal sufferings. Some of his lyrics are entirely pessimistic in tone. His Stanzas Written in Dejection near Naples, reflects a mood of utter despondency. He feels that he is one “whom men love not” and then proceeds to narrate a profound sense of helplessness. The Indian Serenade is another of his lyrics written in a similar mood. Here he gives expression to his sufferings and frustration with genuine passion: “O lift me from the grass! / I die! I faint! I fail! This note of melancholy that pervades his poetry has added to the lyrical quality of his poems. Looking at them we cannot but agree with the famous poetic truth: “Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.” But of, Shelley’s melancholy is never depressing. Shelley never allows morbidity to overcome the enjoyment in his lyrics. Self-pity is no doubt his favourite theme. But at in his lyrics, he presents this self-pity, not as something to be feared, but as an essential part of life. Shelley’s readers are never depressed because they are constantly reminded that sufferings lie only in the present and that in future all sufferings will be replaced by pure happiness. In Ode to the West Wind, the poet shows a mood of despondency. His despondency is soon replaced by an ecstatic rapture of joy when he comes to think of the future happiness of mankind, of the millennium to come. This co-existence of pessimism and optimism- the swift replacement of one by the other-is a major attractive feature of Shelley’s lyric poetry.***

***Spontaneity is the most striking quality of Shelley’s lyrics. His lyrics move so flowingly because they come straight from his heart. His lyrics as, Stopford Brooke remarks “have the rush and impetuosity of south.” According to Compton Rickett, “Shelley exhaled verse as a flower exhaled fragrance. The essential point is that there was no effort or laborious artistry about it any time.” Shelley is swept forward by a rush of poetic energy and goes on producing image after image, all inspired by the original thought. The imagery in these lyrics, therefore, gives the impression of being the product of no laborious thought but of a spontaneous growth of poetic impulse. The imagery in the West Wind, for example, gives an instant impression of a spontaneous flow of thought. We pass in turn over earth, sky, and sea, the music growing fuller and more majestic as the poet moves on.***

***Eagle-serpent battles are quite frequent in literature. Shelley may have come across such battles in Iliad, Aeneid, Metamorphoses, or Faerie Queene. Of the use of this symbol of an eagle-snake encounter in The Revolt of Islam, Desmond King-Hele writes: “The life-long fight of Laon and Cythna against tyranny corresponds to the day-long aerial battle between eagle and serpent. The theme of romantic love comes in when the serpent, defeated, falls into the sea: for in myth, serpents and water often have sexual implications. And the name ‘Cythna’ with its hissing sound and its hint of a swan, serpent-necked, afloat on a still lake, again links serpents and water. Byron called Shelley ‘the snake’ because the way he walked, but the nickname really went deeper, for Shelley was always fascinated by snakes, perhaps because as a child he had heard the legends of dragons and serpents terrorizing the vastness of St. Leonards’s Forest, near Horsham. He was equally fascinated by eagles, but since it was his habit to stress their nobility and to use them to personify young nations throwing off the yoke of tyranny, it is odd that he should here choose the eagle to symbolize evil. Presumably he wished on this occasion to emphasize its cruelty, strength and apparent arrogance, which contrast with the serpent’s unassuming air.***

***‘Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days***

***Where Destiny with Men for Pieces play:***

***Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,***

***And one by one back in the Closet lays.”***

***Adonais illustrates Shelley’s capacity to feel Nature and its doings. The poem is full of myths, that is, personifications of Nature. Nature, according to Shelley, is linked with mankind in an inseparable bond of love and sympathy. Thunder, ocean, winds, echo, spring and other natural phenomena have all been personified and made to participate in the mourning for Adonais. The myth of Morning, lamenting the death of Adonais, is but one example of such powerful, credible, and typically Shelleyan myths.***

