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**POETRY YIELDS KNOWLEDGE: A CRITICAL READING OF PERCY
BYSSHE SHELLEY**

Ph.D THESIS
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Prof. Dr. Ragıp Kutay KARACA

Enstitü Müdürü

To my spouse and daughter,



FOREWORD

In this study, I investigated how poetry can yield knowledge via a critical reading of Percy Bysshe Shelley. The reason why I chose Romantic literature in general and Shelley in particular, was that Romanticism was regarded as a milestone in the history of literature due to its overemphasis on the nature and imagination, on the one hand, and its opposition with urbanization, modernization as well as industrialization, on the other.

Additionally, as for the poets of this literary school, Shelley by far stands out because he was an iconoclastic poet with non-conforming attitudes. He had an extremely revolutionary spirit associated with a rock-solid belief in change. Another characteristic of Shelley was his unwavering willpower for instilling awareness and wisdom in the public. Apart from his admirable literary works, he struggled to be the voice of the suppressed and silent majority. Unlike his contemporary poets or even the first generation of the Romantics, he did not simply rely on the basic tenets of Romanticism, rather, he acted as an unstoppable force of nature whose poetry surpassed the boundaries of rationale and reawakened human beings and empowered them with the capability of imagination to rethink of themselves and their surroundings. One more reason as to why I consider Shelley to be the most leading Romantic poet is that he was a sound and fair critic of institutionalized religion and politics; in other words, he cherished a hope of establishing a secular and uncorrupt government in which the priests and fraudulent officials would not intervene. As a matter of fact, just like Shelley, I am concerned about these issues as well for they open a new horizon before the eyes of the individuals to grasp a relative sense of truth; therefore, I decided to carry out this research in order to present a supernatural aspect of human mind namely imagination, which is an infinite weapon human is equipped with.

Having said that, my purpose is to galvanize my interlocutors and readers to make a change both mentally and spiritually since change is the only permanent concept in the universe, so to speak.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
ÖZET.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Literature Review	5
1.2 Sublime and Shelley.....	26
1.3 Shelley and Politics.....	31
1.4 Shelley's Defense of Imagination.....	35
2. PLATONISM AND NEO-PLATONISM AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO SHELLEY'S Poetry.....	44
2.1 Basic Tenets of Platonic and Neo-Platonic Thought.....	44
2.2 Shelley's Platonism.....	62
2.3 Shelley's Poetic Philosophy.....	66
2.4 Shelley: From Reality To Atheism.....	105
3. SHELLEY AND THE SUBLIME.....	117
3.1 The Sublime and the Beautiful: Their Meaning and Importance in Romanticism.....	117
3.2 Emanuel Kant and Edmund Burke on Sublime	121
3.3 Sources of Sublime, Moral Knowledge and Poetic Inspiration in Shelley..	130
4. SHELLEY'S POLITICS.....	154
4.1 French Revolution and Shelley	154
4.2 Shelley Inspires Marx and Darwin	168
4.3 Poetic Liberalism In Shelley.....	180
5. CONCLUSION.....	207
REFERENCES.....	221
RESUME.....	327

ŞİİR BİLGİ VERİR: PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY 'NİN ELEŞTİREL BİR OKUMASI

ÖZET

Bu tezin ana amacı şiir bilgi türünü ve şiir yoluyla nasıl öğrenildiğini Shelley'nin bakış açısından aydınlatmaktır. Bundan başka, bu çalışma hayal gücü insan zihnini ve düşüncelerini biçimlendirdiği için, Shelley'nin vermek istediği bilginin anlaşılmayacağını savunur. Hayal gücü, doğa elementlerini canlı ve dönüştürecek bir güç olarak işler görür. Shelley'ye göre, hayal gücü doğal çevreyle karşılık bir ilişki içinde, içine girdiğinde tanrısal şiir oluşur ve bilgi ortaya çıkar. Romantik edebiyat akıldan hayal gücü ve duyguya doğru bir değişim ve dönüşümle ilgilidir; yani akıl duyguya dönüşüyor. Akıl ve hayal gücünü, duyguya dönüşmesini, doğaya ve kırsal hayata olan tutkuyu, Romantik edebiyat dile getirir. Shelley'ye göre de, hayal gücü gerçekliğin bilginin ötesine gidebilen doğal bir yetenektir. Shelley, hayal gücünü kutsallığın ve zihinsel yaratıcılığın en iyi ölçü olarak düşünürdü. Ayrıca, o hayal gücünü şiirsel yola yönlendirdi. Shelley şiirin çok yaratıcı bir zihnin ürünü olduğunu ve gerçeğe ulaşma potansiyeline sahip olduğunu iddia etti.

Doğruluktan söylemek istediği şey mutluluk noktasıdır ki göreceli dir. Shelley'nin bir çok çalışmalarını ve özellikle şiirinin araştırmış olan bu çalışmada bulduğum ilk şey şudur: Platon'un takipçisi olmasına rağmen, platonik prensipler den sonunda vaz geçti ve kendi şiirsel felsefesini tanı, yaradılış, doğruluk ve şiir'le ilgili geliştirdi. Bunlara ek olarak, bu tez savunmasının ikinci buluşu shelley şiire tamamen farklı bir anlam kattığını gördüm, ki neredeyse edebi ve sıradan şiir anlam 'ile ilgisi yok. Üçüncüsüye, tanrıya inanmak, hayal gücüyle çelişir zira tanrı, zihnin daha fazla spekülasyon yapmasını önler, halbuki hayal gücü hem bedenin hem de ruhun bilinmeyen bölgelerini keşfetme aklına ilham verir. Son olarak, belli bir dereceye kadar dördüncü buluş, üçüncü keşifle bağlantılı; yani yüce tanrı simgelemez aksini iddia eden bazı filozoflara rağmen Shelley den önce, fakat, yüce gizli bir güçtür doğadaki onun itici gücü insanın hayal gücüdür ve şiir bunu aktive edebilir.

Diğer bir deyişle, hayal gücü yüceyi aktive edebilir. Dahası, hayal gücü zorunlu olarak hoş ve sevimli bir şey doğurmaz, ama bazen kötü ve istenmeyen duygularla karışır. En son ama en kötü değil, politikaya olan ilgisinin güçlü hayal gücünden etkilendiğini anladım, halkın ideal bir toplumu ve geleceği görselleştirmek için hayal gücünü genişletmelerini isteyen siyasi şiirlerinden anlaşılabilir. Gerçek şuki, Shelley'nin özel hayal gücü açıklamasının ışığında bu çalışmanın ana argümanı olarak, ben önemli eserlerini eleştirel bir okuma yaptım genel olarak ve özellikle şiir bilgiyi nasıl sağlayabileceğini değerlendirmek için.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Hayal Gücü, Romantik Şiir, Platonizm, Yüce, Siyaset, Bilgi, Hakikat*

POETRY YIELDS KNOWLEDGE: A CRITICAL READING OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this dissertation is to illuminate the type of knowledge and how it is learned through poetry from Shelley's viewpoint. Furthermore, the study argues that unless Shelleyan notion of poetry in the light of his definition of imagination is taken into account, his intended knowledge cannot be comprehended since imagination, as an intrinsic trait of individuals, shapes the mind and fashions human thoughts. For Shelley, imagination acts as a dynamic and productive force. He adds that once imagination gets involved in a reciprocal relationship with natural surroundings, poetry is made and then knowledge comes into existence.

Romantic literature (1785-1830) pertains to an alteration from reason and intellect to imagination and emotion. It expresses a great passion for nature and rustic life. Percy Bysshe Shelley strongly held that imagination serves as an unbounded natural endowment which can yield knowledge. He, however, repudiated the absolute religious truth manifested in God or any Divine Being. He considered imagination as the best measure for divinity as well as mental creativity. He directed imagination at poetic path claiming that poetry, which is the product of a highly imaginative mind, has this potential to reach truth. What he means by truth is the point of satisfaction and it is relative.

Having probed into the majority of Shelley's works and particularly his poetry, the first thing I found out was that although he was an adherent of Platonism, he finally turned away from a number of Platonic principles and refashioned some of them finally developing his own poetic philosophy as for God, creation, truth and poetry. The second finding of this dissertation is that Shelley came up with a totally different definition of poetry which has almost nothing to do with its traditional definitions. The third finding deals with the fact that believing in God itself is in contrast with the imagination since the former hinders the mind from speculating further; however, the latter paves the way for and inspires the mind to discover the unknown territories. Finally, the fourth discovery is in a certain degree tied with the third one which is that the sublime doesn't symbolize God unlike some philosophers who alleged otherwise prior to Shelley; it is a dormant power in nature and the driving force of which is human imagination expressed in poetry. It is imagination that sets the sublime into motion. What is more, imagination does not necessarily give birth to something pleasant and amiable, rather at times it is blended with nasty and undesirable feelings as well.

Last but not least, I argue that Shelley's interest in politics was also immensely influenced by his overpowering imagination as it can be inferred from his political poems that call the public for extending the scope of their imagination to visualize an ideal society and future. Having said that, in the light of Shelleyan imagination as the main argument of this study, I carried out a critical reading of his canonical

works in general and his poetry in particular so as to find out how poetry can provide knowledge.

Keywords: *Imagination, Romantic poetry, Platonism, Sublime, Politics, Knowledge, Truth*



1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents a scholarly debate of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry. The objective of this study is to explore representations of his idea of imagination, the connections between poetic imagination, knowledge, truth, and the reflections of his Platonic thoughts in his poetry. In this study, it is argued that Shelley regards poetry as a way of philosophizing about the meaning of human life, so he considers the poet as the one with a special task rather than an exceptionally emotional person. The critical reading I put forth here deals with Shelley's sources of inspiration, e.g. his Platonism and Neo-Platonism. Obviously, critics make different conclusions while carrying out the study, each of which can be a future argument and investigation. Besides, the objective of critical reading is not to be opposing or to put finger solely on the unfavorable aspects of the survey under discussion, but it zeroes in on the power that lies in the judgements.

Of course, the meaning of a text is not an entirely subjective matter, and it is crucial that responses be grounded in the text, as well as in the context in which the text was written and is read. This investigation aims to show how Shelley creates poetry that yields moral truth and knowledge about humanity. It is also one of the intellectual endeavors that adds new direction to the research of Percy Bysshe Shelley's works in terms of imagination. In addition, this project aims to develop an overarching framework to demonstrate that understanding poetry is a constructive and dynamic process in which readers extract meaning from texts through experiencing, hypothesizing, imagining, exploring and synthesizing which leads to knowledge. Most importantly, utilizing critical reading will encourage readers to be aware of what they bring to texts as readers; furthermore, the analytical reading can have a profound impact on how readers view texts and how they see their role as active participants in the process of reading. Moreover, the present research seeks to nurture a long-lasting capability so as to apprehend poetry more profoundly in general.

This inquiry would illustrate the fact that reading poetry is an individual and unique act involving the mind and emotions of a particular reader and text at a special time

under peculiar circumstances which results in specific knowledge and finally truth that is dialectic. Nyemaster (2008, p. 238) argues, “these days, poetry is read out of necessity (usually involving a grade), under order.” Today, poetry is being taught in a way that students have to read it simply for getting scores and passing exams. Whereas, poetry commends the mysterious truths about human beings and the world. Poetry looks more like something that belongs to an unexplored territory. In contrast to prose, it seems rather intricate to put a poem into words as it requires a particular time, emotion, source of inspiration and adequate imaginative faculty. This inherent feature of poetry which tends to shed light upon the unfamiliar and obscure things challenges the monotony of this world. Another aspect of poetry is that its language is more compatible with that of people’s everyday life. Nevertheless, the rhythm and rhyme of it as well as the way simple and ordinary known words get different meanings astonish people.

Poetry is of a harmonic and symphonic essence as Thomas Carlyle said, “Poetry is musical thought spoken by a mind that has penetrated into the inmost heart of the thing”¹. It can serve for both education and entertainment. But more importantly, it is a sort of intuitive art by which poets are able to express themselves in any way they wish. As for its exclusive features, suffice it to say that poets don’t necessarily have to be fully acquainted with linguistic, stylistic and literary devices. Shelley believes that poetry is composed once the imagination strikes. Another leading quality of poetry is that its language is economical.

In other words, poets almost always try to be laconic; they don’t tend to be loquacious which makes them a little bit difficult to understand. In fact, poetic language is replete with touching traits, tunefulness and euphony. It can violate the conventional or standard rules of writing. Moreover, poetic phraseology is frequently reminiscent that is to say it invokes a wide variety of sentiments, memories and recollections in the reader, be it constructive or devastating. This emotional diversity along with imagination and constant contemplation is the key to grasp knowledge, truth and beauty. Gill (2003, p.19) declares that poetry is the result of impulsive feelings; he quotes from Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads*: “poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility”. Linguistically, poets have

¹J. Allgater, Carlyle and Tennyson: Relations Between A Prophet And A Poet, M.A Thesis, The University of British Colombia, Canada, 1963: 18

more freedom whereas a prose writer must follow grammatical rules; poets can violate these syntactic rules because poetry doesn't have to be committed to grammar. Instead, it acts in accordance with metrical patterns, accent of sound or musicality, which is why poetry is sometimes called musical speech.

Having taken Shelley's inspirational representation of the poet and poetry into account, readers would probably raise questions concerning not only the form, but also the content of his poetry; by reading his works critically, I assume readers will be able to fill the numerous amounts of latent gaps by bringing their imagination and contemplation into play. Critical reading deals with a sort of "negation". Wolfgang Iser (1980, p.147) suggests "the effect of negation arises from the fact that it denotes a deficiency in familiar knowledge, and so calls its validity into question." Although the text might include known matters, the reader's ideological system, viewpoints and customs will give rise to reassessing those patterns and rules; this is what negation is all about. Moreover, negation gives priority to the skill of creativity to turn out an entity which was not rendered before; in other words, something that has not been given form to.

Other than negation, critical reading employs "Defamiliarization" which is concerned with a particular use of language in order to make familiar things appear different. According to Peterfreund (2002, p. 45), "Defamiliarization is found almost everywhere form is found" This technique includes an alteration based on which readers' apprehension is influenced by the potentiality of language. Besides, Defamiliarization discriminates typical form and application of language from the poetic ones. By so doing, a work of literature is assigned particularity plus readers' understanding and emotions will be stirred. To illustrate, Shelley thinks that poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and renders familiar objects unfamiliar. In a new light, he points out an important aspect of poetry, which is to find fresh ways of looking at things we think we know well.

Negation is a kind of distortion or disruption which is a significant reading strategy once the reader doesn't realize what has been crossed out and what is used properly and transparently. Nonetheless, it asserts that solely explaining what happens in encountering an artful item is not adequate. As will be shown in this study, and Vallins (2000, p.4) declares, "indeed, Shelley's visions of negation have much in common with those of Coleridge's poems which focus on the loss of faith, the

absence of hope, and the impossibility of envisaging any unity with others or with God''. Unlike science which requires rationale and objective viewpoint, poetry does not have to conform to the rules of logic. This irrationality of poetry does not connote negatively; rather it displays a sense of breaking away from mundanely analytical thinking and digging into unknown territories of reality by resorting to the realm of deep pure emotions to which reason and intellect cannot enter. This is what John Keats, a great admirer of Shelley, calls "Negative Capability"². Negative Capability points to the fact that man must surpass and ponder outside the limits of rationality to which he has been accustomed. By this term, Keats means the imaginative faculty which is able to break the boundaries of reason. For example, in his poem, *Bright Star*³, Keats says,

*"No-Yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft swell and fall,
Awake forever in a sweet unrest ..."* (9-12)

The readers therefore can figure out how the poet demonstrates the force of imagination which makes him observe the moon while imagining to have a mixture of moon's constancy and man's power to be devoted and friendly in order to appreciate the time the speaker is describing and take pleasure of it. This sense of intimacy and togetherness can be perceived when the poet likens the moonlight to a pillow on his lover's erotically grown breasts which have become as soft and shining as the moonlight. By this simile, readers can catch on the poet's expansive imagination which could by no means be expressed by rational considerations that is what negative capability is all about. Apart from *Bright Star*, some other examples of Keats' use of negative capability can be found in *Ode to a Nightingale*⁴ and *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Also, Shelley's *Mont Blanc*, which will be discussed in detail, promotes a version of what Keats would call 'negative capability' in its truest sense. In a nutshell, negative capability is a kind of ability to regard the truth with the

²Keats defines Negative Capability as "the primacy of feeling and imagination, which, with their intensity, compose the poetic truth that cannot be achieved by fact and reason" (Ou 2009, p. 2).

³C. Watts, *Rescuing Miranda And Further Literary Essays*, Publish Nation, 2017: 83.

⁴Ali Mohammadi, *The Critical Analysis of The Poem "Ode to a Nightingale" by John Keats through Iser's Theory of the Act of Reading*, International Journal of Science and Research, Vol.5, no.12, 2016

unrestricted spectacles of imagination. It is a driving force to leave behind the conservative thoughts and ideas which hold people back from comprehending the truths about life and themselves.

1.1 Literature Review

This section begins with a short review of the literature regarding Romantic literary school. A significantly high proportion of the studies in the field are concerned with Romantic literature's connection with nature. Findings of earlier researches generally focus on the basic tenets of Romantic poets and their commitment to nature. Researchers have long assumed that the Romantics were some weird figures who were mostly against the common stream of society by being disobedient, believing in the innateness and virtue of man, admiring nature and childhood, imaginative and creative powers and appreciating sentiments. Generally speaking, Romantic poets like the colloquial language as well as ordinary people. Concepts such as beauty and sublime appeal to them as the former stands for tranquility and the latter signifies grandeur, nobility and even ruthlessness. It seems as if the Romantics seek to set up an equilibrium between mysterious metaphysical world on the one hand and the known earthly entities on the other. This innovative literary school acts both as an upheaval and rebirth. The major reason is because Romantics were more emphatic on the emancipation of human from the traditionally practiced and established customs and beliefs as well as from oppression.

What is certain is this movement was influenced by the French Revolution which called for freedom, civil rights and comradeship. Romantics were partly like social pariah who acted against the conventions and dominant ideology of their time and the era prior to them, the Enlightenment. Their appreciation of nature was because they find peace, purity, and originality in it. Moreover, nature was the most influential phenomenon in front of which imagination could be set into motion which in turn can breed spiritual inspiration and knowledge. Romantic poets play a significant role in our understanding, describing and generating the present world in which we live now. Besides, the Romantic literature rather reshaped our thoughts and imagination. Of course there are diverse opinions among the Romantics some of which I will discuss in the following sections. First and foremost, William Blake, whom we can regard as the pioneer of British Romantics was the earliest and leading

Romantic poet who stormed against the methodical, systematic and experimental study of the material world.

He also raided against profit-oriented society which was principally designed for financial gain. This much strong hostility towards industrial era and modernization was simply because he thought they put individuals and their lives under the control by holding them back from achieving truth or ultimate reality. Come to think of Coleridge and Wordsworth, I should point out that these two outstanding poets of the first Romantic generation made a large contribution to reinterpretation of nature which they assumed had a remedial and metaphysical power. This perspective of theirs makes them stand out as the avant-garde poets of a movement namely 'return to nature'. Other than William Wordsworth, the leading figure of British Romanticism, Samuel Taylor Coleridge also picked up on introspective and contemplative poetry via taking a step beyond the confines of human reason. A case in point is his *Kubla Khan*, a poem which was composed while the poet was in a hallucinatory state as a result of taking a narcotic drug. This poem is also elaborated on in chapter three. Furthermore, Coleridge and Wordsworth were the first Romantics who introduced concepts such as "sublime" and "beauty" in their poetry, though their efforts to delve into the subject were not as strong as Shelley's. He applied and expanded their notions so vastly that in majority of his poems, readers can see and figure out how meticulously and adroitly he had perceived and analyzed sublime and beauty.

The second generation of Romantics, most importantly Byron, Shelley and Keats added one more dimension to Romantic poetry which was the poet's own voice in the poetry. Byron presented the poet as a messenger, speculator and free thinker. As for Shelley and Keats, one can see the poet as a highly intelligent but secluded and lonely figure. Their untimely deaths confirm this point. Besides, they raised the poets standing even over the rules and regulations of government and society. This matter is also going to be detailed in chapter four. A very underlying drawback of Shelley's poetry, which made him ironically an amazing poet, whose works could not be read or understood easily by the public, was his readily announced atheism. As a matter of fact, his iconoclastic and nonconforming mindset could have laid the foundation for the advent of modern poetry. In like manner, Keats together with Shelley was mentally caught up in religion to such a degree that he placed poetry over religion as

a more appropriate alternative. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that all these poets in one way or another paved the way for the formation of defiant and rioting sensations which prevailed upon a novel comprehension of poetry associated with an alteration in the poetic taste of the public.

There have also been certain misconceptions about the Romantic poetry. Criticism on Romanticism has focused almost on casting aside the power of reason and intellect; however, that is not the case for all Romantic poets. For instance, Shelley takes reason as a supplementary part of imagination and does not totally refuse it. Another misconception that goes with this belief is that the Romantic writers dislike and stay away from the society; whereas Wordsworth's as well as Shelley's heroes are those who get along with society and belong to the ordinary and even lower social classes with everyday language and life. For instance, the focus of a prior research by Elhassan⁵ was concerned specifically with an overall picture of the Romantic imagination without sufficient, meticulous and profound analysis of the accurate meaning of this term and its connotations in Shelley. Furthermore, she doesn't take into account how and when imagination strikes and what the relationship is between imagination, reason and knowledge for Shelley.

She keeps moving from one discussion to another so that it is not certain what her main argument is. Nowhere in her thesis does Elhassan put forth the knowledge and truth that Shelley highlights in his works. On the other hand, in agreement with my discussion, she demonstrates how the French revolution impacted the development and content of Romantic literary school as in "the foremost conservative reviewer of the day connected the Revolution in Literature with the agitation of the French revolution and the discussions as well as the hopes and terrors to which it gave occasion"⁶. Her description is mostly a general review of Romanticism with almost no particular argument. For instance, in chapter three, the writer turns to "Shelley's early life"⁷ talking excessively about his father, grandfather, school, children and wife which still keeps the reader away from the main argument that is not transparent. Even if we assume that Romanticism was the pivotal argument of her thesis, it is a broad concept a very specific part of which needs to be argued.

⁵S. Elhassan, Romanticism in Shelley's life and poetry, M.A Thesis, University of Khartoum, Sudan, 2009

⁶S. Elhassan, 2009, Romanticism in Shelley's life and poetry, M.A Thesis, University of Khartoum, Sudan, (Duff 1994: 22 Cited in Selma, pp. 16-17)

⁷Ibid., p.61

Another writer, Firat Karadaş⁸, considers imagination as a general attribute of Wordsworth's, Shelley's and Keats' poetry with no referrals to the degree of its importance in them and that to what extent each of these poets' works have been influenced by imagination. But he analyzes the role of imagination in relation to Mythopoeia and metaphor which adds a novel and constructive dimension to the study of imagination. Karadaş considers myth and metaphor as the inherent features of imagination which is a novel investigation of Romantic imagination⁹. He states that "beauty lies in nature and can only be realized with the intervention of the imagination"¹⁰ which is consistent with my argument on imagination as nature functions as a raw material and inspiration for activating imagination. He rightly asserts that "in Shelley's *Mont Blanc*, *Ode to the West Wind* and *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, the poetic imagination of the speakers constructs a transcendental presence out of phenomenal beings"¹¹.

As a matter of fact, I will elaborate on these poems in chapters two and three by linking them to imagination, Neo-Platonism and sublime. Karadaş truly points out that "Morality and the transience of human life are seen to be two of the most common themes of the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats"¹². Throughout my chapters, I will also be scrutinizing this issue by providing analyses and relevant examples. In his survey of Romantic poetry¹³, Woudstra overlooks an underlying fact. She carries out her research on Romantic poetry through Wordsworth's and Keats' works and does not mention anything about Shelley. This was the more apparent drawback of Woudstra's study though her explanation of "the melancholy poet"¹⁴, which is about John Keats and his nature poetry, was highly illuminating. Evidently, I suppose, it is not almost virtual to talk about Romantic poetry and not refer to Shelley's works, as his poetry and his language turned a new chapter in Romanticism.

⁸F. Karadas, *Imagination, Metaphor and Mythopoeia in the Poetry of three major English Romantic Poets*, PhD Dissertation, 2007

⁹*Ibid.*, p. IV

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p.213

¹¹*Ibid.*, p.218

¹²*Ibid.*, p.219

¹³J. Woudstra, *Poetry, Nature and Self: A Quest for happiness and Acknowledgement during the Romantic Age*, 2012

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p.55

He is the first Romantic who didn't simply turn to poetry, nature, humans' comradeship with nature, etc., rather he philosophically contemplated on poetry and various walks of life including social, religious and political realms. As I reviewed critical studies, I realized that one of the limitations of my study is concerned with women Romantic writers such as Charlotte Turner Smith, Mary Shelley, Dorothy Wordsworth, Hellen Maria Williams, Emily and Sharlotte Bronte, Anna Seward, etc. However, Woudstra argues about it once she refers to "the masculine tradition looking down on women poetry"¹⁵ by picturing William Wordsworth's and his sister, Dorothy Wordsworth's poetic life. In a research by Williams and Porrello, they clarify the term 'Radical' in relation with the Romantic poetry and say that "Though it can refer to an advocacy of political or social reform, 'radical' refers to a thing's roots, its fundamental nature"¹⁶. In reality, they present an accurate explanation of Shelley's profound imagination which is well suited to my own analysis of this matter in chapter four. Shelley's imagination functions like a driving force in and behind the poet to push him forward and to be the voice of the unheard public.

As I will show in chapter four, this exclusive type of imagination is just as an insatiable desire that can be met once fundamental metamorphoses have been implemented both socially and politically. Last but not least, in their study, Williams and Porrello explored scrupulously the reality and divinity as the after-effects of such a deep-seated imagination; this will be examined in the second chapter of my thesis. Other than above investigations, in a study by Soe Than¹⁷, there has been little probe of Romantic imagination so that it seems somehow vague as to whether the writer had assumed that Shelleyean imagination is just the same as Keats'. Therefore, this topic is in need of further scrutiny and clarification, which my inquiry to a certain extent provides.

In my study, I examine the relationship between Shelley's poetry and knowledge via focusing on his concept of imagination. It is the main purpose of the dissertation to draw attention to Shelley's exclusive definition of imagination and its major role in interpreting truth, God, eternity, reason, nature, and knowledge. Moreover, as will be

¹⁵Ibid., p.34

¹⁶J. Williams, &S. Porrello, (n. d), English and Religion: The Radical Imagination: In Conflict, We Need Imagination, p.70

¹⁷S. Than, Nature, Imagination, Reality and Two English Romantic Poets – Shelley and Keats, 2002

seen below, this research contends that Shelleyan poetry is of a specific thought-provoking nature due to its transcendental and avant-garde essence as it holds beauty, infinity and constant change in itself. This dissertation is motivated by research questions the first of which is “What does Shelley specifically mean by imagination?” The second question is “How can poetry give birth to knowledge?” As for the third one, I would ask “To what extent was Shelley influenced by the writers and thinkers prior to him?” And the last question would address “Why is Shelley considered as a revolutionary poet? To answer these questions, this study will elaborate on the poetic imagination from Shelley’s perspective. In fact, this issue is fundamental in Romanticism in general as the first and second generation of the Romantics had been quite preoccupied with it. Besides, I suggest a new generation of research in this area needs to address the extended question: “What were the aftermaths of Revolutions during seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on the Romantic literature?”

As for the significance of the study, firstly, this research advances our understanding of different ways of reading poetry. It provides the reader with a novel attitude as for how natural environment can be a source of inspiration to create a work of art. Secondly, this investigation aims to show that poetry has an infinite quality which can picture a broad range of topics and issues whereas other sciences fail to do so. This is the reason why Shelley holds poetry in a higher regard. Despite material sciences, poetry keeps constructing various mental models and pictures in our mind which is mostly associated with generating particular emotions that cannot be justified scientifically. Poets act as if they struggle to drag the readers to the poem and make them experience what and how they feel or think. This way of establishing acquaintance between them causes the poem to be impressive and enduring along with senses like happiness, passion, pain, remorse, etc. Besides, poetry by nature induces the readers to speculate more profoundly, go beyond the borders of reason and involve their imagination infinitely. For the most part, poetry employs natural elements and human life conditions as its primal matters. It divulges the perplexities, allure as well as fairness of man’s being and his surrounding environment. In addition to what went above, due to being a subjective experience or sensation(s), it is occasionally demanding to translate poetic language because its diction provokes metaphoric and evocative meanings which culminate in subjective interpretation of

it. Therefore, this permanent semantic diversity of poetry gives rise to rereading and appeal of it.

In my study, I also refer to Shelley's laconic language, i.e., he puts a variety of concepts in a few words for the purpose of leaving extensive room for diverse interpretations leading to knowledge and truth. Nevertheless, that is not the case for prose. The main contribution proposed by this study to Shelley scholarship is to provide a better comprehension of Romantic literary school in general and Shelley's distinctive attitude towards imagination, truth, and knowledge in particular; it also lays the foundation for the basics of philosophy, sociology, modernity and politics. In the light of this investigation, readers can figure out that Shelley's poetry does not serve for didactic purposes, but it has the power to function as a source of motivation and creativity as well as being a political manifesto. In other words, this inquiry reflects the fact that Romanticism was not a solely theoretical school the way its first generation of poets represented, rather its second generation and on top of all, Shelley, proved it to be a pragmatic school along with practical consequences. This issue will be looked through in the chapters to come.

This study investigates Shelley's novel and irreligious understanding of God, eternity or Supreme Being that can be observed and perceived through natural phenomena in the world as it can be seen in *Mont Blanc* and *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*. Equally important, this study shows how Shelley inspires a sense of hope and change in the reader for better conditions and promising future despite its sporadically gloomy tone. Likewise, the research instills in them love, passion, brightness and insight. In a word, this project aims to show the readers how Shelley sought for a mental balance, self-awareness, being skeptical of his own old beliefs which he used to take for granted especially when it comes to religion, divinity and superstition. A difference has to be made between prose and poetry as the latter will be more emphasized than the former in this survey; the difference is that poetry is not literal, almost by definition. Poetry shows us a higher truth that is expressed in a non-literal and non-linear way, a way that is completely original to the artist who has composed it. So the very first thing readers have to do is trying to tamp down their desire for literal certainty when they encounter poetry. Therefore, here analytical reading can come into play as it is replete with abroad variety of techniques and methods in order to uncover the hidden and the unspoken or unwritten in the literary text or poem.

Furthermore, poetry deals with profound concepts and it tries to express deeper and disparate meanings in fewer words. However, that is not the case for prose as it is unlimited and infinite. Simply put, poetry does not picture everything before the eyes of the reader, but rather it always leaves some room for reader's subjective interpretation which is the most underlying characteristic of poetry. Moreover, it has to be pointed out that Shelley has stood out among all other Romantic poets due to his iconoclastic beliefs and establishment of relationship between poetry and moral good of individuals in society. In particular, according to Bressler (2007, p.38), "Shelley, among other Romantic poets, redefines poetry as the expression of the imagination." When elements of the imagination first permeated the literature of the Romantic era, things shifted. Feeling intuition, instincts and emotions began to overrule logic and reason. The imagination became the defining creative power for many romantic writers and poets as they sought individuality and freedom. They were tired of their blind stuffy world and simply wanted to escape.

Besides, Shelley maintains that all branches of science have originated from poetry and they are inferior to it. He also asserts that poets are representation of ultimate reality as well as Supreme Being. Having been tremendously influenced by Plato, Shelley alleges that invisible beauty and discerning eyes belong to poets only. Besides, Shelley holds poetry in high esteem lifting it up over all other arts and crafts. Shelleyan poet is ubiquitous and omniscient; he defines poet as someone who oversteps the borders of mediocrity and engages in immortality and universal life force. In the second chapter, I will look at Plato's philosophy and his influence on Shelley. As a matter of fact, Plato laid the first stone on which Shelley's thoughts had been based. Ware (1983, p. 550) in this regard professes that "Plato's deepest influence on Shelley was as support for divine intuitions". Furthermore, in *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley (2008, p. 38) admires Plato when he says, "his excellence consists specially in intuition, and it is the faculty which raises him far above Aristotle, whose genius, though vivid and various, is obscure in comparison with that of Plato." Many literary scholars have criticized *A Defence of Poetry* for its incongruence and for mixing Platonic and tentative contemplation.

Nevertheless, it is wise to say that *A Defence of Poetry* encompasses flexible immaterialism. In *Defence*, Shelley strives to broaden the scope of his readers' vision and withhold them from an erroneous faith in reason-based advancement which

intimidated to engulf them in a recent worldliness which is cataclysmic to individual's life. Klancher (2013, p. 50) argues that "we recall how, in Shelley's writings on poetry, powers of language (especially metaphor) will distinguish between the fully institutionalized genres, especially verse, and the instituting or world-founding power of poetry". In the meantime, these qualities, I assume, make Shelley a ubiquitous poet who steps outside of time and space boundaries. Essentially, Shelley's poetry is replete with entanglements, twists and turns which are either for determining language or for comprehending the universe by contemplation, insight or passion. A *Defence of Poetry*, one of Shelley's rare prose works, contains a language magnifying poetry. Shelley puts poets alongside the innovative and gifted people who have the capacity to prognosticate and establish conditions outside the limits of their life span. He also states that this nurturing and enlightening faculty of poets goes so high that they cannot even sometimes figure out what their poetry puts across. Although Shelley is considered as a true devotee of Plato and a Neo-Platonic poet, his tenets sometimes are not in line with those of Plato; for example, Plato, quite contrary to Shelley, argues that moral conduct is a rational conduct.

Moreover, Plato points out that imagination does not produce a beautiful and indestructible order, but rather reason draws down absolute values which establish the most perfect and rational order, and that rationality is itself beauty. Shelley's mental proximity with Plato revealed itself in his poetic awareness, but he was not a blind adherent of Plato; in other words, there were times Shelley deviated from Plato and brought his own esoteric pattern into existence especially when Plato rejected poetry. Nonetheless, Woodman (1960, p. 550) utters that Shelley regarded "Plato as essentially a poet" and rebuffed "Plato's rational formulations". It should also be cited that Shelley did not abide by the attitudes of other scholars even Plato in the case of truth. He kept struggling with a formulation of truth all on his own; plus, since he is primarily a Romantic poet, for him nature plays a key role to achieve truth.

For Plato, philosophy and poetry are two opposite poles. There has been a long old dispute between them for centuries. Nevertheless, the satire is although Plato held a grudge and animosity against poetry and eloquence, one of the early works of poetry belongs to him as he built quite a reputation for his poetic works such as *Love*

Asleep, Neath This Tall Pine and *To Stella*. Ferrari (2007, p. 431) maintains that in *Republic*, Plato maliciously assaults poetry by referring to Homer in: “Praisers of Homer who say that this poet educated Greece, and that it is worthwhile to take up his works for study regarding management and educating in human affairs, and to live having *arranged one’s whole life* in accordance with this poet”.

Here, Plato blatantly expresses his opposition to the universal perspective which Homer and his adherents have constituted and kept up. According to Plato, poetry is of a detrimental effect; moreover, he claims that poetry’s portrayal of natural world and deity is mostly wrong. Ferrari (2007, p. 415) refers to Plato’s *The Republic* remarking that “works of poetry are forms of imitation”. In fact, he overtly humiliates the poets by calling them forgers whose works are always artificial. For Plato, poets only mimic everything. They are shallow thinkers who cannot see beyond their nose and are not capable of getting into the core, truth. A poet, he says, simply knows outward show who pretends to have infinite knowledge of the world and being. Finally, he emphasizes that poetry is a perfunctory art and poet is a copycat that would produce nothing but a copy of the image which itself is not original.

Plato holds a distrustful attitude towards poetry, but at the same time he endorses its utility in studying, public ceremonies and so on. This frequently ambivalent stance of Plato goes so far that in spite of the fact that he considers poetry as an essential and significant element of our life, he calls it the destroyer and degrading element of man’s status. I assume that Plato’s tenets need to be scrutinized with respect to his time and the social, intellectual as well as the cultural milieu of his society because it seems to me that the folks of then and the way poetry was written or read were clearly not the same as Shelley’s time or even today. Furthermore, Plato accused poetry of being a mimicked version of life. He argued that since poetry is imitative, it is against truth. He also believed that truth is attained via dialectics or rationalistic debates which philosophy claims, to a great extent, to provide because dialectics leads to acquiring knowledge whereas poetry fails to do so, he adds.

As proposed by Greene (1918, p. 1), “Plato fiercely criticizes poetry as a whole, and professes to banish the tribe of poets from his commonwealth; they are perverters of morality, mere imitators and deceivers, and their art is concerned with the world of appearance, not of reality”. Despite Plato, Shelley holds poetry in a high regard

calling it the builder and developer of sophistication and civility. He attributes an apocalyptic role to poets whose message entails infinity and unity with the One. In *Defence*, he (2008, p. 64) says, “Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed”. For Shelley, poetry is something inherently stunning; it is like a magic glitter which once shines on even rotten and grotesque things, makes them dazzling too.

Furthermore, unlike Plato who regards poetry as an immoral thing, Shelley considers it to be a transcendent entity. His poetry is not simply a bunch of verses tied together through some metrical, linguistic and literary devices; rather it is overflowing with pleasure, constant unveiling of truth as well as dynamism. Shelley’s poetry keeps revealing brightness out of darkness and ambiguity. Apart from being a poet, I suppose he is a philosopher as well just the way Plato was. His poetry apparently acts as a medium to delve into the unknown territories of human spirit and tries to touch his mind and beliefs to rethink of himself. Besides, his poetry renders a different form of truth by breaking the long-established clichés and molding them from an entirely different viewpoint. To do this, Shelley employs poetry as a courier which is capable of unearthing truth that is very similar to what Plato had reiterated about the mission of poet as a true founder and not a copyist or follower who can help individuals observe and feel the eternal and spiritual truth.

In Shelley, there is this idea that poetry comes through the poet by some divine force, literally the divine inspiration that is a radical idea for a number of reasons. Primarily, it seems to make an association between supernatural world and the poet. So, Shelley draws from philosophers like Plato and talking about the *Dialogues of Plato* and how that too is delivered in a poetic form (as will be discussed in chapter one). Thus, being intensely touched by Wordsworth, Shelley expands the idea of what poetry is, but that is tied into a kind of divine inspiration that moves the poet to create the written document and to express it.

Abrams et al. (1987, pp.1720-1721) selects Shelley’s *To Wordsworth* in which the poet says:

*“Childhood, youth, friendship and Love’s first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams leaving thee to mourn.*

These common woes I feel” (3-5)

Since Shelley is primarily a Romantic poet, it is inevitable to use words such as “childhood, youth, friendship and love”. Nevertheless, the reason why the poet utilizes them is to express pity for losing a precious pearl like Wordsworth whose existence and presence were just as ephemeral as the above terms. As can be seen, though Shelley doesn’t explicitly apply uplifting words here, his intention can be felt as sensational and magnificent because for him, Wordsworth is master of all from whom he has obtained a substantial amount of inspiration. In similar fashion, Shelley argues that poets possess this potential to bring to light the deviousness of this ephemeral world; plus they are able to direct people at the truth which is crippled by the inefficiency and mental deficiency of the ruling system and overwhelming impression of society. Another reason for his accent on poetry is that Shelley finds poetry an outcome of robust imagination; besides, imagination itself is the maker of morality and goodness. To put it differently, he maintains that unless the reader is furnished with imagination, he will not be able to perceive the knowledge and truth behind the poetry.

It is important to realize that Shelley strongly rebuts the common misconception that poetry is mimicry of nature that sets its sights on amusing readers or making them happy. Instead, he accentuates that a genuine poem is just like a spring from which knowledge, rationale and pleasure pour out. Hence, it can be concluded that composing a poem is not as shallow as Plato alleged. It requires considerable amount of subtlety, genius, inspiration and imagination which endorse the fact that it is not an image of an image or a duplication of a copy.