***“Ah, Moon of my Delight, who know’st no wane,***

***The Moon of Heav’n is rising once again:***

***How oft hereafter rising shall she look***

***Through this same Garden after me- in vain!”***

***S.A. Brooke regards this poem as the most astonishing example of Shelley’s myth-making power. Of this poem he says: “It is not only a myth of the Cloud; the Cloud is accompanied by a host of other impersonafications of nature- the sanguine sunrise with his meteor eyes, the orbed maiden of the moon, the imprisoned giant of the thunder, the lightning which runs through the sky to find his love, - all are touched into life, and yet there is not one phrase, not one adjective which is contradictory of, or which does not illuminate, natural fact.”***

***Shelley has been universally accepted as one of the supreme lyrical geniuses in English poetry. He, according to Swinburne, “stands alone among singers, and he is the perfect singing god.” According to Cazamian, “Shelley’s lyricism is incomparable. In no other poet do, we find the perfect sureness, the triumphant rapidity of his upward flight, the soaring height, the super-terrestrial quality as well as the poignant intensity of the sounds which fall from these aerial regions.” Ernest Rys in his Lyric Poetry has paid a similar tribute to Shelley’s lyrical genius: “Among the lyric poets, Shelley, who was a lyric poet before everything, needs no longer to have his claim reaffirmed. We judge him by the verdict of those English poets who, coming after him, have famously sustained his ideals.” Even the narrative poems of Shelley are stamped by his lyricism. Shelley combines his passion and simplicity with other remarkable qualities, namely, the quality of music and the art of combining the outward rhythm of the verse with an inner rhythm of thought and imagery. No other English poet has so well succeeded in blending music with thought, in harmonizing rhythm with emotion.”***

***“And when Thyself with shinning Foot shall pass***

***Among the Guests Star-scatter’d on the Grass,***

***And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot***

***Where I made one-turn down an empty Glass!”***

***To Night is another fine example of Shelley’s ability to create new myths. He does not pursue Greek legend in this poem, but himself creates “forms more real than living men, Nurslings of immortality.” While admiring the mythical element in this poem, Fowler has observed: “Personifications of Day, Night, Sleep and Death are common enough in the English poets in imitation of Classical poetry, but they are apt to be frigid. The remarkable thing about Shelley’s personifications is that they are more real to him than their ancient counterparts were to the great majority of the classical poets themselves. Perhaps the best help to the appreciation of the most delicate hues would be the study of some of the allegorical paintings of Burne Jones.” In the poem, Shelley has strengthened his myths by lending life and feeling to some abstractions and by distributing relationships among them.***

***By ‘myth’ we usually mean a purely fictitious narrative involving supernatural persons etc. and embodying popular ideas on natural phenomena or such other things. The origin of myths lies in the ancient days when people, unable to form abstract conceptions, described the phenomena of nature in terms applicable to their personal actions. The introduction of myths in poetry is, of course, a much later development. Mr. Henri Frankfort and Mrs. H.A. Frankfort, in their book Myth and Reality, have referred to the functions of myths in poetry: “Myth is a form of poetry which transcends poetry in that it proclaims a truth; a form of reasoning which transcends reasoning in that it wants to bring about the truth it proclaims, a form of action, of ritual behavior, which does not find its fulfillment in the act but must proclaim and elaborate a poetic form of myth. Like Blake, Shelley is essentially mythopoetic. Of all the Romantic poets, he is the greatest myth-maker. No other poet has used the ancient myths to such advantage as he has done in nature and philosophical poems.***

***He was alone the perfect singing God; his thoughts, words and deeds all sang together. Arnold, one of the worst critics of Shelley, admired his music and remarked: “The right sphere of Shelley’s genius was the sphere of music.” Shelley’s careful handling of diction fitting into the sense of his lines enhances the musical quality keeping with the swift, of his lyrics. The rhythm of Ode to the West Wind is thus exactly in gusty march of the wind itself: “O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being.”***

***“While the Rose blows along the River Brink,***

***With old Khayya` m the Ruby Vintage drink:***

***And when the Angel with his darker Draught***

***Draws up to Thee-take that, and do not shrink.”***

***Shelley’s is unparallel in the sphere of making myths out of Nature mainly because he has a greater imaginative insight into Nature than any other poet. The natural phenomena occurring through a great volume of space have always attracted him. The moon, in particular, has always been an object of interest to Shelley. He has referred to the moon as a living and feeling object in many of his poems. In Prometheus Unbound, the moon has been given a human shape. It is presented there as the lover of Earth, indulging in an erotic myth. The moon is imagined as a young maiden in another poem, The Cloud.***