Shelley, I think, holds the scales even in his poetry. He doesn’t solely insist on the momentary delight we can obtain from poetry, but he draws the readers’ attention to existentially relevant aspects of poetry which are more fragrant for him; particularly when in *Defence*, it is expressed by Shelley (2008, p.60) that “sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself” Evidently, it is a sardonic statement as he finds and sees sweet and bitter simultaneously in poetry. Indeed, as will be shown in the following chapters of this thesis, his emphasis on the more grievous and pathetic aspects of life and human conditions out of which delight can be born is more transparent. As has been noted by Shelley, the poet is not only an emotional person, but also a philosopher or an intellectual whose means, poetry, can generate knowledge,

intellect, authority and delight. What is more, his atheism is also somewhat related to this doctrine of his. He held that there is no reason to believe in God or prophets as long as there are poets because they are different figures who are distinguished from the other ordinary people, and they have peculiar faculties and traits which place them on a higher status than messengers. In a nutshell, he asserts that poetry pictures beauty, dignity and all the visible and unseen worlds with both their favorable and unpleasant features, so to speak.

Furthermore, at times it is not apparent if Shelley is a Materialist or Idealist. I think he is somewhere in the middle fluctuating between two poles as both got him into restlessness. On the one hand, having witnessed cruelty and oppression, he rather lost his faith in *Ideal Forms* of Plato; on the other, since material world and physical sensory perception are fleeting, he couldn't count on materialism either. Nevertheless, this sense of suspicion induced him to systematically devise his own particular poetic philosophy. In the same fashion, ambivalence can be palpably seen in Shelley's life and to some extent in his works. As for his life, we encounter a rather conceited yearning towards taking over others as he had some affairs with different women which is quite in contrary to those grandiose and lofty concepts he pictures in his poetry. To me, he was in a state of undecided self-indulgence to be precise. Gallant (1989, p. 181) articulates that "Shelley seems to have been working towards a recognition of the inevitability of ambivalence in much human experience, with its accompanying pain, envy, urge to power and grasping selfishness, but also its joy, love and generosity". In other words, as for ambivalence, Shelley reiterates that his poetry does not essentially have to do with genuine life, but rather it mostly deals with the practice of poetry. On no account does he expect his readers to stumble on informative points in his poetry; all he hopes for is to generate a sort of feeling in readers that he himself had undergone at the same time as composing that poem.

Ironically speaking, Shelley's poetry appears to be both impulsive and enriching in that by experiencing the poet's emotions and mind-set whilst composing poem, one would acquire some knowledge that would not otherwise be gained. From this ambivalent stance, we can figure out why some of Shelley's poems such as *Alastor* finish off with a shade of indecisiveness and contradiction. To sum up, Shelley had a dubious nature and constant tension which may be perceived by meticulous readers.

There is a tangible spotty tantrum and suspicion in Shelley as if he wants to bring to light the concealed realities of life but with a kind of hesitation; that is why his poetry at times seems paradoxical to the reader.

It should also be noted that Shelley's notion of changeability was due to the fact that he was vastly affected by Platonic school. During his lifetime, Shelley reflected on the Platonic notions which had connections with the idea that the worldly issues were immature portraits of genuine knowledge. What is more, he remarked that every human being is capable of achieving the ultimate truth. On the other hand, Plato draws an ideal picture of beauty that is in contrast with the corporeal depiction of it by Shelley. For Plato, beauty can be achieved by argumentation; however, Shelley holds that it is a kind of potential that human takes in as a delight deep down his soul. Shelley expresses his Neo-Platonic realization describing that the most beautiful and eternal world is generated by imagination which itself is the legacy of a comprehensive mind. In his poem, *The Sensitive Plant*¹⁸, Shelley remains adherent to his Platonic tenet as in:

*“For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death for change; their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.”*(21-24)

In these verses, Shelley emphasizes that change is the only immortal thing in the universe. Additionally, he believes that the power of affection, emotion, grace and joy is by far more than human physical capacity to put up with. Implicitly, he makes an analogy between man's bodily frailty, which bears resemblance to darkness or ambiguity' and the power of love, beauty and delight that is the very picture of human creativity. It should be kept in mind that Plato and his philosophy had a large impression on Shelley's ideology and works. In his works *Republic*, *Phaedo* and *Timaeus*, Plato presents an entire philosophy on life and after life according to which before we were born into this world, we were in the land of forms also known as Heaven. While we were in the land of forms, we were what is known as a psyche. Psyche means a mind or a soul and wandering around the land of forms we were

¹⁸P. B. Shelley, *The Poems of Shelley*, Vol. 3, Published 2014 by Routledge, London & New York, 1819-1820: 316.

easily able to recognize the perfect versions of everything. We were ruled over by a being called God and this God is made up of several forms particularly the forms of Good, intellect and soul. God was the perfect version of good, intellect and soul.

As a matter of fact, there are other forms as well. Some existed in God; some were created by God; however, all of these perfect versions of everything existed in the land of forms. The land of forms was by definition perfect. Now between us and the earth was a barrier of darkness. We pass through this barrier in order to be born and the process of passing through this barrier was so traumatic that in essence we forget about the land of forms. So while we are on the earth, we have to relearn everything that we had forgotten. Eventually, if we were lucky, we would grow old and one way or another we would indeed die and our psyche would pass through the barrier again into the land of forms. To Plato, this was a never-ending cycle of life and afterlife though many of the later theologians would say that this only happens once. The later theologies were known as either Platonic or Gnostic. In essence, they believe that the nature of God in Heaven could be known. More specifically, on the nature of God, the form of good means that God is by definition the perfect version of good.

He is all good or Omni-benevolent. He also has the perfect version of intellect and soul though later these forms will be marginalized in favor of other forms. To shed light on it, these forms namely intellect and soul in their supreme level, would make up the Platonic God. By extension, this would mean that God has all knowledge or omniscience. If God were made up of the form of power, this would mean that he contains the perfect version of power, all-power or omnipotence. Briefly, this interpretation of God is what Platonists call the Ultimate Being or the Supreme Creator. Additionally, for Platonist thinkers, God had to be known and the way he was known was largely through deduction. For example, a perfect version of light is assumed to exist. Fire is a version of light and star is also a version of light; they are both lesser copies of the perfect light. What they share is light, but neither is a perfect light since perfect light is assumed to exist, but does not exist on earth. It must be in the land of forms. Everyone has a version of intellect, yet no two intellects are the same and none of them is perfect. The perfect version of intellect must exist in the land of perfection, the land of forms.

Wisdom exists everywhere, yet none of its manifestations is perfect. Dreams, astrology and divination could all provide wisdom. These versions of wisdom may

help determine the nature of the land of forms, but perfect wisdom exists only in heaven. This is an instance of how Platonism and its offspring Gnosticism work. There are traits of this world that are assumed to be poor copies of the ultimate forms or ideas in heaven and the nature of those forms can be roughly known by exploring the nature of this world. Though being a Neo-Platonist, Shelley's perception of God was relatively different from that of Plato. Shelley admits that God is a perfect version; nevertheless, he refutes God's uniqueness which is said to be out of any human being's reach as theology and religions claim so. In fact, Shelley depicts God as a potential power lying in every individual that can be triggered by using imagination, contemplating and acquiring knowledge permanently which result in grasping truth. What is more, Shelley alleges that poets are able to perform this task in the best possible manner which is rather contrary to Plato's definition of truth, but in terms of its hierarchical nature both are on the same wavelength.

Moreover, the kind of poetry Shelley speaks for is way different from the one composed by virtue of putting together the stylistic devices and elements such as rhyme, meter, rhythm, etc. He also believes that poetic imagination, majesty, musical articulation as well as intellectual coordination will draw the readers closer to moral truth. Shelley expresses that unless a poet is rebellious and original, truth will not be brought to light. Needless to say that the truth Shelley is talking about has nothing to do with the Christian or religious one, rather it is mostly Platonic and philosophical which is intrinsically rather Agnostic, but not divine.

Plato believes that before we were born, we were floating in an otherworldly dimension or super physical environment. We saw a succession of perfect things and we absorbed their nature. To illuminate, we see a perfect table, a perfect circle or a perfect triangle which are unconstrained by any material concerns. Unconsciously we try to make a table or draw a circle if we zoom in it just as perfect as possible because before we were born, they had been perceived by us impeccably beyond the realm of senses. Then when human gets to earth or is born, he has the dim unconscious memory of the perfection of things around himself and he is able to identify table, a mathematical shape or any other entity. In fact, the purpose of *The Allegory of the Cave* is to start looking at things themselves as well as at the idea behind them.

Plato pointed out that this matter holds true not only for tangible things, but for philosophical ideas, emotional states and abstract concepts such as religion, honor, virtue, dignity and so on. Besides, Plato highlights that there is always a perfect version or ideal form of everything in our mind. It can be concrete and actual things like the way we see, taste, touch and smell or conceptual issues such as God, morality, power, etc. He goes on by saying that we have been living in a chamber or a prison or a world of concepts which have organized and run us. According to Plato, these concepts don't speak for themselves; rather it is the human, philosophers, thinkers and legislators who determine the will of majority concerning these notions. For instance, the concept of democracy cannot speak for itself unless politicians designate to what extent it can be practical in a particular society which can be close to or away from its perfect version. This is what Plato means by his *theory of the forms*.

As another example, Plato sets up a parallel between the Sun and the Good. As the former is the primary root of life on the earth, the latter brings about the existence of the ideal forms. It should also be noted that Plato equates the Good with truth. He takes even one step further and claims that the origin of law, peace, conformity, refinement and comprehensibility is The Good. For instance, in the *Republic*, Plato makes a comparison between the Good and the Sun. To clarify, he asserts that light comes from and is supplied by the sun which makes the tangible objects and phenomena be visible around us. Likewise, the Good or ideal form equips humans with a particular, creative and scholarly illumination (just like light but figuratively) which empowers them to figure out these ideal forms that are invisible and insensible. This is how Plato explains truth which is unchanged, eternal or simply put; it is the realm of being of what it is. Therefore, Platonic truth is double-faceted on the one side of which lies palpable universe and on the other, the invisible world or the Ideal Forms. These two elements are the foundations of Platonic ontology. One more thought-provoking instance Plato provides is *The Allegory of Cave* which I am going to explain in the following.

Shelley in his poems is concerned with questions such as “what is Reality, knowledge and the meaning of life?” Initially, 2400 years ago, Plato said life is like being chained up in a Cave, forced to watch shadows flitting across a stone wall. That is actually what Plato suggested in his *The Allegory of the Cave*, found in Book

VII of *The Republic*, in which the Greek Philosopher envisioned the ideal society by examining concepts like justice, truth and beauty. The ancient Greeks were emphatic that philosophy was not just an elaborate abstract exercise. It was, they felt, a deeply useful skill that should be learned and practiced by all in order to help us to live and die well. No one believed this more than Plato who was passionate in his defense of philosophy as a kind of therapy for the soul. One of the most compelling stories he told on behalf of the utility of philosophy was what has become known as “*The Allegory of the Cave*”. It is perhaps the most famous allegory in philosophy. This was a story that was intended, as he wrote, to compare “[t]he effect of education and the lack of it on our nature”¹⁹. In *The Allegory*, a group of prisoners have been confined in a cavern since birth, with no knowledge of the outside world. There is no natural light in this cave, the walls are damp and dark. They are chained, facing a wall, unable to turn their heads, while a fire behind them gives off a faint light. Occasionally, people pass by the fire, carrying figures of animals and other objects that cast shadows on the wall. The cave dwellers get fascinated by these reflections of animals, plants and people.

They name and classify these illusions, believing they are perceiving actual entities. Then one day, quite by chance, someone discovers a way out of the cave out into the open air. At first, it is simply overwhelming. He is dazzled by the brilliant sunshine in which everything is, for the first time, properly illuminated. He finds the new environment disorienting. Gradually, his eyes adjust and he encounters the true forms of all those things which he had formerly known only as shadows. When figured out that the things around him are real, while the shadows were mere reflections, he cannot believe it. He sees actual flowers, the colors of birds, the nuances in the bark of trees. He looks at the reflections in the water, at objects directly and finally at the sun whose light is the ultimate source of everything he has seen. He observes stars and grasps the vastness and sublime nature of the universe. The prisoner returns to the cave to share his discovery and tries to help out his companions who are still mired in confusion and error. Nonetheless, since he has got used to the bright upper world and not to the darkness anymore, he can hardly see anything underground or see the shadows on the wall. Apart from that, he seems to the others totally unimpressive. The other inhabitants of the cave think the journey has made him

¹⁹C. Partenie, Plato: Selected Myths, 1st edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004: 51-56

stupid and blind, and violently resist any attempts to free them. They even get sarcastic, then very angry and eventually plot to kill him.

Plato introduces this passage as an analogy of what it's like to be a philosopher trying to educate the public. It is an allegory of the life of all enlightened people. The cave dwellers are humans before philosophy. The sun is the light of reason. The alienation of the returned philosopher is what all truth tellers can expect when they take their knowledge back to people who have not devoted themselves to thinking. For Plato, we are all for much of our lives in shadow. Many of the things we get excited about, like fame, the perfect partner, a high status job are infinitely less real than we suppose. They are phantoms projected by our culture onto the walls of our fragile and flawed minds but because everyone around us is insisting that they are genuine we are taken in from a young age. It's not our fault individually. No one chooses to be in the cave. That's just where we happen to begin. We're all starting from a very difficult place. If, like the man in Plato's story, we bluntly tell people they're wrong, we get nowhere, we cause deep offense and may endanger our own life. Athens had, after all, recently put Socrates, Plato's friend, to death. Plato knew from close experience just what the cave dwellers might do to those who claim to know the sun.

The solution, Plato says, is a process of widespread carefully administered philosophical education by which he understood the method of inquiry pioneered by Socrates and known to us as the "Socratic Method". It's a very gentle process. We don't lecture or harangue or force someone to read a particular book; we just start with a general declaration of intellectual modesty no one knows very much about. Socrates insists that wisdom starts with owning up to ignorance. To put it differently, most people are not just comfortable in their ignorance but hostile to anyone who points it out. In fact, in the real life Socrates was sentenced to death by the Athenian government for disrupting the social order; his student, Plato, spends much of "*The Republic*" disparaging Athenian democracy, while promoting rule by philosopher kings. With the Cave parable, Plato may be arguing that the masses are too stubborn and ignorant to govern themselves. But the allegory has captured imagination for 2400 years because it can be read in far more ways. Importantly, the allegory is connected to the theory of forms, developed in Plato's other dialogues, which holds that like the shadows on the wall, things in the physical world are flawed reflections

of ideal forms, such as roundness, or beauty. In this way, the cave leads to many fundamental questions, including the origin of knowledge, the problem of divine representation, and the nature of reality itself.

For theologians, the ideal forms exist in the mind of the creator. For philosophers of language viewing the forms as linguistic concepts, the theory illustrates the problem of grouping concrete things under abstract terms. Besides, others still wonder whether we can really know that the things outside the cave are any more real than the shadows. Plato asserts that the only way to achieve truth is philosophy because it is based upon logical argumentation; however, poetry is the source of illegality and creates hallucination, he says. By mimesis, he means poetry is the duplicate of another copy which makes it far from truth. It can also be inferred from Plato that he prefers the sporadically bitter aspect of truth (philosophy) to the fake joy of poetry. In the same book, *The Republic*, Plato stresses that human soul on a greater level is intermingled with reason as its bottom line, and it is also composed of inferior desires and sentiments on a lower scale. He underscores that anything that stimulates and boosts reason is sound and pleasant, but sentimental and irrational things are unfavorable.

For Plato, truth is the product of opposing opinions and battle with unending difficulties. I suppose Plato believed in the freedom of thought and expansion of mind. His disagreement with poetry doesn't necessarily imply his rejection of it; instead, he gives priority to reason than to emotion or poetry which is exactly unlike Shelley's comprehension of truth and poetry. More importantly, it is necessary to bear in mind that Plato, while a child, might have been subjected to and influenced by poetry as he has produced a number of poetic works as well. Nonetheless, his proclivity towards philosophy or rationality could have been due to the prominent figures such as Socrates and Pythagoras who were fundamentally engrossed in utopian society and science of numbers and calculation respectively. Just like Shelley, Plato was also ambivalent on which path to choose, but ultimately he preferred reason to emotion whereas Shelley did the other way round. Although Plato had a constant animosity to poetry, he could never totally discard its undeniable role in human life because after all his poetic impulse was longstanding in him.

In his various works, Plato in one way or another shows his opposition with poetry. For example, in the *Ion*, he rebuffed the concept of inspiration to compose poem. In

his other work, *Symposium*, he suggests the final objective of human life which is utilizing rational faculties and overlooking the physical feelings so as to attain truth. However, in the *Phaedo*, Plato's tone becomes a bit milder and he takes account of bodily sentiments along with wisdom as an integral tool to reach truth which is what later on Shelley adopted and persisted in. Back to *The Republic*, it can be observed that Plato once again disgraces poetry by associating it with the material entities and physical sentiments; he declares that the best way to gain knowledge and truth is to refrain from these objects and feelings. Then in *Phaedrus*, Plato extends the notion of inspiration and links it to the concept of opinion, differentiating the genuine acts of adoring beauty from mimetic poetry. At the end, taking *The Laws* into account, readers can find out how Plato reevaluates the problems running in the Republic by reproaching poetry and its excessive appreciation to the advantage of knowledge and craftsmanship. Therefore, it goes without saying that Plato did not devise a distinct doctrine concerning poetry.

Plus, I should also note that Plato's attitudes as for poetry should not be considered as thorough and individual conclusions. What he stresses is the existence of ideal forms justifies the power of reasoning and the cause of living. However, virtually ideal forms, which refer to immortality, appear not to be achieved as they are hierarchical; and also because as Plato emphasizes, wisdom and experience of life get perverted by bodily sentiments and constraints. In other words, concrete entities function as an obstacle on the way of achieving ultimate reality or truth. Plato recommends that poetry can be worthy of reading if poets depict perpetual forms in their poems. Then and only then a poet can be philosopher as well and this hardened clash between them may be halted. Shelley interpreted truth as something based on inner experience rather than fact or something which is subjective. He firmly held that truth cannot be achieved unless human sets imagination into motion because it is the imagination which frames our knowledge and consciousness; as well as, it forms the way we understand the natural surroundings. In other words, according to Shelley our subjective realization of truth or an internal reconstruction of it determines our knowledge and recognition of external universe. Furthermore, Shelley, having been influenced by Plato, thinks of truth as an ageless and unending concept; that is to say it is not restricted to a particular time.

Additionally, by unending he means that truth becomes known on account of dialectic or rational argumentation which itself is the product of imaginative faculties. Indeed, for Shelley, truth is an indescribable notion that is beyond words. To put it differently, as I will elaborate on it in chapter two, the meaning of truth keeps getting deferred so that there would be no ultimate distinct signification of it. Unlike Plato, Shelley finds poetry as the best medium of expressing and transferring truth. By all means, as voiced by Welburn (1986, p. 42), “the boundless nature of human desires and emotions was for Shelley the chief evidence to his imagination of the validity of a truth beyond the painted veil. It may have been with the concepts of Platonism that he tried to render that truth thinkable; it was with the style and aesthetic of sensibility that he attempted to render it imagination”. To elucidate, Shelley’s understanding of truth was something which had to be firstly apprehended and then conversed or negotiated not the other way round. Shelley announces poetry has such an incredible power that can generate truth.

1.2 Sublime and Shelley

In chapter three, I am going to talk about the sublime as Shelley’s poems reflect some of the best examples of it. Travelers from Britain to Italy had for many centuries passed through the Alpine mountains but it was only in the 18th century that they began to admire the mountains rather than see them simply as a barrier. In Britain, too, at places like Rievaulx Abbey, the dramatic Goredale Scar in Yorkshire and Westminster Abbey, landscape inspired thrilling feelings of awe and dread. The melancholy taste for gothic ruins went hand in hand with a new taste for the wilder faces of nature, barren mountains, deserted ravines, torrents, waterfalls and great cliff faces that seemed almost as though they’re about to topple and crush the beholder. Romantic poets were interested in nature and had written about their emotions admiring such scenes and saying that they reminded them of the violence of the world, the indifference of nature, the inevitability of the end of civilization itself, but it was another English nobleman Edmund Burke who gave this new taste for wild nature a name and called it “the sublime.” In the Romantic Era, the term came to be considered as an aesthetic concept.

I will explore in this chapter, two outstanding philosophers, namely, Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke, who traced the root of sublime back to discomfort and terror. I

will also elaborate on the Shelleyan sublime and the sources of his inspiration in poems like *Mont Blanc*, *Tintern Abbey*, *Imitations Ode*, *Kubla Khan*, *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind* and *To a skylark* by analyzing his language and his clear-cut configuration of daunting pictures. Shelley molds his poems' characters and settings so intensely that he creates a sense of sublime in his readers. When it comes to the sublime, it is unwise to claim that this term was coined by the British Romantics, rather it is better to say that it became fashionable and well-received in this period. In fact, long before the British Romantic poets, it had already been recognized by philosophers such as Kant and Burke.

Undoubtedly, Shelley must have read these thinkers as one of the origins of his inspiration. In particular, Monk (1960, p. 235) suggests that Burke deserves to be praised because he "established the aesthetic of terror and pain [and] found a physical explanation for the aesthetic experience" namely sublime. Generally speaking, in literature, the sublime is a partially mingled sensation coupled with pain and pleasure. This complicated feeling sometimes goes beyond the earthly extrinsic restraints and rational borders of human knowledge. Shelley's definition of sublime is pertaining to the groundwork of Romantic philosophy. In *Alastor*, Shelley's description of sublime is as follows:

*"The stream, that with a larger volume now
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell: and there
Fretted a path through its descending curves
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and its precipice
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
Mid toppling stones, black gulphs and yawning caves,
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues?
To the loud stream." (540-550)*

Seeing these lines, we are faced with immeasurable, baffling and perilous scenery. The scene has a sublime characteristic in that it can go beyond the emotions of the traveler; it is also capable of provoking a sensation in us as if we have been wandering in threatening territories. Evidently, the nature symbols such as stream, winter, rocks, precipice, ravine stones and caves portray the most underlying theme of Romantic poetry, nature, but in Shelleyan style that is mostly interwoven with a sense of dread and uneasiness rather than pleasure or comfort. Nonetheless, as I will present, the reason why Shelley applies sublime is not solely to demonstrate the littleness, triviality and failure of human emotions and passions before the infinite power of the nature; indeed, it serves both for epitomizing the celestial world in which the restrictions of this universe cannot impede human and the poet from boosting their imagination and knowledge.

Mont Blanc offers the most compelling evidence regarding the Shelleyan sublime. This poem exhibits Shelley's metamorphosis from Platonic divinity to a somewhat agnostic excellence in which Mother Nature and not an Absolute Being is almighty and domineering. In line with this attitude of Shelley, Roy (1952, p. 247) maintains that "Nature and her daughters, Virtue, Reason and Truth, are invoked as the only deities to be adored and worshiped". Having read Shelley's *Mont Blanc*, the reader promptly realizes that sublime is a concept in romantic poetry that applies to the description of nature and how man comprehends the realm of experience that cannot be easily defined or measured.

Romantic literature oftentimes affiliates the sublime with natural elements, including thrilling, astonishing and breathtaking expanse of a ravine or mountain. Therefore, upon being exposed to them, the individual realizes the deficiency of his mind and intellect. It is also important to mention that sublime works through the inner and essential nature of man which has to do with the most nebulous, appalling and vigorous feelings. Furthermore, these natural surroundings pave the way for arousing those strong sublime sentiments. To elucidate, the sublime in Romantic poetry applies to the way that contemplating nature heightens man's understanding of himself, the world and his place in it. What is more, Shelley's identification of sublime was fairly dark, as his poems paint a picture of nature as being powerful and ruthless, exposing the frailty of man, man's lack of power and mankind's ephemeral existence and limited role in the world. As a matter of fact, the concept of sublime

serves as an overpowering ideal that pervades Shelley's thoughts in such a force that he begins to believe that even nature is not reality.

Moreover, Shelley sets his sights on the connection between man as a beholder of natural landscape and the grand lofty objects of nature. At the same time, it appears as if Shelley doesn't simply desire to compose a literary work, but interestingly, he goes after fashioning his readers' mind through directing them at rethinking of the meaning of sublime and the way it can influence poetry. It is significant to admit the various and contrary interpretations of sublime as it is of diverse meanings in literature, craftsmanship, theology, ontology and metaphysics.

On the other hand, Duffy (2005, p. 25) confirms Shelley's unfaith in God when he says God is "irreconcilable with the knowledge of stars, specifically, that scientific understanding of natural phenomena is incompatible with – and effectively contradicts – the theistic configuration of the discourse on the sublime". Here Shelley mocks the concept of religion and its incongruity with poetry as the mother of all sciences through which one is capable of achieving knowledge. Besides, he attacks the established religion which presents an inferior picture of the sublime. Other than his ideological alteration, Shelley's rhetoric and his vast knowledge of the subject matter draw the reader's attention. The point is his poetry cuts both ways; it both makes changes in the reader and instills in him tremendous amount of knowledge. The mechanism of acquiring this type of knowledge will be broadly looked over through the chapters.

Having examined majority of Shelley's poems and prose, I found out that throughout Shelley's life, there was a major change of stress from experimental dialogue about the sublime as indicated in his materialism and politics to a sort of enthusiasm in spiritual productive sublime. I suppose it was a necessity for his poetic career as a policy for illustrating a different type of sublimity and its impact on his poetry. Thus, it can be alleged that in order to figure out Shelleyan sublime, readers cannot simply rely on Kantian Sublime which is single-mindedly divine and Utopian. With this in mind, Shelley asserts that once the human mind becomes consciously hesitating and when his mental restrictions are identified, the sublime comes into play. It goes without saying that Shelley attaches a great significance to the power of mind to such a degree that for him, mind can function as a stimulant which incites people to better and ameliorate their society. A case in point is in *A Defence of Poetry* in which

Shelley (2008, p.40) puts forth that “Man in society, with all his passions and his pleasures, next becomes the object of those passions and pleasure of man; and additional class of emotions produces an augmented treasure of expressions The social sympathies, or, those laws from which as from its elements society results, begin to develop themselves from the moment two beings coexist ... and equality, diversity, unity, contrast, mutual dependence become the principles alone capable of affording the motives to which the will of a social being is determined to action”.

Simply put, Shelley extended the scope of love and friendship from the realm of romantic affairs and maudlin sentiments to the domain of comradeship among the individuals in the society though he was obsessed with its repercussions as to whether it will fall flat or be fulfilled the way the French Revolution was materialized. Shelley’s discussion here points to the fact that poetry is something adorable by its very nature and it is brought into being at the moment the poet undergoes a charming feeling just like the time individuals express love, care and intimacy to one another. The point made by Shelley is at the time when humans notice their desires and speculations in people around them, a kind of reciprocal being is borne as a result of such an identification which requires the birth of a common discourse accounting for this commonality and unanimity.

To put it more clearly, society is the direct reflection of every single person; it is us. Having said that, we will be subjected to a constructive shared feeling which would be unavoidable for progressing and reforming general public and social order. Hence, in this thesis, I aim to expose that poetry has this potential to display not only an individual’s picture to himself, but also a portrayal of others to him. This is exactly what sublime in Shelley seeks for reaching. The way he utilizes sublime purposely deals with politics so as to make an individual come across other people as though this novel comprehension of sublime shows a different aspect of it which at times is contrary to the conventional understanding and application of sublime. In this context, in keeping with Barcus (2003, p. 356), it is worthwhile to consider that “the poetry of Shelley has been but little read, and is, indeed, of a nature too abstract and spiritual to become popular with the majority of readers in any country. Shelley uses an astonishingly abounding, diverse, and exquisite choice of words. Plus, his emphasis on imagination has made his style resourceful and sumptuous. Furthermore, the primary magnetism of Shelley’s works lies in his exclusive

intellectual freedom and dripping emotions as well as inflamed benevolence reflected in his poems.

Shelley employs a symbolic, mythical and metaphorical language which is an inherent and indivisible aspect of imagination. Additionally, Shelley underscores the power of the mind as it is mythologized as a forming, creating, and omnipresent power. Moreover, in his poetry the power of thought and the question of education and knowledge can be explicitly seen. In effect, for Shelley, human mind encloses such a strength that can shape and refashion our world. He goes on by saying that imagination is another splendid human gift which is capable of narrowing down the breach between man and his surrounding universe. What is more, in this chapter, I am also going to describe Shelley's passion in the moment sublime emotion is created. He composed his poetry in a way that its sublime content could make an alteration in the mind of the people who read his works via establishing an intimacy among them. By extension, this sense of sublimity will fill the void between the observer and nature elements so that they would be united and one. The overwhelming impression from this kind of sublime feeling is political. In all likelihood, Shelley holds that poetry is of such a capability that can give rise to transformation both individually and politically.

1.3 Shelley and Politics

Among other Romantic poets, Shelley always stood out as the most political of all, and the one who was earnestly in quest of not only social amendment, but also, on a large scale, universal alterations. These qualities make him a truly egalitarian and autonomous poet. Else ways, in *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley (2008, p. 54-55) stipulates, "The principle of equality had been discovered and applied by Plato in his *Republic*" as the theoretical rule of the mode in which the materials of pleasure and of power produced by the common skill and labor of human beings ought to be distributed among them". To put it another way, Shelley's powerful imagination explores the whole universe to bring together impressions and associations indicative of his ideals and aspirations. It is a numerous, colored and sensuous as well as symbolic appeal. In chapter four, I am supposed to focus on Shelley's politics. The political attitudes of Shelley defending civil rights, parity, abrogation of usurping public ownership and throne caused him to be regarded as an extremist and anarchist.

As stated in Duerksen (1988, p.75), “politics were probably the dominating concern in Shelley’s intellectual life”.

In “*A Philosophical view of Reform*”, Shelley (1920, p. 74) says, “if the existing government shall compel the nation to take the task of reform into its own hands, one of the most obvious consequences of such a circumstance would be the abolition of monarchy and aristocracy”. Having said that, Shelley appears to have had an accurately broad and down reaching knowledge about the social and political events going around him. Moreover, sarcastically he refers to an ever-widening gap between the ruling system and the people. He contends that this government has no use for people to such a degree that if reforms be given to the subjects, they will certainly wipe out the kingdom and the upper social class which for Shelley is unquestionably expected.

Presumably, one can realize that out of almost every statement Shelley utters, a sense of egalitarianism, emancipation and justice can be felt. By “*the abolition of monarchy and aristocracy*”, Shelley implies that centuries of totalitarianism and social class divisions have been futile. Besides, he shows contempt to dysfunctional monarchy that is not capable of implementing fundamental and practical reforms. Shelley sneeringly suggests that all over the world, reforms are usually carried out by the governments, however, since he doesn’t find the England’s ruling system resourceful and creative enough, he inclines toward his people and states that if reforms are given to the people themselves, they will put them into action more effectively and operationally. For instance, he says, the nation would cripple and sabotage not only the throne, but also the upper crust of society.

Again in “*A philosophical view of Reform*”, Shelley (1920, p. 50) expresses, “that they know this, and that they are impatient to procure a reform of the cause of this abject and wretched state. That the cause of this misery is the unequal distribution, which under the form of the national debt, has been surreptitiously made of the products of their labor and the products of the labor of their ancestors; for all property is the produce of labor”. Here, Shelley denounces the monarchy for refraining from fulfilling reforms. He goes on by saying that this irresponsibility and lunacy of the decision-makers is the origin of the public misery and this pitiable situation. It can also be inferred that for Shelley, the country’s executives are good for nothing and except for filling their own pockets, they do almost nothing to the

unfair and unlawful distribution of power and wealth among the crown members and high-ranking authorities.

Shelley (1920, p.82) criticizes this issue by remarking that the ruling classes justify their own authority and possession via leaving people in drowning financial crisis whereas making themselves more loaded and prosperous. He wraps it up by reminding the rulers that whatever they possess now including their high economic status as well as official exclusive rights all proceed from the working-class painstaking, physical efforts and struggles. In the same book, Shelley asserts, “The strongest argument, perhaps, for the necessity of reform, is the inoperative and unconscious abjectness to which the purposes of a considerable mass of the people are reduced.”

Once again, Shelley calls his own people to take the lead and action and not pin their hopes on the kingdom. He believes that monarchy has humiliated the English people by being defective and incurring irreparable losses on even people’s ambitions and righteous expectations. Shelley evidently objects to monarchy which has never been based on any legal elections. These arguments suggest that Shelley wonders how and why a King or Queen should hold majority of key governmental and legislative posts while being irresponsible to what s/he does. From Shelley’s perspective, not only can monarchy not consolidate public solidarity, but also it broadens the gap among various social classes. Hence, why should there be such a useless royal institution, and not a democratic system, which solely adds fuel to the fire of existing difficulties and disastrous conditions? For Shelley monarchy means imposing back-breaking expenses on the shoulders of poor people. He goes on by saying that it makes no sense the civilians plug away, nevertheless, the monarchy gain the credit and benefits. It is interesting to note that these ideas of Shelley even today are bought by modern and liberal people.

Along similar lines, Duffy (2005, p. 125) argues that “The idea of a natural history of politics allows Shelley both to challenge public political despondency about the Revolution itself and to promote faith in a gradual, moral and intellectual reform, to offer, in short, a ‘wise’ interpretation of the Revolution”. In another part of “*A philosophical view of reform*”, it is announced that by Shelley (1920, p.7) that “the will of the people to change their government is an acknowledged right in the constitution of England”. Regarding this, Shelley justifies his expectation of reforms

and deep-seated changes in England. Furthermore, he pronounces that as maintained by law, once the majority of society unanimously gets discontented and frustrated with the ruling class and their unproductive guiding principles and procedures, the nation would legally have the right to seek an alternative even at the expense of resorting to more radical options such as revolution, military operations and public massive turnout.

However, if the government stand against this officially permitted and peaceful right of people, then that will presumably turn them into tyrants who simply abuse the law instrumentally for their own advantages. As a matter of fact, Shelley one more time calls attention to commitment to the written laws, codes and legislation of the country which everyone regardless of their ranking position, gender and wealth must be devoted to. Shelley ironically declares that statesmen violate the rules and regulation that they themselves have proposed, written and confirmed. At the same time, in his view, the only escape hatch in order to get out of this immensely topsy-turvy and tumultuous situation is to have recourse to law. In the same book, it is declared by Shelley (1920, pp. 69-70) that “the great principle of reform consists in every individual giving his consent to the institution and the continuous existence of the social system which is instituted for his advantage and for the advantage of others in his situation”. To elucidate, Shelley lays emphasis on the fact that even if a set of reforms get conducted, it shouldn’t and can’t be implemented by one person or organization, but rather it has to be put to public vote to see whether people or elected representatives of them approve these reforms or not. After all, laws and social transformations are for the benefit and betterment of society of which every individual is a member. In all his discussion of reforms, Shelley takes no notice of the royal class or government officials and their so-called privileges over the others.

What matters for Shelley is that law must be laid down by people for people apart from the excessive interests, merits and wants of the ruling minority. Thus, Shelley equates reform with sticking to constitution; otherwise, it would be mindless to look ahead to a bright and promising future. Last but not least, considering his time, Shelley revolutionized the realm of literature via redefining reform and law through his works which is no exaggerating claim to call some of them underlying political manifestos that later on inspired and were applied by renowned universal figures, such as Marx and Darwin.

1.4 Shelley's Defense of Imagination

Imagination (poetic inspiration) according to Shelley is human's capability to construct sensory perception. Shelley holds nature higher than human, but he reminds that imagination is by far greater and stronger than nature. In other words, once the spark of imagination strikes, it soars infinitely so that even it surpasses God's might. On the other hand, this unique force of imagination contributes to the formation of a sense of beauty in human, reader or beholder. Burkett (2016, pp. 70-71) quotes from *A Defence of Poetry* in which Shelley mentions that "[a] Poet is a nightingale who sits in darkness, and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician". Markedly, Shelley defines poetic imagination as a musical instrument with a pleasant reverberation, harmonious vibration and dulcet melody. For Shelley, imagination is a talent existing in every man. Moreover, human's alteration and evolution all are determined by this knack. Come to think of reason and imagination, it is worth noting that Shelley assigns an inferior and secondary status to the former; however, the latter occupies a primary and superior position. He furthers that reason functions as an underpinning for imagination from which poetry originates.

On the other hand, Shelley deemed that imagination has the power to expand human's ethical considerations. We should also bear in mind that as a child, Shelley was passionate about material sciences particularly chemistry and its constituent elements namely fire, water, wind and soil which fundamentally deal with changing matter. I assume that alchemy shaped his philosophical concept of alteration manifested in his works. To further, for Shelley, imagination functions as the content of unoccupied knowledge which is loaded with implication, intention, perspective and assessment. Therefore, although humans can be of a regular life, they ordinarily heap their knowledge with certain amount of changeable experiences that are restricted to the mundane reality of this universe. Plus, they possess a talent about being cognizant of further entities that is left hidden; this gift is called imagination which is regarded as the most substantial apparatus in order to experience upheaval, betterment and beauty. Generally, as Wallace (2009, p. 17) put, "Attending to the ways which concern for imagination, the passionate, the melancholic and the individual are significant throughout 1700s".

All things considered, Shelley believes in man's real and outward expression of his imagination and poetry is an innate characteristic of man. A human being is that body with the imaginative soul. Moreover, Shelley elevates poetic language by saying that it expresses the imagination best because speech is directly related to our thoughts, words are our best mode of conveying our thoughts. The imagination creates thoughts and language is a more straightforward depiction of our actions and desires of our inner existence. In a nutshell, Shelley holds poetry as the highest form of art, superior to music, painting, and sculpture which culminates in gaining tremendous amount of knowledge. According to Shelley, phraseology and rationale are necessary but not adequate to achieve reality. They just bring about knowledge which is restricted. Indeed, Shelley was a diehard opponent of merging perception and knowledge with idealistic or theological dogma. We should also bear in mind that Shelley does not refute theology with no good reason, but he poses imagination as a decent alternative and requirement. Besides, he states that neither religion nor imagination is absolute or definite; he believes in the relativity of them.

As a matter of fact, Shelley believes that the poetic talent has a double-faceted operation: the first engenders fresh substances of knowledge, authority and delight which is another argument of this thesis; the second act of poetry, however, deals with an intellectual aspiration for multiplying wisdom, competence and happiness as well as putting them in order which is based on a particular scale and regularity named the beauty and virtue. Correspondingly, Shelley divides two different groups of readers regarding how an ordinary component of discernment processes the language of poetry. For Shelley, one class of readers possess a particular ability to see beyond language's materiality of signification and look for the knowledge and true meaning of poetry; another group, however, get stuck on the materiality and surface of poetry which is always already there.

Mccue (2014, p. 61) comes out with the point that "Shelley extends the meaning of the word 'poet' to refer to anyone who creates art, whether it be poetry, painting, sculpture or music". Simply put, Shelley's definition of poet is not restricted to literature, but rather to a wide variety of arts and sciences. Furthermore, he asserts that poet is the one who co-exists with other artists so as to contribute to the happiness, progress and perfection of man. According to Livingston (1997, p. 57), "Shelley's schematic polarity between high and lowbrow poetry functions not as a

static structure but as the pretext for a carefully engineered mixing”. Shelley’s words are clearly an adaptation of Wordsworth’s account of the process of retrospection and reconciliation, the process of absence triumphing over presence, memory overriding direct experience or hidden meaning over the explicit one.

Moreover, these words offer a subtle challenge to Wordsworth’s version of this process. Despite some contradictory comments about Shelley, Wordsworth asserts that Shelley stands out among his all other Romantic contemporaries holding a superior position. Having said that, it can be inferred that for Wordsworth, who is regarded as the most prominent poet and even the main pioneer of Romanticism, Shelley is an outstanding literary man in terms of poetic craftsmanship, elegance and taste. In a similar fashion, Shelley clearly admires and confesses Wordsworth’s unmatched standing when he says “common woes” because firstly the word “common” is a sublime adjective meaning ubiquitous and secondly, “woes” refer not simply to a normal trouble, rather it is a tremendously profound suffering and catastrophe which can never be wiped out and at the same time stands for a sublime but unfavorable description of the poet’s mood that he is skilled at. In fact, the speaker’s tragically grandiose words pay homage to Wordsworth.