***A symbol in a broad sense denotes an image used to signify an idea. Shelley, endowed with tremendous imagination and a deep insight into natural objects, finds symbols to express his ideas almost at will. That is why his poetry abounds in symbols and requires from the readers quite an amount of insight to be able to appreciate it. R.H. Fogle observes: “Shelley’s poetic world is not a literal transcription of his perceptions of the natural world but a conscious arrangement and compositions of these perceptions. Shelley is also abstract in his consistent use of symbolism.” This abstract nature of his symbolism has added to the difficulty in understanding his poems. Yet it has to be admitted that despite their vagueness, most of his symbols have a charm of their own are generally accepted as evidence of Shelley’s great imaginative genius.***

***In the ancient myths the actions of nature are impersonated described as doings of men or animals. The dawn is, in such myths, regarded as a being flying before the rising sun. summer and winter are presented as powerful beings conquering each other by turn with a regularity. Such impersonations of the forces of nature still exist, but they no longer live in faith of reason. Shelley’s greatness as a myth-maker lies in his ability to keep himself detached from the older implications of the myths and make new myths out of such forces of Nature. His myths are refreshing because they come in a spontaneous, natural way, and not out of a conscious and laborious effort on the part of the poet. Clutton-Brock has paid a glowing tribute to Shelley’s myth-making faculty: “To most of us, the forces of nature have but little reality….But for Shelley these forces had as much reality as human beings have for most of us, and he found the same kind of intense significance in their manifestations of beauty that we find in the beauty of human beings or of great works of art…There is this difference between Shelley and the primitive myth-makers- that they seem to have thought of the forces of nature as disguised beings more powerful than themselves but still in all essentials human, or else as manifestations of the power of such beings. But to Shelley the west wind was still a wind, and the Cloud a Cloud, however intense a reality they might have for him. In his poetry they keep their own character and do not take on human attributes, though their own qualities may be expressed in imagery taken from human beings. When he addresses the West Wind…we are not wrought upon to feel anything human in the wind’s power; but, if we are susceptible to Shelley’s magic, we are filled with a new sense of the life and significance and reality of nature.”***

***The personification of the moon becomes more credible and more realistic in the lyric To The Moon. In the poem, the moon looks more human and commonplace. The Moon looks pale because, the poet explains, she is weary of “climbing heaven and gazing on the earth.” The “gazing on the earth” also implies a relationship of love between them. She is sad, like any human being, when she is lonely. She keeps changing her form because she is restless, like human beings, at finding none worthy of her unchanging love. Shelley’s myth of the moon may not agree with modern scientific explanations of the satellites, but it is at once unique and appealing.***

***The theme of the frail boat adrift on stormy seas or streams appears again and again in Shelley’s poems. Boating appears as Shelley’s favourite pastime. He seems to relish the alternate senses of danger and domination as the boat survives the pull of the waves which seem to overwhelm it. In the boat, he finds his own personality summed up while he proceeds along the stream of his life challenging bravely the hurdles it sets up for him. That is why he goes on to use a boat’s progress, across the ocean or down a river, as a symbol for a soul’s journey through life. Rough waters for him signify emotional crises faced by the souls. Shelley makes good use of this boat symbol in Alastor where the Poet is seen setting sail in a shallop that survives a furious storm and a hazardous journey along an underground stream into the bowels of the earth via an enormous whirlpool. It is also used in Prometheus Unbound, where Asia sings.***

***Shelley’s lyrics are surpassingly musical and sweet. Swinburne was ecstatic in his tribute to this aspect of Shelley’s lyricism. Shelley out-sang all poets on record, but some two or three throughout all time; his depths and heights of inner and outer music are as diverse as nature’s and not sooner exhaustible.***