We can also think of Shelley here as essentially trying to identify the major themes in Wordsworth’s works. Literally, Wordsworth’s poetry left an immense impression on Shelley which will be elaborated on in the subsequent sections. In *To Wordsworth*, Shelley commends Wordsworth’s canonical poetic works and feels sorrowful for his imaginary loss by calling him an unrivalled poet:

“One loss is mine

Which thou too feelest yet I alone deplore.

Thou wert as a alone star whose light did shine

On some frailed bark in winter’s midnight roar:

Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood

Above the blind and battling multitude:

In honoured poverty thy voice did weave

Songs consecrate to truth and liberty, ---

Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,

Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.” (5-14)

Once again Shelley praises Wordsworth by calling him a unique and archetypal star in the world of poetry who casts his light, namely his poetry, over the doddering nature and the darkness while revitalizing and illuminating them. Additionally, the poet consolidates Wordsworth’s status through likening him to a “rock-built refuge” that others were not able to see because he was way above the public understanding and appreciation. Another very notable point in these verses is that whether Shelley really admires Wordsworth or downgrades him since Shelley’s description of Wordsworth is as if Wordsworth is dead and a religious song is being sung for him. However, it goes without saying although Wordsworth was older than Shelley, he passed away much later than Shelley. Hence, the likelihood of Shelley sneering at or outfacing Wordsworth rises up.

Tomalin (2009, pp. 94-95) pinpoints that “Wordsworth referred to the real language of men, and opined that the use of simple and unelaborated expressions could create a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets”. Besides, he has the desire to be and to use the voice of the everyday people to communicate. In reality, poetic truth is of paramount significance for Wordsworth in part of his poetry. Notably, that’s a really interesting phrase when Shelley is talking about “*In honoured Poverty thy voice did weave*”. Poverty here means desire to communicate in the language of the common and everyday person. It’s not just there’s an honor to the scarce tongue of the poor, what I mean by that is they don’t have the elaborate vocabulary that comes from intense engagement with education primarily through reading texts.

In addition, these verses express sadness or grieving at the departure of another great voice but as he begins to summarize what is so significant about that voice is that in this poem, it seems something like the personality of Wordsworth is being highlighted. Stressing the undeniable part of Wordsworth, Strachan (2007, p. 160) reiterates that “To the modern reader, Wordsworth is most representative of the spirit of the Romantic age”. It seems fair to suggest that there is a sense of deep personal relationship, this fundamental bond and unification of feeling between Wordsworth and Shelley which is something fairly distinctive and it’s really substantial to the kinds of works that Shelley is going on to do. If truth be told, there is this idea that

the connection, which binds the poet and those who hear the poet's work, i.e., readers, seems to be resonating quite intensely.

Shelley still goes on marveling at Wordsworth's poetic language and "voice" which has been knitted with a simple and comprehensible language of the common people. The poet holds that Wordsworthian poetry is dedicated to discover ultimate reality, which once achieved, will bring about freedom. Presumably, it can be inferred that from Shelley's standpoint, Wordsworth was a strong advocate of intellectual emancipation and transformation. The poet again centralizes the sublime aspect of Wordsworthian poetry through referring to grandiose themes of his artistic creation. I assume that this much excessive reverence to Wordsworth is not solely for glorifying him, but Shelley wants to get hand on Wordsworth's dominating supremacy and introduce himself as a leading poet of this movement surpassing his prior Romantic counterparts. Moreover, when Shelley says "*thou leavest me to grieve*", a sort of sarcastic mourning can be felt as the poet is trying to pass this sadness on Wordsworth because his poetry is not bought by anyone anymore. In this respect, it appears that Shelley tramples Wordsworth's poetry to a degree that he wants Wordsworth not to be anymore: "*that thou shouldst cease to be*"

In my viewpoint, Shelley divides Wordsworth's works into two categories: the earlier ones which were of revolutionary themes that appealed to Shelley; and the later ones that got away from those extraordinary ideas. For this reason, Shelley thinks of the second Wordsworth as a poet who is no longer alive, to be exact. Briefly, Wordsworth serves as an undeniable and highly influential inspiration for Shelley not only in his poetic career, but also in the formation of some of his ideological inclinations. With respect to the above poems, it can be claimed that Shelley must have read Wordsworth so meticulously and profoundly that the way he talks about Mother Nature and her elements is very similar to that of Wordsworth, so to speak. In actuality, Shelley declares that poetry, in the strict sense of the word, generates the most transcendental merits for man; thus, poetry is inseparably associated with the source and root of human being. What is more, he states that this creation of merits is carried out via linguistic metamorphosis. As stated in Shelley, language primarily is the disorganization of recurring poems; as well as, lexical and syntactic differences are all manifestations of poetry. In essence, Shelley believes that keeping on his innate predisposition makes contribution to the development of

his poetry along with his elegiac diction. On this basis, comparing Wordsworth's language with that of Shelley, it seems that the latter is of a relatively further private origin and that is man's cognizance.

Given the above points, an indispensable feature of Shelley's poetry is its high-mindedness. His poetry gets induced by sort of passion for transformation and also it possesses a predictive and visionary approach. Furthermore, I suppose by his poetry, Shelley is trying to declare that such a despondent and way too defective universe will be made over into a realm of contentment and lack of restrictions. Of course, I should also point out that his poetry is a mishmash of not only cheerfulness, but also unhappiness. Shelley puts on view concepts like decadence, over-romantic or maudlin tone as well as challenge with truth which can be found in poems like *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind* and *Adonais*.

Additionally, Shelley was engrossed in utilizing bizarre diction through leaning on arbitrary meanings of terms, which was regarded as a variation in language, to empower his readers to comprehend universal affairs of alteration that catalyzed the dominant thought in Romantic period. On the other hand, it should be noted that Shelley's language appears to be roughly materialistic as well. To illustrate, Shelley prioritizes the materialistic and poetic language over the spiritual one. By so doing, he draws a close connection between poetry and science. Besides, this bare materialistic language is Shelley's poetic initiative means which is the underpinning element of imagination. He also remarks that language is intimately linked with human contemplation and per se demonstrates our practices and emotions.

As for inspiration, in *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley (2008, p. 59) underscores that "Poetry that results from strong inspiration gives rise to meaning but is not reducible to any one meaning or even the received sum of its meanings. Veil after veil may be undrawn, and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed". Although it is said that Shelley (like his other Romantic contemporaries) was inspired by nature, he didn't believe in the nature created by God, but rather, what he meant by nature was a world with no God. This Agnostic philosophy of Shelley could probably be one of the most overwhelming inspirations in his poetry as many of his poems indicate this theme. In line with his Atheistic tendencies, Shelley assumed that this physical world cannot have a creator and the reason why we live in this macrocosm is simply the necessity of an inevitable evolution of time.

If truth be told, Shelley's sense of inspiration had been so penetrating and long-lasting that he held an optimistic view that Romantic Movement would be a turning point and pave the way for the following centuries' intellectual thinkers and poets to figure out how individuals communicated with each other back then. Indisputably, despite his rather optimistic inclinations for the upcoming changes, Shelley was at times cynical about the way things were going during his lifetime; however, he was of a rock-solid confidence and desire as to the fact that humans will finally be able to topple the tyrannical political systems in one way or another.

Yet, Shelley assigns a jurisdictive role to poets. Indeed, Livingston (1997, p. 73) paraphrases that what Shelley means by "unacknowledged legislators of the world" is that poets measure the circumference and sound of the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations; poets are the creators of an unknown inspiration. Besides, Shelley equates poet with a lawmaker or messenger. In other words, from his viewpoint, poet encompasses and gathers together jurisdictive and apocalyptic traits. In reality, Shelleyan poet watches deeply this time and now as well as sets the rules on how things should be arranged. Moreover, he has the foretelling and far-seeing capability which makes him the observer of past and prospect; he also is of a generative power who can blow life spirit into the dead bodies. In fact, Shelley levitates poetry as an inseparable feature of revelation which is to say a sort of apocalypse can be represented in the form of poetry as well. Poets usually join immortality, immensity and the boundlessness, so to speak.

To sum up, based upon what went above, the dimensions of Shelley's political, historical, personal and literary concerns go beyond his skeptical disposition as it influences his stand on language and knowledge, but more often than not, those concerns are negotiated through that skeptical disposition. In other words, it cannot be said that Shelley dismisses language as a tool of social change or method of historical reflection or means of emotional expression; nor can we say that Shelley's work is without dogmatic or didactic aims. Indeed, Shelley felt that poetry had the potential to teach real lessons, bring about knowledge, describe real moments, and inspire real action. Expressly, the feel and note of escapism is very evidently found in his poems that makes him as an unmistakable romantic. Also his wistful fancy urges him to fly to a faraway land where the pains and miseries of the earth will not

plague him. Finally, it has to be mentioned that Shelley's works have often been discussed, but seldom understood. It goes without saying that an area for further development in my study is augmenting the amount of works studied for Shelley.

As for his Atheism, I think Shelley was going in for finding out the identity and overall hypothesis of God whom no one could have ever truly recognized. The God who is ahead of supernatural and biased icons or code of beliefs; as well as he is outside of any known religion. Sure as can be, in his poetry, Shelley struggles to keep away from Christianity, its teachings as well as its bias. He holds that Christianity gave rise to the destruction of Greek folk tales, distortion and mendacity. Strictly, the provocative argument Shelley brings up here namely the existence of an overwhelming mind or Being controlling the individuals, cannot be found in what we read from Wordsworth, Blake or Coleridge. His approach is clearly not antagonistic towards religion, but critical, which raises human imagination and knowledge to break through the drastically restricted frontiers of fanatically established religious tenets and to consider the possibility of a higher truth. What is more, Shelley's conventional style and its significance entailed an opposition and a menace to the first generation poets of Romanticism out of whom Wordsworth and Coleridge can be mentioned.

He was petrified by the tyrannical picture of God which had been portrayed in the Bible; that is why he sets on this Merciless God in *Queen Mab* and seeks a substitute in characters like *Mercury and Bacchus* who are saintly and in the springtime of life. Other than that, Shelley was a freethinking poet who was strongly opposed to sexual discrimination; he also believed in parity between opposite genders. Additionally, he was of the opinion that autocratic systems, institutionalized religion and the ignorant poor public lay the foundation for the absolute rulers to control and hold people back from making progress.

In a nutshell, no literary movement or poet had ever been grappling with the concept of individuality as much as the Romantics did. Additionally, for the Romantic poets, failure and decadence are fundamentally because of arrogance and the lack of mutual affection. They also held that a real poet has to eradicate ego which is precisely what Shelley means by imagination since it is superior to the ego and has to do with a different sphere. Last but not least, Shelley holds that poetry cannot be constituted unless a revelation strikes the poet the way a volatile and unsteady breeze blows and

gives us a different and delightful feeling. This stimulation roots in the internal world of the poet which keeps changing just like a bloom of plant loses brightness so that we cannot prudently figure out how and where it emerged from as well as how it vanished.

Indeed, Percy Bysshe Shelley's cutting fame has been identified by foundational changes. Since he was of an irreligious nonconformist ideology and was notorious for having various relationships with different women in his life, majority of his literary works were very often denounced. Critics had widely distant attitudes towards Shelley. Some commended the divine and artistic aspects of his poetry to such an extent that even his poetry was strikingly viewed as a manifestation of paradigmatic love. However, others blame Shelley for his hazy symbolism, obscure ontology, reckless approach as well as his mental and sentimental callowness. On the contrary, there is one thing for sure about Shelley: his literary approach is still alive and very much similar to contemporary literary criticism which holds alteration in the way Shelley expresses in his poem, *Mutability*. When it comes to the attitude of the poet, Shelley hangs on optimism though it does not promise accomplishment; it only considers breakthrough as an option and consequently it lets loose the force of imagination and innovation. In the following chapters, I will discuss these issues and many others by taking most of his works and preferably his poetry into account.

Indeed, Shelley's poetry traverses across diverse concepts, some of which are as follows: aspiration, dread, sanguineness, skepticism, belief, durability, instability, wisdom, imagination, universe, temporality, idealism, eternity, agnosticism and integrity. Moreover, Shelley's poetic excellence is not simply because of his rhythmic and euphonious written composition, but due to his reverberating and startling language and message. Unfortunately, Shelley was short of cultivated public who could hear and understand him properly; nevertheless, he had exclusive articulation and rhetorical skill which only belong to a deeply inspired and philosophically inclined man.

2. PLATONISM AND NEO-PLATONISM AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO SHELLEY'S POETRY

2.1 Basic Tenets of Platonic and Neo-Platonic Thought

For centuries, Platonism and Neo-Platonism had been regarded as roughly the same philosophical doctrines. However, with the arrival of the nineteenth century, it was made known that this identicalness was not the case; from then on, the two schools of philosophy diverged and followed disparate paths. Initially, Platonism is a school of philosophy descended from Plato's doctrine. It calls attention to abstract entities and beings. Plato was an Athenian philosopher, a student of Socrates who lived between 428 BCE and 348 BCE. His approach to metaphysics is sprinkled throughout his writings and the most significant part of it is his *Theory of Forms* which eventually became the foundation of Neo-Platonism. The theory of forms states that for each quality, there is something which is the greatest possible expression of that quality. Plato explains part of his theory of forms in the *Dialogue* known as *Phaedo*, where he discusses the form of beauty.

He asserts that a beautiful thing is not necessarily the one which has alluring color, appearance, design, form or the like, but it is the presence or communion of Absolute Beauty that makes a thing be or look beautiful. Thus, Plato's attitude towards metaphysics is concerned with absoluteness. For example, what makes a work of art beautiful has nothing to do with its constituent parts, rather it's due to the fact that it communicates with the absolute beauty. In other words, a particular form or a specific painting is not dazzling or good-looking for its structure, configuration or design; but it's all about representing a noble and grand form of beauty namely absolute beauty. Another case in point is when an artist is doing a seascape painting, he/she can apply a combination of blue and green to make it sound literally genuine. However, in another painting, once the background is mostly orange, it won't most probably look as beautiful since it is not close to the absolute beauty.

These two examples can somehow facilitate our understanding of Plato's *Theory of Forms*. As a way of explanation, in *Cratylus* (one of Plato's *Dialogues*), he argues for his theory of forms using geometry. At the time, in Greece there weren't computers which could make perfect circles and people couldn't draw perfect circles by hand, but they still knew what they were referencing when they drew a circle. Plato surmises that because there was a form of perfect circle in their mind, individual circles were shapes which participated in that absolute form or perfect circle. Human beings are supposed to know what a circle is because they recollect it. As for reality, Plato deemed that it had two facets: the first side is worldly, tangible, impermanent and variable. However, the second aspect is spiritual, immortal, constant and explicit. The latter interpretation of reality depicts the former one. In other words, the corporeal truth is a pastiche of the spiritual one. In addition, Neo-Platonists approved this model of Platonic reality; but they added up one more aspect to this classification which was the metaphysical reality that was considered to be supreme and the most apprehensible form of reality.

Plato's epistemology depends on his belief in the immortality of the soul. In *Parmenides* (his other *Dialogue*), young Socrates argues with Parmenides. The argument put forward in that dialogue is referred to as "the third man argument" because it uses the form of man as its theoretical basis. Parmenides states that if a man is a man, it is because he participates in the form of man. Then there must be a third actor or another form which accounts for the interaction between man and the form of man. However, once that is introduced, there must be something which accounts for the interaction between the three and so on and Ad. Nauseam. Despite the third man and other problems, forms became the foundation of the Aristotelian metaphysics as well as the ideas of Plotinus (205 – 270 C.E.), the founder of the last major ancient Greek school of philosophy, Neo-Platonism.

With respect to this school of thought, Remes (2008, p. 1) adds that "Neo-Platonism refers to a school of thought that began in approximately 245 C.E., when a man called Plotinus moved from the intellectual center of the Eastern Mediterranean, Alexandria, Egypt, to settle in the capital of the Roman Empire, where he began teaching his interpretation of Plato's philosophy, gaining many disciples and followers". Neo-Platonism didn't show up until about the 19th century. It is significant to remember that Neo-Platonism was coined by theologians rather than

philosophers as it is a decidedly more spiritual system than what Plato suggested. It is also important to note that Neo-Platonism is referred to as a Greek school of thought due to its origins in Platonism rather than its national origin as Plotinus was Egyptian. Because of his interest in philosophy, Plotinus went to Alexandria where he studied for a while. Then he became enthusiastic about Persian and Indian philosophy and eventually he went to Rome where he taught and lived the rest of his life.

Plotinus suggested a form which is the fundamental basis for the constitution of reality called “*The One*” which is analogous to the Hindu concept of *Brahma*. “*The one*” is both self-causing and also causes all other things. Nevertheless, unlike Plato, Plotinus uses his argument in the form of reductionism calling back to Pre-Socratic philosophers and their methods. Two more major concepts, *intellect* and *soul* were necessary in order to understand why there is any kind of distinction at all from *The One*. Intellect represents logic, rationality and generally true information; whereas soul shows things like the eagerness for eternity through reproduction. The former deals primarily with external processes, however, the latter with internal ones. In a nutshell, these three fundamental forms are deeply interconnected because as things rise in the intellect or the soul, they become possibilities which must be expressed through *The One*.

It is also necessary to note that Neo-Platonists never considered themselves to be founders of a new philosophical school, rather as illuminators of Platonism. The prefix, -Neo, simply reflects a sense of period coming after Plato. Renaissance intellectuals even were particularly enthusiastic about Plato specially his notion of *Ideal Forms* and ultimate truth which is attained beyond this tangible universe. Plato had established himself as such an influential philosopher that these intellectuals got to the bottom of his works primarily from religious, namely Christian, perspective despite the fact that Plato had grown up under irreligious or agnostic circumstances. As a way of illustration, Neo-Platonism entails a top-down multi-layered sequence on top of which *The Good* or *The One* is situated. The second position belongs to Mind-Being dichotomy. The third and the fourth go with Soul and Body respectively. Lastly, Matter takes the lowest rung of this ladder. To explain, the Good or *The One* is not conceivable, i.e., it is way above human recognition. It is also a source from which everything derives. Every living and inanimate being comes from

and goes back to it. Man's mind deals with immortal things, however, the soul has been interconnected with time.

Man is a medley of both; therefore, his life somewhat has to do with time and to some extent with timelessness or immortality. Body is where the baseness or perversity resides in, but it can never penetrate into the soul. In fact, soul is the realm of emancipation from all confinements and inhibitions. Soul is destined to experience another better life which fairly makes up for this worldly one. Baseness is in matter which is completely nebulous and indefinite. According to Neo-Platonists, ultimate truth is eternal and grander. For them, Plato was the most outstanding thinker of their era. Plotinus held that truth does not lie in the interaction between man's apprehension and the outside world entities, but it is in the harmony of various components of the mind with no interference of extrinsic elements. The Neo-Platonic philosophers' ideology was partly akin to that of Gnostics and Rationalists, and simultaneously identical to mystics. Plotinus was fundamentally an advocate of rationalistic thoughts; nonetheless, once he realized that human being and his natural surrounding cannot be sufficiently justified by rationale, he turned to mysticism.

Based on his mysticism, mundane matters and terminable things would never lead man to God, instead, human must introspect and use his imaginative faculties boundlessly so as to reach the Supreme Being. So, contemplation is regarded as the utmost mechanism which makes individual search for God in himself. One of the most underlying concepts to which Neo-Platonists are committed is negation. Negation means if human hikes up above his limits, he will come up with a sense and belief of higher spirit and power the way God possesses it and this is the point at which wisdom or intellect fails and human becomes God. Neo-Platonists equate The One with the ideal forms of Plato that is a sort of entity which everything stems from. The One proposed by Neo-Platonists has almost nothing to do with God.

It is immaterial and unable to generate, but it (The One) gives rise to the formation of Nous or intellect. Put it differently, intellect is an outgrowth of The One. It begins from the soul or the abstract on top to the matter or the palpable at the bottom. The soul's function in Neo-Platonism is similar to the forms in Plato. In addition, for them, human is a combination of flesh and spirit; hence he is of this exclusive capability to rise up that succession and come nearer to The One. It can be achieved via mortifying and purifying the spirit as well as abstaining from the physical needs.

Neo-Platonism appeared almost 600 years after Platonism, however, it lasted for roughly 1500 years as a dominant school of thought which accounts for its inevitable importance, influence and infiltration among the public.

Neo-Platonists believe in a particular world which is the product of a spiritual revelation that, in turn, is taken from The Absolute One. This supreme One is equated with the Good which refers to the spreading of ideal and virtue. The intended world of Neo-Platonism is composed of ranked sequences or graded orders which are not divided domains in terms of time or space; rather they are specific grades of existence that are eternal in every being. Apart from that, for Plotinus, intellect, is the ubiquitous knowledge of the world in which there are stereotypical designs and thoughts that give rise to the formation of the universe and organizing it. What is more, in the Neo-Platonic world, there is a soul which includes the universe and enlivens it.

This comprehensive soul is the origin of the souls of every animate creature; as well as, it composes the midway truth between the divine intellect and the material universe. Since the material world that has been surrounded temporally and spatially, is pertinent to the bodily senses, it cannot get closer to the divine truth. The material stage is the last level of creation; thus it is typified by unfavorable and non-affirmative words such as the domain of constraint, shadows and obscurity. This is very similar to Plotinus's description of light when it goes gently away from its source as far as it finally vanishes into blackness and drops out of sight. Plotinus similizes the material grade to the evil because it has been situated in the undermost part of his hierarchy of beings with respect to existential value. Despite its minimum status, the level of matter is not always featured by unpleasant terms, for instance, beauty is engendered by the material world and it is a harmonic combination of an entirety with its constituent parts made and kept together by the soul of the universe. On the word of Neo-Platonists, since human is a union of body and spirit, this ability lies in him to mount to and reach the maximum level where intellect and metaphysical dimension reside. Of course unless he sets himself free from all material and corporeal things and dependencies, he won't be capable of fulfilling this objective. As can be seen, Plotinus regards man as a creature with will power and volition whose destiny is designated by him freely.

Every single entity initiates from The One via intermediating the intellect and the soul of the world. On the other hand, Plotinus thinks of the power of imagination, which is an inseparable feature of human's soul to reach eternity. Having said that, once human employs his imagination, he can attain metaphysical freedom. Plotinus asserts that the main duty of the philosophers is to ameliorate man's life, eliminate his reliance on this material world and purify as well as cultivate him righteously and rationally. Plotinus introduced and systematized a sort of precisely organized metaphysics which was both rationalistic and utopian. He built his school of thought on the supernatural tenets of Plato. Plotinus compounded some novel characteristics including hierarchical order, emergence or derivation and highly rational mysticism. In short, Neo-Platonism is regarded as the ultimate representation of scholastic philosophy, and played the historical role of Platonism in the following years.

Indeed, one of the major concerns of Neo-Platonists was to set up a network between man's spirit and the greater soul of the nature. Plato's disciples attached a paramount significance to the notion of man that is a representation of creator. As stated by them, man's spirit inherently craves to rejoin the natural environment. Platonism and Neo-Platonism supposedly affected the Christian doctrines. In *Aesthetic Themes in Pagan and Christian Neo-Platonism From Plotinus to Gregory of Nyssaby*, Iozzia (2015, p. 26) argues that "it is with Platonism that Christian thought combined willingly, in a conjugation which proved most significant from the point of view of philosophy. The exact evaluation of the influence of Platonic thought on Christian authors is still a matter of debate". Apparently, Plato's ideas have influenced the Christianity not the other way round. For instance, what is known in Christianity as body-soul dichotomy sounds to have been taken from the Platonic categorization of them. Plato connected the soul to morality and reality the way Christianity does today.

Another controversial issue concerning the subject under discussion is that Christianity regards the Heaven as Utopia and debases the material world as a sheer mimicry of the ideal place and life. Meanwhile, Plato, centuries prior to Christianity, had posed this hierarchy in his theory of forms. I suppose Platonism laid the foundation for the emergence of Christianity. Moreover, both doctrines believe in ultimate and permanent reality or God. Platonic God is perfect, non-human and a

perfect version of good; whereas, God in Christianity has human characteristics such as creating and controlling.

According to Plato, God has nothing to do with man. On the other hand, Christians reject the idea that their tenets have been derived from Plato. Unlike Plato who asserts that God is an unrestricted being in terms of his goodness and beauty, Christians maintain that God unites his divine nature to human nature as in the Holy Trinity. He can be mediator for all the world. But he does that in a very non-Platonic way; he doesn't do anything like what Plato or Pre-Platonic myth would conceive of it. What Christians believe is to articulate a revelation that began with Jesus and Holy Scripture. They never abide by borrowing anything from Greek myth and Platonic configuration, wisdom, literature or things of that nature. Christians are wrestling with trying to conceive of what Jesus says of himself and what they experience in the resurrection. They don't even find it important to get any ideas from Platonism. That Christianity and Platonism have been rather intermingled is out of question; nonetheless, Platonism's impression on Christianity appears to outweigh which made Christian theology undergo some transformations. Furthermore, unlike Christians, Platonists and Neo-Platonists reject human being's alliance with God and accentuate Gnostic solidarity as a result of rumination which itself originates from dialectics.

For all that, Platonic doctrine is in harmony with Christian teachings, specifically when it comes to cerebral aspects of this universe, soul's eternity and philosophical inquiry into the beginning of the macrocosm. This compatibility goes as far as even some Christian intellectuals, in their works, refer to Platonic writers such as Plotinus who refutes the hypothesis that Christianity was totally against Platonism. What is more, although Platonism and Neo-Platonism claimed to have influenced Christian writers, conversely, these authors held that Plato had been inspired by the Old Testament. Equally important, Iozzia (2015, p. 27) posits that "in the first half of the fourth century, the Platonism known to Christians was the revisited one of the Middle and Neo-Platonists, who introduced new elements within the tradition that inspired them, or simply highlighted old motifs revitalizing them with eastern religious doctrines". Despite the fact that Platonism and Christianity were at some points opposed to each other, they had a lot in common.

The emergence of the Church and Christian divinity was, to a great extent, dependent upon Platonism. Also, Plato scrutinized the concepts of self, body and soul. He

stipulated that body is concerned with physical decadence and degradation; nevertheless, soul deals with virtue, beneficence, honesty and integrity. As a result, it culminated in a better and more comprehensive realization of body and soul dichotomy in Christianity as well. Although Neo-Platonism and Christianity had been living side-by-side for quite a while, it was Christianity which was the admitted and practiced religion of the State. In other words, unlike the apparent superiority of Christianity, the two tenets were involved in a rather tranquil and undisturbed controversy. Nonetheless, in the later years, some impediments turned out between them since Christian politicians and decision makers found Neo-Platonism as an imminent menace to the ideological as well as legislative integrity of the public and the State; therefore a considerable amount of restriction and prohibition was imposed on Neo-Platonists so as not to propagate or indoctrinate their ideas and principles to the folks.

This sense of opposition and conflict even got exacerbated so that they were forced to modify and refashion their schoolings in accordance with Christian criteria. Over and above, these pressures were hiked up to such a degree that it culminated in bloodshed, the most prominent case of which was murdering a Neo-Platonist female intellectual. Still further, as cited in Remes (2008, p. 40), “The Neo-Platonists start from the Platonic insight that the perceptible universe and its particulars present several challenges to cognition and knowledge. Plato noted that sensible objects suffer from compresence of opposites, that is, they can be, for example, both larger and smaller at the same time depending on the context in which they are inspected. Plato’s *Parmenides* attacks the conception that being could be many by saying that in that case the same things must be both like and unlike”.

It is necessary to mention that not only Plato’s philosophy, but also Aristotle’s doctrine affected the incipience of Neo-Platonism, and this impact was somewhat affirmative and to some extent controversial. For instance, Neo-Platonists furthered and argued Aristotle’s concept of nature. They believed that nature cannot be comprehended without the active function of human soul. For Neo-Platonists, transformation is an indispensable part of the nature whose driving force is inner rather than extrinsic. They consider nature as dependent which has been structured based on apprehensible hierarchies that is what Plato names *Ideal Forms*. Moreover, both Aristotelians and Neo-Platonists are obliged to the notion of the One which is a

consolidated basis of this classification and hierarchical sequence. To explain, some of the major characteristics of Neo-Platonism are as follows: firstly, they believe in additional classification of interpretive comprehensible domain beyond the tangible world. Secondly, Neo-Platonists assume that human spirit innately reflects this categorization; therefore, it can exceed the restraints of this classification.

In conclusion, Platonism was a highly controversial philosophical school that laid the foundation for the posterity's interpretations. Then Neo-Platonism emerged that pick up where Platonism had left off. Neo-Platonism was mostly in favor of Platonism, along with some minor alterations and oppositions; for instance, they ran counter to Plato's understanding of poetry, woman, his absolute priority of reason over other human faculties, his discussion of ideal forms and so on which I will turn to as the discussion goes further. Literally, it was Plotinus who moved the ancient Greek philosophy that was basically rationalistic up to a kind of mysticism which was super-rationalistic. Plotinus was seeking for an entity or being more grandiose and extraordinary than reason.

It looks as if beyond plenty of existing philosophical schools, Platonism gets hands on a plethora of attributes that are on the same wavelength with Christian doctrine, among which are the metaphysical world's abstractness, soul's eternity as well as pondering upon how the universe emerged. On the other hand, Neo-Platonists along with Aristotelians appreciate the brisk and dynamic nature; they also highly regard soul both as the significant element of life and as its underpinning. Needless to say that according to Aristotle, the living body houses the soul as its most essential reality. They take one step further and claim that not only in the physical body, but also in the whole world, lies an animate soul which does not simply deal with living creatures, rather even with soulless beings such as mountains, rivers, cliffs, etc. As for knowledge, Aristotelians paved the way for Neo-Platonists. To put it more clearly, Aristotle and his followers declare that one's welfare and prosperity depend not only on divine features, but also on mundane circumstances and events which are possible to occur, however, cannot be prognosticated with certainty. Tangible matters are directly the building blocks of human knowledge which do not require any mediatory elements or principles to be expressed or realized by the mind.

To begin with, Neo-Platonic knowledge is sort of stratified. On top of the hierarchy, the more expansive and profound knowledge is situated whereas at the bottom of it

lies the tiny restricted knowledge. This ranking is very similar to a teacher-pupil hierarchy in terms of knowledge. To illustrate, teachers simplify and clarify the wideness and complexities of subject matter for their students. They also right their learners' errors. This up-down process demonstrates Neo-Platonic knowledge. The lower rung of this ladder deals with specific and partial understanding of entities and a diminutive picture of human soul, intellect and material things. Nevertheless, the higher rung includes more general and complete comprehension of issues; for example, worldwide rules and regulations. Therefore, the top part provided the down part with essential touchstone as to what is correct or otherwise. Having said that, I should also point out that for Neo-Platonists, knowledge has never been the ultimate objective, rather it acts as an equipment to emancipation. They believe that once knowledge and cognizance augment, we can get closer to some degree of ultimate truth of which every individual is a component. In other words, our ordinary knowledge is the prerequisite to make us be united with that ultimate truth.

One of the most fundamental questions for Neo-Platonists pivots on acquiring knowledge. They believe that human beings' cognition is unstable if they cannot contemplate more profoundly. As a matter of fact, Neo-Platonists express that for individuals to attain wisdom, consistency and mental consolidation, they have to keep away from dealing with perceptible matters as they put forth seriously challenging obstacles on the way of mental functions. Turning to Platonism, alterations and contradictions agonize them most; therefore they are so skeptical even when they come across a true compatibility between their physical senses and their spirit.

On the other hand, when it comes to Platonic knowledge, it should be cited that for Plato, knowledge has already been existing in man's soul. Moreover, since it is dialectical, this argumentative approach just contributes to awakening our knowledge and bringing it to mind. According to Plato, the knowledge that springs from sensory perception is simply concerned with the ephemeral and experiential entities which has nothing to do with the abstract and transcendental knowledge. Hence, Plato asserts that it is not knowledge whatsoever. To enunciate, Platonists announced that genuine knowledge is learned easily and it is variable but not necessarily intricate. Bearing this in mind, it can be realized that Platonists and Neo-Platonists, as for knowledge acquisition, are not on the same wavelength. Plotinus strongly upheld that

the most notable quality of human soul is Reason or wisdom that is always on the rise and never falls down due to its Utopian nature which seeks perpetuity, sophistication and stability. The concept of Forms proposed by Plotinus is the constituent part of the Reason which is steady and unvarying. Besides, Neo-Platonism asserted that Reason and Platonic Forms, can by no means be attained by the mind, and this culminated in broadening the split between the Reason and human soul.

Plato (2016, p. 34) in his *Republic* asserts that “You would acknowledge the existence of abstract ideas, such as justice, beauty, good, evil, which are severally one, yet in their various combinations appear to be many. Those who recognize these realities are philosophers; whereas the other class hear sounds and see colors, and understand their use in the arts, but cannot attain to the true or waking vision of absolute justice or beauty or truth; they have not the light of knowledge, but of opinion, and what they see is a dream only”. To elaborate, he considers knowledge as a category in relation to conceptual and very specific things. However, tangible objects can solely construct opinion. To exemplify, Plato maintains that in daylight everything can be seen transparently, in dimness or half-light they look vague, and when it is night, we can’t see anything. Here, our soul is represented by our eye that knows the truth. Sun embodies the truth itself. But twilight connotes an amalgamation of clarity and obscurity indicating unintelligence. By giving this example, Plato refers to discrepancies between the transparent and obscure phenomena in the knowledge which is based upon physical sense.

Remes (2008, p. 146) maintains that “sensible objects pose a grave difficulty for thought activity that strives for knowledge”. To put it differently, Plato decisively alleges that the knowledge that stems from sensory or experiential perception is not knowledge indeed as it simply exposes an outward show of the material entities. What is more, he remarks that genuine knowledge is acquired through intellect, and this intellectual knowledge is more reliable than the perplexing and distracting so-called knowledge experienced by physical senses. He furthers that truth is attained by discerning the philosophy of essence or existence, and existence can only be figured out by human mind but not sensory perception. In a nutshell, Platonic knowledge emphasizes on the fact that human soul should be segregated from his mortal part, i.e., body. The transcendental nature and true notions are stored in soul; nonetheless,

the decaying things are blended with the mortal part. He concludes that the real knowledge is acquired once the body is excluded as it is a barrier on the way of grasping true knowledge. Quoting from Plato's *The Republic*, Cornford (1941, p. 8) puts, "this knowledge is the moral virtue of man, qua man, and constitutes the art of living".

As a result, for Platonists and Neo-Platonists, worldly matters such as reputation, serendipity, espousal and destitution are of neither productive nor detrimental outcomes for people's way of gaining knowledge. In reality, for these philosophers, once an individual probes into his mind and speculates on his inner life, genuine knowledge and bliss can be achieved. Additionally, they state that permanent unity with the Supreme One or ultimate reality results in everlasting knowledge which has little to do with the earthy nature. For Plato, art serves for remedial purposes. Poets are liable for ameliorating people's lives. In addition, Plato held that one of the most inevitable things to refashion and rehabilitate society is art. Much of Plato's life was put on mutually ideal interaction between individuals and political system. He is regarded as the most utopian philosopher. Furthermore, he was preoccupied with making an ideal society not based on its army, but on its prosperous members whose various requirements have been met and expectations lived up to. In his book, *The Republic*, Plato asserts that people should utilize their wisdom or reason prior to taking action. According to Plato, reality can by no means be exhibited by art; nor is life able to do so because art is simply a duplicate of life. As well as, Plato remarks that the universe is nothing but a hallucination which people go through.

It is also a set of tangible things and phenomena such as images, looks, shapes and so on. Indeed, Plato maintains that there might be several kinds of reality, nevertheless, the most genuine one is the reality which is composed of enduring *Ideal Forms* formulated by Infinite Spirit. The *Ideal Forms* are quite original and the only simulation of God of which there is no further imitation. For Plato, everything even the concrete entities like doors, desks, cars, houses, etc., which are seemingly put together by human, emanates from a whole or superior and ever-lasting creator of *Ideal Forms*. In summary, I presume that Plato sets up a hierarchy on top of which God and at the bottom, art and life have been situated. Plus, God but not life and art determines reality. However, it is imperative to cite that Plato failed to establish facts for his postulation of God as an impeccable, perpetual and omniscient originator.

Briefly, despite the fact that Plato does not abide by art's function in arriving at truth, he still holds it in a high regard asserting that art has the capacity to portray reality if not represent it.

For the most part, Neo-Platonism is actually regarded as a philosophical school descended from Platonism. Nonetheless, apparently there seems to be a breach between the two schools of thought that needs to be elucidated and bridged over. The metaphysics of Aristotle basically is considered to be Neo-Platonist. The key point to be remembered is although Neo-Platonism has been thought to descend from Platonism and Plato's didactics, it is rather disparate from Platonism and the prior philosophical schools which were widespread long before Plato. Plotinus, the forerunner of Neo-Platonism or his disciples did not coin this term, but this honor goes to the German academia and has nothing to do with the founder or adherents of Neo-Platonism since they regarded themselves as moral intellectuals, thinkers and apprentices who followed Plato's footsteps. Although Christians and Neo-Platonists had been living together peacefully for centuries, clearly Christianity was the dominant school of thought which even politically and socially restricted Neo-Platonists. These constraints root in the fact that Neo-Platonism was of a naked language as well as a skeptic and rather heretic approach to the degree that its adherents were not allowed to practice their teachings communally.

Christian followers went too far and even committed murder simply because they expected Neo-Platonists to adjust and modify their principles depending on Christian dictated rules. In spite of the seeming discrepancies between the two schools of philosophy, Christianity was somehow influenced by Neo-Platonism. To specify, Neo-Platonists emphasized the spiritual and superior domain as the supreme righteousness which Christians found so pleasant. Merlan (1975, p. 2) states that "Plotinus, once considered to be the founder of Neo-Platonism, is now being interpreted as its greatest member important but not all important in the history of Neo-Platonism. The soil out of which he grew, sometimes referred to as Pre-Neoplatonism, sometimes as Middle Platonism, exhibits qualities precisely mediating between the Academy and Neo-Platonism". The point that has to be noticed here is being Neo-Platonist does not necessarily mean pursuing the tenets of Plotinus, as the thinkers living during the same period as Plotinus did or the posterior ones never alleged so. The interesting point is that the parallel between Neo-

Platonists and Platonists is by far more enigmatic than that of Neo-Platonists and otherwise.

Furthermore, Plotinus, the pioneer of Neo-Platonism, was opposed to some of the Gnostic teachings; a case in point is the belief that God selects some individuals closer to Him while some others away from Him no matter how hard they struggled and apart from pious life they lived to reach Him. In addition, Plotinus discarded another Gnostic tenet that some illnesses and disorders can be treated by spelling and sorcery. Although Neo-Platonists were finally attracted to Christianity, Porphyry, Plotinus's disciple, openly antagonized with evident opacity and contradictions of Christ's remarks so that he called some of his statements babble and absurd. According to Remes (2008, pp. ix-x), "the somewhat bizarre but fascinating and highly influential philosophical school of thought called Neo-Platonism, although pagan, had an emphatic interest in spiritual matters. As the centuries revealed, Neo-Platonism existed side by side and, to an extent, in dialogue with the growing Christian religion. Despite the religious and spiritual context, Neo-Platonism was focally a continuation of ancient philosophy, i.e., a dialectic with Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic heritage". While Neo-Platonism emerged predominantly as an unchristian doctrine which picked up where the previous dialectical schools of thought such as Platonism, Stoicism, Aristotelianism, etc. had left off, it paid a great deal of attention to religious and immaterial issues so that Christianity's flourishing and continuity were partly due to the inevitable and privileged impact of Neo-Platonism.