***Shelley uses the symbol with even greater significance in Adonais where, ensconced in his soul-boat, he zooms out of sight on his way to join Adonais. With such symbols Shelley obviously follows in the track of Coleridge who liked to represent the soul’s progress through life by a voyage in a boat, a device used on the grand scale in The Ancient Mariner.***

 ***“And this delightful Herb whose tender Green***

***Fledges the River’s Lip on which we lean-***

***Ah, lean upon it lightly! For who knows***

***From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!”***

***“The lyric proper” says Stopford Brooke, “is the product of a swift, momentary and passionate impulse coming from without for the most part, suddenly awaking the poet into a vivid life, seizing upon him and setting him on fire. The duration of this fire is short in all poets, but it burns with different intensity in different poets.” In Shelley, it burns slowly for a time, then flares to heaven in a rush of flame, then sinks and dies as swiftly as it flamed. It is as momentary as a meteor in him, and its substance is vapourised by its own heat. A pure lyric arising out of such circumstances has to be simple both in theme and form. Because the lyric fire is short-lived, the lyric gives forth only one emotion or one thought. In the creation of such a lyric there is no time for ornamentation. Shelley is the master of this swift, fiery and simple form of lyric. The Flight of Love can be quoted to illustrate this form.***

***“Perplext no more with Human or Divine,***

***To-morrow’s tangle to the winds resign,***

***And lose your fingers in the tresses of***

***The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.***

***The poetic drama, Prometheus Unbound, abounds in symbolism. The person in the play is not real; they only represent some ideas. Prometheus stands for something which Shelley himself describes in the preface as “the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and truest motives to the best and noblest ends.” His companions- Panthea, Ione, and Asia-are in effect Faith, Hope, and Love. Pitted against them is Jupiter, who represents the brutal forces in human nature. Jupiter’s ultimate defeat symbolizes the defeat of evil by the spirit of life. The union of Prometheus and Asia similarly signifies the union of human mind with the spirit of love that pervades the universe, and marks the beginning of the much awaited reign of love. Thus in the play Shelley has symbolically represented a whole Greek legend to express his favourite idea of the imminent regeneration of mankind.***

***The word ‘poison’ often recurs in Shelley’s poetry to signify evil and corruption. In Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills, the ‘poison’ symbol has been used to imply evil and exploitation. The symbol is used in The Revolt of Islam where the poet says that in the good time to come. The frequency with which the symbol of poison has been employed in Shelley’s poetry is a glaring evidence of the poet’s deep concern about the evils in this world.***

***“You know, my Friends, how long since in my House***

***For a new Marriage I did make Carouse:***

***Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,***

***And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.”***

***Shelley’s sky-lyrics-Ode to the West Wind, The Cloud and To A Skylark- have all been interpreted as having symbolic significance. The West Wind drives away the old, pale, hectic-red leaves and scatters fresh seeds over the ground. Shelley thus looks upon the Wind as a destroyer of the old order and the usherer of a new one i.e., as a symbol of the forces that will end all evil and bring about the golden millennium in which there will be nothing but peace and happiness for mankind. In the poem, The Cloud, the brief line of a Cloud has been interpreted by many critics as Shelley’s intended symbol of man’s brief span of life. The Cloud’s rebirth after death has also been construed by such critics as a symbol of the immortality of the soul. However, there is no doubt that his concept of the Skylark is entirely symbolic. To Shelley, the bird stands for the perfection that ever remains unattainable and unknown to man. So he tells the bird, “What thou art we know not” and then asks, “What is most like thee?” The bird is: “Like a poet hidden/ In the light hymns unbidden, /Till the word is wrought/ To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not”… and in this sense, it performs functions that the poet himself wishes to do. The skylark, by its very nature, also symbolizes Shelley’s own poetic spirit.***

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***Rituparna Ray Chaudhuri.***

***~***

***“The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,***

***Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit***

***Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,***

***Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.”***

***[Except Setting, Ideas, Changing anew words or alike, words are taken from Critical Thoughts on Shelley of Dr. Sen and quatrains of Omar Khayya`-m...]***

***~Rituparna Ray Chaudhuri.***