As well as, Remes & Svetla – Griffin (2014, p. 513) postulate, "Both Neo-Platonism and Christianity were strongly committed to the divine origin of the soul, its immateriality and its immortality, but disagreed on the issue of its uncreated nature. In this regard, both Christianity and Neo-Platonism opposed the Gnostics and the Manicheans with their dualist cosmological vision of a world governed by both light and dark forces. Both also were aesthetic movements – Plotinus did not want his portrait painted (image of an image) – and there was also a certain disdain for, or at least devaluation of, the physical world". To demonstrate, there are some commonalities between these two ideological schools such as emphasis on transcendence or experience beyond the normal or physical level, spirituality and benevolence. Nevertheless, regarding the differences, it has to be cited that unlike

Christianity which stressed afterlife prosperity and salvation, Neo-Platonism underlined human felicity and integrity not in the hereafter, but in this world.

Another indispensable point to mention is that comparing Gnostics and Christianity, it should be remembered that both herald a savior, be it Christ or any other divine messenger, who would rescue its believers from sin and its repercussions and bring their souls back to the One by an ethereal connection with the mediator in whom they have faith. However, in Gnostics, it is assumed that the only way for the soul to achieve reunion with the One is simply a sacred twinkle which can be attained through meditation and profound reflection. Neo-Platonism which was brought up by Plotinus, was on the basis of Plato's postulation. Plato believed that truth, infinity and perfection exist beyond the material world.

To make the long story short, both Neo-Platonism and Christianity maintained the transcendent nature of the One as the source and origin of the visible universe. They further defended the divine origin of the soul and its desire to return to the One from which it came. The body and the world of the senses are regarded as distractions and impediments to achieve this unity with the One. Then again, Neo-Platonism and Christianity advocated spiritual practices to purify the soul, leading ultimately to deification. Nevertheless, Christian doctrine was the dominant tenet under whose control Neo-Platonism could not autonomously propagate its teachings both publically and politically since after all society was governed by the Christian leaders. Conjointly, both Neo-Platonism and Christianity were essentially spiritual philosophies that opposed what they understood to be the materialism of the Stoics.

In effect, one of the substantial issues with which Neo-Platonists have always dealt is whether reality is composed of solely one creative component or double elements with regard to virtue and wickedness dichotomy. Nevertheless, Neo-Platonists seem to believe in the One who generates the beauty and goodness from which even the villainy springs; accordingly, they postulate a hierarchical priority from good at the top to the evil at the bottom. On the whole, Neo-Platonic philosophy is a one-way process from up to bottom not the other way round; that is to say Neo-Platonists hold that human spirit cannot be influenced by things which are lesser and inferior than the soul such as by flesh and physical world. For them, human soul is of eternal nature, nonetheless, it is still coupled with body.

Paradoxically, for Neo-Platonists, reality is both metaphysical which is beyond the mind and dependent on the mind at the same time. In other words, they are realist philosophers who seek reality in a reciprocal interaction between conception and what is generally presupposed as reality in the external world. There has to be a conformity between the intricacy of contemplation and twist of existence. On the whole, for Neo-Platonists, existence and mind are inseparable. What is more, Neo-Platonists reiterate that the *One* is the primary and final origin and cause of every living and inanimate beings. Moreover, along with Neo-Platonism, there were also some other contemporary incorporeal movements like Stoicism which had a different interpretation of reality, prosperity and resistance and believed in individual contemplation, instead. Overall, it can be inferred that unity lies in the universe and from this unity comes a wide variety of attitudes, choices and tendencies; otherwise, the world might have been a ramshackle, haphazard and indistinguishable place which lacked a stable individuality. Also, no unanimous definition and realization of truth could be presented which, in turn, laid the foundations for the emergence of a perplexing spiritual, social and political milieu.

The concept of fall plays an indispensable role in Neo-Platonism. According to Neo-Platonists, every individual's spirit includes a component which is pure and solid and is called wisdom or intellect. The intellect never flows down and is perpetually speculating. Besides, it does not encompass all human works. Neo-Platonism claims that wisdom gets triggered on particular occasions. For example, once we break out an argument with others or when we deliberate on a subject for roughly a long period of time. Furthermore, the wisdom is considered as the most essential part of the spirit which is not always on the upward trend, but rather it occasionally undergoes some changes. Also, the intellect stores knowledge no matter perceptual or dialectic. Generally speaking, every human being, who possesses spirit, has a degree of wisdom.

To make out, in one categorization, Plotinus classifies the soul into premier or intellectual and minor or unreasonable sections. He labels the intellectual part and peak of the soul as the non-descending component which never falls downward, rather it moves up in a permanent upmost trend towards ever-lasting intellect. In fact, this reasonable part of the soul is regarded as the greatest degree of spirit or inner self and can come closer to the metaphysical realm. In connection with the idea of

incarnation, Neo-Platonists deduce that there is a very close relationship between thought and existence. To specify, they presume that if one is capable of pondering upon something, s/he cannot necessarily be that thing albeit individuals' contemplating faculty is infinite.

As for reincarnation, Remes (2008, p. 120) elaborates on this concept by saying that "For the Neo-Platonist, the doctrine of reincarnation does not mean that a human person with a particular life history would be reincarnated; in reincarnation, the souls lose most if not all of their individual memories as well as those of their characteristics closely connected to the particular bodies they have incarnated in previous lives". Indeed, the notion of reincarnation which Neo-Platonism refers to is the rebirth of a soul in another body after death. This resurgence takes place in a different body which can be physically animate being or an unworldly one depending on what a spiritual attribute the person's foregone life was of. In *Phaedo*, Plato brings forth the eternity of spirit. Considering Christianity and Socrates hypothesis based upon which all phenomena are concerned with immortal recurrent procedures, Plato comes to the understanding of eternity with respect to reincarnation. Reincarnation connotes that someone with a new and special life will be transfigured; but this process is associated with the loss and disintegration of some singular qualities; therefore reincarnation does not guarantee the individual perpetuity, nor does it undertake to provide any comfort or pleasure. Briefly, for Neo-Platonists, immortality takes precedence over wisdom the way time goes before the soul. They consider time as something which is conceptually actual.

According to Neo-Platonists, natural and animate beings are like circles of a chain glued together. In fact, they postulate that every single being in the world reflects the other entities; in this respect, their attitude is very similar to that of transcendentalists in general, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's Over-soul in particular, who hold that people and objects are of an internal soul which constitutes the whole or the One, and are united and intermingled with one another tightly. Additionally, there is a common misconception about Neo-Platonists that they merely consider the highly spiritual matters like soul; another accusation is they are thinkers who overlook human's very preliminary and ordinary acts as well as capabilities by digging into life's immaterial aspects, however, that is not the case as Neo-Platonists assert that there is more to human beings than meet the eyes since from their viewpoint, the

more individuals ameliorate themselves and their material situation, the better they can improve their spiritual status. In sum, Neo-Platonists supposed that there is no restriction on the way of both bodily and psychic advancement. They even claim that reason and wisdom, unlike their striking capability, have some constraints that fail to undertake human progress and prosperity; instead, they underscore conjunction with the One as a way of reaching reality.

As a matter of fact, one of the most leading issues with regard to Neo-Platonism is its wide variety of patterns for reason; for instance, it represents a broad range of diverse forces concerning disparate forms of living all around our outside world. On the contrary, it provides us with a large number of irrational schemes. To take one step further, rationality goes even so far that it sometimes fails to become the prevailing prototype or the scale upon which the significance and full value of objects can be measured or figured out. Actually, in my view, what Neo-Platonists mean by rationale is not an ordinary thinking or reasoning power though it bears a thoroughly telling implication; nor is rationality of a comparative scale, say, this is more dialectic or intellectual than that, but I am of the opinion that Neo-Platonism expresses uncertainty as for any measurable hierarchy of argumentation. This half-way policy adopted by them accounts for the fact that righteousness and virtue can or cannot be the origin of all animate and inanimate beings; besides, syllogism is not sufficient to pick out individuals' bona fide aptitude or aspire for a higher and utmost status. Consequently, Neo-Platonists come forth to be skeptical of the emergence of this mundane world and its nexus with the supreme One.

In a nutshell, unmistakably in Neo-Platonism, a difference is made between matter and soul. To elucidate, the former is viewed as inferior, but the latter is considered to be superior. In fact, by establishing a hierarchy, Neo-Platonists prioritize intellect and spirit over the physical existence as man is preferred over other living organisms and life forms; the reason is since human beings utilize their wisdom and are able to make logical decisions. Nevertheless, other living creatures lack this aptitude and are determined to be in the service of super creature, Human. Further, they assert that applying intellectual faculty causes everything to be telling and significant. Shortly, Neo-Platonists think that soul is mainly impermanent and changing which is able to generate itself immeasurably.

2.2 Shelley's Platonism

Bressler (2007, pp. 37-38) argues that “Of all the Romantic poets, Shelley by far is the greatest devotee of Plato, embracing Plato’s beliefs and establishing himself as the voice of Neo-Platonism in British Romanticism”. Shelley in *A Defence of Poetry* expresses his faithfulness to Plato. For Shelley, any living and non-living being in our surrounding universe is the manifestation of the Supreme Being or The One. Despite his commitment to Plato’s philosophy and his definition of truth, Shelley reinterprets the concept of Platonic reality claiming that what Plato means by the intellect, Shelley equates it with his notion of poetic imagination, giving it a superior status than that of Platonic intellect. Though having different realizations, both claim that their approach guides man to truth. Shelley even goes further and states that ultimate truth cannot be attained unless individuals resort to poetry. In other words, Shelley sanctifies and elevates poetry which can be composed only and only through an individual’s imagination.

Shelley admits Plato’s notion of the One and reality, nonetheless, he refutes Plato’s concept of intellect, as the inexorable medium of reaching truth, and replaces it with poetry. Introducing himself as a representative of Neo-Platonism, Shelley sets up a connection between divinity and poetry via imagination, but not intellect. Shelley pointedly refutes the instructive aspect of his poetry illuminating that poetry is “the expression of imagination” and not for teaching people. Besides, Shelley describes poetry by calling it the source of everything, the decorator of life and the revitalizer of spirit without which nothing can be blooming and generative.

Stauffer (2005, p. 127) suggests that “In at least one corner of Shelley’s imagination, any emotion felt strongly and sincerely tends towards utopian creativity”. To emphasize, Shelley stipulates that poetry leads people to reality or *The One*; it is not solely in individual’s mind, but poetry has been spread out all around the nature, he says. In his view, all sciences are considered as sub-branches of poetry; as well as he declares that poets have been manifested in all scientific and artistic works. It seems that Shelley was largely affected by both Platonic and Neo-platonic doctrines as he, at times, was of utopian propensity. As a matter of fact, adopting such a perfectionist orientation lies at the heart of the Romantic Movement; to put it differently, Romantic poets show curiosity and concern about theosophical and spiritual issues which were of paramount significance in Neo-Platonism that is closely tied with

Plato's *Ideal Forms* as well as spiritual truth. Briefly, according to Clark & Connolly (2015, p. 48), "Romantic Poetry is a progressive, universal poetry".

Milnes (2010, p. 122) alludes to Shelley's Platonism once he points to "stressing the importance of Patently Non-epistemological desiderata like hope and love. Thus, the bond of love in the essay 'on love', 'which connects not only man with man, but with everything which exists', becomes in the *Defence* the property of poetry, which create for us a being within our being". In fact, Shelley's Platonic definition of love appeals to whatever human beings realize, feel terrified of or pin their hopes on. Moreover, in this essay, Shelley expresses close bond between members of human race and all existing beings; he calls love as an innate attribute which is within every living soul since birth. Regarding Shelley's Platonic tendencies, genuine love can be achieved once one abandons his essence; only then the true beauty emerges that comes to existence as a result of practice and contemplation.

Philosophically, it seems that in spite of Platonic and Neo-Platonic principles, the sole act of beauty and virtue designates the individual's merging with the heavenly. Contemplation or deep thought brings about this spiritual oneness which itself is the after-effect of rationalistic efforts and activities. Shelley presumed that contemplation is a refined and delicate virtuosity which is the reflection of beauty and knowledge. He was an ardent perfectionist and unsurmountable craftsman with a talent to expand poetic jargon into the realms of self-belief, public encouragement and governmental reforms. Besides, it appears as if contemplation, in turn, operates and is reinforced through imagination. As reported by Morse (1981, p. 162), "The imagination is a pure and stable center for the identity of the individual". In other words, imagination is the driving force to profound and supernatural deliberation; Shelley goes further and claims that even amour, ethics and intellect stem from imagination. For Shelley, though contemplation and reason are essential qualities of man, they are repercussions and by-products of imagination. Shelley has stood out as a Neo-Platonic poet compared to his other Romantic contemporaries; namely, he is generally considered as an adherent of Neo-Platonic teachings. It seems as if there is some sort of inherent conjunction attaching Shelley to Plato and accentuating Shelley's being a follower of Plato, which is to say he was inspired by his erudition which poets like Byron and Blake were incapable of achieving. In actuality, what the

Romantics struggled to represent, partly was what Plato had already expressed; in plain English, there is a proximity between them.

Shelley is a Platonic poet but temporally a Neo-Platonist depending on the particular requirements of his era and inevitable intellectual changes governing the Romantic school. We can somewhat realize his intention behind his poetry and prose so that figuring out what he tried to say in his works can be facilitated by tracing it back to a characteristic age and specific philosophical school back then. Additionally, by knowing Shelley's theoretical tendencies as to whether he backs up Platonic doctrine or Neo-Platonic principles, readers would perceive Shelley's ambivalent position which happened to be a driving force behind his poetry that in turn, leaves it open to a multitude of interpretations and realizations.

Vicente (2014, p. 158), one of Shelley's critics, argues that "Shelley adopted similar symbols to those used by Plato, caves and veils, in order to denote metaphorically the mind's elevation beyond the world of particulars to the realm of eternity and universal". From this, it can be inferred that Shelley was the strongest adherent of Plato among all other Romantic poets as Shelley struggled to demonstrate that human wisdom is capable of uplifting itself by going above the mundane macrocosm into the immortality and perpetuity. Likewise, I find it necessary to highlight Shelley's contemplation as an effort for arriving at spiritual reality which is fundamentally a Platonic concept referring to the other side's more invaluable and privileged life once human beings pass away. Furthermore, this point, in turn, accounts for Shelley's devotion to Neo-Platonism's notion of the *One* according to which, a small number of broad-minded individuals are able to achieve solely via withdrawing themselves from terrestrial concerns.

In a word, this single-minded approach unfolds the fact that Shelley was most probably an elitist since he thought that reality can be portrayed by a poet who is by far higher than the ordinary people and closer to the One as well as it is the poet who can pick up a more genuine sense of everlasting life. In addition to this, his elitist views also imply Shelley's disdain for social conventions, customs, public indifference and intellectual poverty because, for him, these issues play a preventive role and hinder them from reaching spirituality and true prosperity. According to Bowie (1997, p. 313), "the Romantics do use the notion of longing, but it means the desire for and pursuit of truth that cannot finally be fulfilled, not the surrender to

indeterminacy”. By all means, Shelley was, in some sense, a transcendentalist due to his referring to mysterious longing, goodness and virtue which lie in the hypostasis of this universe. In truth, Shelley was in a suspending state as for truth and that if poetry could lay on its veil or set back life’s gloomy mask. Indeed, his perception of truth is ambivalent as truth sometimes causes the twisted thing to look picturesque. In *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley states that truth does not remain stable, rather it is subjected to alteration. Therefore, it is unwise to call him a pure Platonist.

Contrary to his other Romantic contemporaries, Shelley paid a great deal of attention to language especially the metaphysical one which was not a common interest among Romantic poets; however, it was indicative of his profound captivation in philosophy. In other words, in his works, Shelley was not seeking to teach his readers, rather he might have attempted to establish his exclusive theoretical orientation. Tomko (2011, p. 120) glorifies poetry by declaring that “Poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted”. Still and all, influenced by Platonism, Shelley states, poetry opens a new horizon before the eyes of its interlocutors taking the veil of hidden goodness. Poets are ubiquitous and an inseparable part of *The One* because they join immortality and perpetuity causing them to stand out and be a head and shoulder above the public.

In addition, Shelley reiterates that poetry and poet have the power of educating folks and foretelling the future. Having scrutinized the above mentioned, it can be said that Shelley emerged as a revolutionary British Romantic poet whose Neo-Platonic novel ideas overshadowed the course of literary criticism from then on and have to be examined thoroughly and meticulously. The key point is that having read Shelley’s works, readers most likely would realize that the major conflict in Shelley’s poems and prose is reality and its relationship with dialectics and communication not necessarily between transcendentalism and empiricism which makes Platonism a rather ambiguous school of thought. To illustrate, based on Shelley’s philosophy, reality lies in and is reflected in poetry, and the poetry is the aftermath of instant brainchild and awakening which comes from imagination. Demata & Wu (2002, p.31) admire imaginative faculty pointing out that “Imagination is the essence of aesthetic response”. Nevertheless, for Plato, that poetry brings forth reality is refuted because he regards poetry as a simulated craft not an original one; so he assumes that a fake thing cannot generate reality. In contrast, Shelley recognized the authority of

poetry as a simulated craft which is dynamic and creative. In a nutshell, despite Plato who seeks reality solely in spirituality, Shelley finds it in poetry's dexterity to join up the spiritual with the worldly. Therefore, it cannot be stated that Shelley is opposed to Plato, rather he follows the path of Platonic reality adding one more dimension to it which is considering the material aspect of reality.

2.3 Shelley's Poetic Philosophy

Leask et al. (2015, p. 189) express wonder at Shelley asserting that "The life and in some cases the death of the radical Romantic Shelley also fascinated the twenty-first-century poets, sometime as a biographical fact but always as a precise locus for what gives his visionary poetry its authenticity". In essence, Shelley sees no bounding in his life philosophy to experience things which shows his strict cupidity. This extreme greed made him estranged and finally skeptical of the affairs of this physical world. Then he turned to discernment which for him was a step higher than man's knowledge and awareness. Moreover, Shelley constantly goes on a journey of inner discovery; he finds out that this universe can't house the human properly. Besides, he expresses his concerns and doubts about the human fate. Comparatively, Shelley deeply comprehended that the more human learns, the more s/he would realize the poverty of their knowledge as Welburn (1986, p. 13) brings forward, "that verge where words abandon us, and what wonder if we grow dizzy to look down the dark abyss of how little we know". For Shelley, life is an opportunity given to human and has a lot to offer. Human knowledge and logic are inadequate to recognize and explain the majesty of the world since he is like a drop in the ocean; hence, one needs to be equipped with a weapon stronger and better than knowledge that later Shelley named it imagination.

To make it perfectly clear, Faflak (2012, p. 27) delineates the mechanism of the mind when he says, "I urge a return to the reasons why the Romantics thought the imagination needed defending, and to their awareness that the inward bears a necessary relationship to the outward. Because the standard map of the human mental apparatus was divided into the three faculties of memory, reason, and imagination". Shelley holds that human psyche is composed of imagination and wisdom. I suppose it was not only Shelley who gave credence to imagination, but also Romantic poets espoused imagination and undertook to keep it safe from

hysteria and unbalance. Besides, all these Romantics, in one way or another, unanimously acknowledged that the provoking of imagination in every individual would be a life-altering experience that can even revolutionize the universe and all the existing beings.

Over and over, intellect or wisdom deals with how human will be conceived; nevertheless, imagination gets a handle on the rebirth of him. Shelley's exclusive and inventive potential comes from his astounding linguistic craft; indeed, Shelley's deconstructionist inclination once more draws attention based upon which one lexical item can give birth to a wide variety of meanings. By all means, there is one thing for sure, Shelley was neither a sheer positive thinker and rationalist nor an absolute pessimist, but at times he went through these philosophical schools which shaped his mentality and perceptual life. I assume that Shelley was seeking to achieve things that were hard to grasp and beyond human apprehension. He himself even at times didn't know what he was specifically hunting for to such a degree that he got drowned and vanished in his imagination, to be precise. What is certain is he had realized that there is more to life, world and human than meet the eyes. Shelley's poetry is both vastly crafty and inexplicably hard to pin down as well as matchless with respect to rhythm and musicality, nevertheless, these are the features of a poet. Shelley is of a dual mind; on the one hand, he is avidly engrossed in the concept of human, on the other, he deals with the rationale and mechanism of contemplation.

Under these circumstances, I think Romantic poetry reaches maturity in Shelley. It should also be noted that as cited in Burwick (2001, p.53), "the Romantic poets sought to develop a literary mode which would correspond with a particular mode of consciousness or a way of thinking about the world". Overall, he holds that those who express doubt on everything, will have a genuine faith later in life. He asks his readers to go beyond the physical perception because then and only then one can figure out the tiny little amount of his knowledge. In fact, Shelley assumes that inner consciousness makes us be more humble and this modesty is the key to reality. Another reason that causes Shelley to be regarded as a high-ranking poet is that he is not only single-minded about inner knowledge, but he is a far-seeing poet who delves into and beyond everything. His poetic style is full of life and flexible, but not rigid.

Comparing the first generation of Romantic poets with Shelley, we realize that the former were more visionary than the latter; moreover, they believed in a dreaming prospect more than Shelley did. Shelley's poetry represents both lofty majesty and gloomy truth. Shelley believes that knowledge of oneself is very significant element for human to reach reality, otherwise man would be entangled with worldly issues and façade of affairs. Other than Milton and Goethe, receptivity in general and Rousseau in particular left a profound impression on the content of Shelley's poetry and its blossoming. In consonance with Esterhammer, Piccitto, & Vincent (2015, p. 73), "Rousseau engages in a discourse similar to that of Shelley: the power of the imagination over the aesthetics of creation". To illustrate, Rousseau stressed the merits of receptivity and its undeniable characteristic in shaping one's imagination and perspective towards the world. However, Goethe referred to the detrimental aspects of person's senses and creative thought.

Explicitly, just as Rosenthal (2008, p. 129) puts, "any man who derives noble enjoyment from the sentiments of poetry is a true poet, even if he has never written a verse in his life". Apart from that, Shelley's private conditions, poetic neat sentiments and the sensitivity of his soul somehow have been the practical output of the school of sensibility on him. Elsewhere Shelley says that his poetic talent springs from his exclusive imagination, rapport, passion and deep pondering. Besides, he is so sensitive to the natural phenomena happening around him with his penetrating eyes that he even catches the tiny differences concerning emotions and living creatures. For Shelley, not only the metaphysical world, but also the perceptible one has always something to offer us. Besides, I think it can be claimed that Shelley's frame of mind was inclined to Gothic concepts which, in turn, was influenced by William Godwin, his father-in-law.

Henceforth, Shelley holds the scales even saying that human is under the control of inventive and inspired mental pictures and he is simultaneously cognizant of his innate restrictions; in other words, he doesn't see these constraints as a barrier to have a strong imaginative power, but he finds them as a prerequisite and necessity without which imagination cannot be accomplished. Of course, this claim of Shelley doesn't indicate any contradictory remark between the physique and metaphysic, rather it denotes that the structure of imagination is composed of divergent incentives. To elucidate, I think Shelley attempts to achieve everlasting life and

being free from the limits and borders. To fulfill his dream, he takes into account the potential roles of luck and transformation. Idealistically speaking, Shelley contends that no human being is as enduring as poetry that is why he regards poetry as a top art superior to all other sciences, crafts and beings.

Abrams et al. (1987, p.1720) discuss Shelley's *Mutability* in which the poet expresses that change is the only permanent thing, other phenomena are all ephemeral. Besides, this change can be an emotional or psychic one which surrounds or leaves us right away apart from the kind of mood we experience, be it pleasure, grief or agony, the result is all these feelings and conditions are transitory except for alteration which lasts forever that again approves the concept of Neo-Platonic change. The subsequent lines taken from his so and so poem illuminate the above ideas appropriately:

"It is the same!

For, be it joy or sorrow, the path of departure

Still is free:

Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;

Nought

May endure but mutability" (13-16).

In other respects, when it comes to the temporary aspect of inspiration, Plato and Shelley see eye to eye with each other. As Hulle and Nixon (2007, p. 23) assert, "The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal". According to Shelley, the formation of poem is spontaneous and unmanageable. Every individual essentially possesses this faculty which takes place with no mediation or interpretation. That how and when this enthusiasm occurs is unknown and unstoppable. Other than that, he asserts that the configuration of poetry is compatible with person's imagination though at times the poet's mind fails to grab the evasive reality. In other words, despite the fact that poetry accounts for immortal reality, this reality cannot be entirely grasped.

Ferber (2005, p. 30) argues that "creative imagination, genius and nature are closely associated with one another in the beliefs of the British Romantics". Among the Romantic poets, Shelley more than others explores imagination and nature mostly

because he is a Neo-Platonic poet. To make it more transparent, for Plato, nature acts as a vigorous and highly skilled being that can generate a universe based upon the ideal forms or utopian patterns. Platonic nature is also lively, dynamic and intelligent. He assigns immortal and divine attributes to nature out of which human is borne, thus, Platonic man is an animate and godly creature. Plato, just like Shelley, believes that nature is eternal the way time is. On the other hand, from Platonic perspective, reason is a remarkable property of human by which he can pore over the nature.

As for imagination, Platonic reason preceded imagination. He links imagination to a state of obscurity, and reason to brightness. Indeed, his philosophical approach is rational and computational. He cannot leave the affairs of the cosmos to imagination which can by no means be calculated or justified; and since poetry is the product of imagination, he blatantly refuses it. This is the point where Shelley deviated from Plato because Plato rejects both imagination and poetry. This matter will be examined carefully as the discussion goes further. Yet, Shelley's understanding of transcendental inspiration markedly originates from Plato's concept of divinity. In truth, Shelley believes that imagery is a depiction of reality; that is why he frequently applies this literary device in majority of his poems. After all, for Shelley and Plato, the interaction between heavenly and earthly issues culminates in poetic revelation; plus, for Plato the source of this inspiration is external and not in control of the poet; even so, for Shelley it is absolutely internal and poet already possesses it. To go into details, both in *On Life* and *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley applies the term "circumference" in the former essay, it refers to a path which encompasses everything; nevertheless, in the latter, Shelley (2008, p. 44) mentions that "poetry makes human mind burst the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy".

What is more, it causes to discover the reality which is further away than mind. However, for Shelley, reality is not outside the human mind. Shelley's supernatural perspective underwent a vigorous change concerning the concept of reality. He was suspending between the corporeal notion of reality and the Platonic implication of it. Shelley seems to be introducing various ways to attain reality. On the one hand, he equates poetry with reality which is the main reason for his agreement with Plato's

dialogues that are of poetic essence; therefore they are a representation of reality. One more thing I also have to point out is that Shelley's understanding of poetry is comparative not absolute; in similar fashion, he is fairly suspicious of poetry's inherent and essential qualities.

On the other hand, Shelley puts first human's physical sense so as to apprehend reality; he does this via visually descriptive and figurative language as in the following verses of *Mont Blanc* (Abrams et al. 1987, p. 1740):

"My own, my human mind, which passively

Now renders and receives fast influencings,

Holding an unremitting interchange

With the clear universe of things around" (37-40).

At this point, Shelley diverges from Plato since Plato throws down the power of bodily senses; meanwhile, Shelley underscores the fact that in order to achieve reality, one must set up a balance between surrounding world and his senses. By way of explanation, a close contact and perennial reciprocity with nature leads to discovery of reality. To further, Wilson (2003, p. 125) is inclined to think that "Shelley's poet proposes, cautiously that human minds are not separate from nature but an integral part of its functions". Shelley paints a very different picture of the senses, describing his mind as a sieve which receives influences freely. His use of the adjective *clear* to describe the universe also indicates the extent of his understanding; the workings of the universe are not opaque but transparent to him. After describing his experience of the external, Shelley continues to express his process of perception:

"One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings

Now float above thy darkness, and now rest

Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,

In the still cave of the witch Poesy" (41-44).

The poet shows that the mutual interaction between his internal world and the external one is inevitable. Shelley somehow rejects Plato's condemnation of poetry by saying that poetry has such a magic power that can move one's thoughts in all directions just like a bird flying up and down. For Shelley, this power of poetry is all-

inclusive. Plus, everyone is able to overstep his limits and rise above, the way *Mont Blanc* has touched the ceiling of the sky. By so doing, truth can be achieved, he argues. Actually, the perception of the beginning lines of the passage leads to creation by the end, which is in Shelley's case the creation of poetry. Correspondingly, in *Mont Blanc*, Shelley presents the notion of reality by closely connecting it with majesty which has been unveiled in the physical appearance and grandeur of the mountain, but unlike Platonic truth which is abstract and hard to grasp, Shelleyan reality is more attainable.

To clarify, Shelley in *Mont Blanc* epitomizes the concept of reality through mountain. In this poem, he equates reality with power which has been portrayed in the mountain:

*"Mont Blanc yet gleams on high- the power is there
The still and solemn power"* (127-128).

In the following, Shelley again refers to the majestic power of the mountain by calling it a king with "throne" which has been encircled by "ice gulfs". The poet's aim is to demonstrate the force of reality represented by mountain:

*"Where power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice gulphs that gird his secret throne"* (16-17)

It can also be said that mountain refers to Platonic *Ideal Forms* with its sublime qualities. I suppose one of the most crucial points with regard to Shelley is that although Plato had a considerable impact on him, he was not brainwashed uncritically by Plato's ideas. For one thing, he looked up to Plato simply because Shelley considered him primarily as a poet. Additionally, just like Plato who thought of poets as pariah, Jones (2000, p. 108) verifies that "Shelley often figured himself as an outcast". From Shelley's perspective, a higher reality can be manifested in poetry. Generally speaking, there seems to be contradiction in Shelley's perception of poetry because once he views poetry as potential descriptions and chronicles which is a dialectic creation; however, elsewhere he specifies poetry as a heavenly apocalypse that goes beyond the boundaries of wisdom and logic. He calls this realm imagination. In addition, Robinson (2006, p. 28) maintains that "imagination is a complex power. It includes conception or simple apprehension, which enables us to form a notion of those former objects of perception or of knowledge, out of which

we are to make a selection”. Needless to say both of these components of mental action play an inevitable role to compose poetry.

As a matter of fact, the reason why Shelley stresses the constructive role of imagination for composing poetry is his being influenced by Plato’s emphasis on the intuition once we encounter things and circumstances with which we are not familiar. In fact, Platonic concept of truth is imaginative. Schlutz (2009, p. 38) highlights the undeniability of imagination when he states “Imagination is also for Descartes the means through which thinking proper, the faculty of knowing, receives knowledge, considers, or applies itself to the outside world and to the body”. Moreover, Shelley’s interest in empiricism displays not only his attachment to Socratic philosophy, but also indicates a metamorphosis from his earlier dyadic thought to a contemplation on the basis of connection and synthesis.

It should be remembered that one of the causes of Shelley’s enthusiasm toward Plato was his poetic nature seeing Plato intrinsically as a poet. Plato’s language was of an exclusive tune, his imagery was realistic and majestic which makes his message more explicit and intelligible. In *Republic*, Plato put forward the maxim of homology and utilized it as a principle which resembles the Marxist principle of the equal distribution of power and pleasure. In *A Defence*, Shelley (2008, p. 39) states that “reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance”. As mentioned above, Shelley gives imagination an essential status, but to reason a secondary one. Simply put, Shelley apparently degrades reason since he supposes that it is not adequate to lead human to truth unless it is intertwined with imaginative faculties. Furthermore, it can be inferred that since composing poetry requires a temporary inspiration like a fainting wind that puffs on a vanishing fire, which reinforces imagination, therefore the instrumental function of the reason comes into play in order to interpret what had already been found out by poet’s imagination as well as to figure out the supernatural.

Taylor (1999, p. 54) upholds, “the poet, penetrating the unsightly and disgusting surfaces of things, has unveiled with exquisite skill the finer ties of imagination and feeling”. Correspondingly, Shelley believes that any writer is inescapably a poet since he assimilates phraseology with metrical composition. He also asserts that one must be outfitted with a special faculty, imagination and retrospection, for grabbing what is authentic and well-formed to be named poet. In addition, he states that an

eloquent and articulate poet needs to know the pertinence amidst being and consciousness on the one hand, and between consciousness and articulation, on the other. Moreover, Shelley emphasizes the similarity among wording and poetry stipulating that words' abundance and the syntactic or structural differences function as necessities of composing poetry.

In addition, Shelley expresses that poet's language is figurative which is to say it exhibits the preceding obscure associations of entities and keeps up their suspicion so that the terms that account for these connections turn to essential concepts. Lastly, he adds that the survival of language depends on poet's artistic use of it; plus, the origin of language is imagination. To make out, Shelley regards with disgust the poetry which serves for instructional purposes; this is one of the most ambiguous statements uttered by Shelley. Furthermore, it appears that Shelley and his other Romantic contemporaries were almost reluctant to rational considerations, they were fond of spiritual betterment, instead. In like manner, Carruthers & Rawes (2002, p. 206) in *Romanticism in the Celtic World* argue, "Heaney stresses poetry's offer of release from the Poet's Predicaments, an emphasis that aligns itself with Shelley's wish to familiarize the more highly refined imagination of his reader with beautiful idealism of moral excellence". In truth, Shelley makes unfamiliar the concept of imagination by stating that readers of poetry have to purify their mind in order to thrive their imagined moral values and orders; having said that, Shelley defamiliarizes and redefines poetry in its most universal sense.

In other respects, Michael (2015, p. 219) alleges that "it is a mistake, Shelley says to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of life. As it was for Keats, didactic poetry, he says, is my abhorrence". Just like Keats, Shelley also asserted that he never felt a need for his poetry to serve for pedantic purposes; what Shelley sought to carry out was to make human's vastly purified awareness become acquainted with the splendid eminence of virtuous perfection. To clarify, for Shelley the highest moral effect of poetry lies in its appeal to the imaginative and emotional faculties. From this, it can be realized that Shelley's stand is once more ambivalent as to whether poetry must serve for the moral good of society or didactic purposes. Additionally, from Shelley's perspective, poetry's

mechanism, operation and objective can be learned; however, the aesthetic, meticulous and cognitive principles of it are mental and abstract.

It is the poetry which brings into existence the au courant ingredients of person's understanding and knowledge. At times, poetry occupies a pivotal position in the formation of knowledge and every so often as a peripheral element of it. In other words, it can act both as the infrastructure and as the constituent part of human's intellectual scheme. What is more, Milnes (2010, p. 57) elaborates on the notion of thought by saying, "for Shelley, any theory can be sacrificed to thought". To illustrate, as much attention as Shelley pays to imagination, he does to thought. His emphasis on thought can be seen in his urging to back up the debatable aspects of affairs; he does this even if he loses his literary prestige or his readers and critics make contemptuous fun of him. On the other hand, Shelley was particularly interested in hypnotizing his readers by moving them to their and his favorite mental as well as historical directions. What I mean by this is that his thoughts even in this day and age are bought by people; concepts such as emancipation, immunity, justice, egalitarianism, public consolidated solidarity, etc. are a lot of people's obsessions.

In essence, Shelley asserts that poetry can broaden the scope of individuals' knowledge. Additionally, he gives prominence to poetry's enlightening capability not only on society, but also administrative power that can be attained by patronizing people's unanimity as well as their spiritual awareness. I should also point out that Shelley's poetry possesses some particular attributes; for example, it is sort of revolutionary and extreme. Moreover, his poetry is of a dynamic and brave essence. Shelley also artistically expresses his emotions in an imaginative and beautiful way.

At this point, I suppose Shelley reaches a sense of poetic orgasm via composing poem. He believes poetry sets human's genuine essence in motion which itself throws light on a more mystical disposition; this activation is not long-lasting and fades away immediately. Only the ones with the highest gentle perceptiveness and extended imagination can actualize it. Furthermore, the moment this sense strikes, human psyche is in a pure condition that wrestles with any mean yearning. Keen (2004, p. 240) thinks that "Romantic poets were situating themselves not only in comparison with earlier forms of poetry, but with these prior definitions of literature (as knowledge) generally". Of all his contemporaries, Shelley seems to be the most riotous one who left no stone unturned to draw people's attention to social alteration,

political amendment, public discipline, shared rules and regulations as well as individual optimism. Moreover, just like other Romantic poets, Shelley was fascinated and inspired by nature. Apart from his poetic talent, Shelley had an opinion of remodeling his community by the help of both his poems and people as if he is calling people for upheaval to put an end to the conservative and conformist traditions so as to attain the true sense of unity and collective achievement.

For the most part, LeGette (2017, p. 101) infers that “as scholars have argued, Romantic era claims for original genius, and the increased status of the author and his imagination”. Therefore, Shelley is not simply a literary man whose job is to compose poetry, but his broad-minded penchants, his faith in egalitarianism and his audacious and world-shattering nature make him stand out among other Romantic poets and many others as a paragon of rationale and prosaic emotions who appears to be a genius, to be exact. It seems as if Shelley’s thirst for seeking truth cannot be satiated. As has been noted, he’s in a kind of paradoxically poignant and optimistic mood as if he’s waiting for something extraordinary to happen and nothing makes him contented. His hungry soul digs into the nature and the essence of human then flies up to the divine to discover the truth. Shelley is like a nomadic who never stops at one point, but has to always move on. His journeys during his life to different countries and places are a compelling evidence of this variety-seeking spirit.

At first sight, it may appear that Shelley was making every effort to challenge the existing system, however, it is not the case as his top priority was to penetrate into the people’s genuine sentiments, unconfined worth and power which can subsequently lead to many other communal shifts on a large scale. In addition, Shelley optimistically expects a bright prospect when individuals will be of equal rights in an impartial community. One of the reasons Shelley is still remembered for his iconoclastic ideas, is that he came from an aristocratic family in spite of which he preferred to side with the common people that in turn makes him a conscientious and true human prior to being a poet. Some intellectuals lay blame on Shelley for being so unrealistic and having utopian, unripe and incoherent thoughts, whereas Shelley always pursued a benevolent course of action in many aspects of his career life.

Shelley employs a symbolic, mythical and metaphorical language which is an inherent aspect of imagination. Additionally, he underscores the power of the mind as it is mythologized as a forming, creating, and omnipresent power. Besides, in line

with Travers (2001, p. 43), “Shelley seeks to define (and defend) the nature of poetry and the poetic activity”. Moreover, in his poetry the power of thought and the question of public awareness and knowledge can be explicitly seen. To put it differently, Shelley’s poetry does not seem to be understood on a literal level because it does not get a handle on a piece of literature, but it takes care of irreversible structure of our essence. Also, his poetry mirrors human being associated with ever-growing aspiration for acquiring knowledge; this is stated in Shelley’s *Defence of poetry* (2008, p. 62) as in: “the functions of the poetical faculty are two-fold, by one it creates new materials of knowledge and power and pleasure; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order which may be called the beautiful and the good”.

Then again, Mccue (2014, p. 61) points out that “Shelley extends the meaning of the word poet to refer to anyone who creates art, whether it be poetry, painting, sculpture or music”. Simply put, Shelley’s definition of poet is not restricted to literature, but rather it includes a wide variety of arts and sciences. Plus, he asserts that poet is the one who co-exists with other artists so as to contribute to the happiness, progress and perfection of man. Ultimately, for Shelley, poetry yields and regulates knowledge which is to say it is the point that every single thing alludes to and the substance which comprises everything. Shelley deemed that poetry was of the capacity to indoctrinate factual expertise and tell of actual instants as well as stimulate true conduct which all lead to the acquisition of knowledge, to be precise. By the same token, Abrams (1999, p. 177) elsewhere again quotes from Shelley as in “I always seek in what I see, as Shelley said, the likeness of something beyond the present and tangible object”. To clarify, Shelley assigns an oracular responsibility for poets expressing that they have the ability to prognosticate what occurrences will take place in society. This attitude of Shelley may cause to project unfounded and erroneous image of poetry before the eyes of the readers and drives it away from its primary and principal mission which is reflecting the imagination. However, I think there is a misinterpretation here as for the predictive function of poetry, that is to say Shelleyan poet passionately joins an imperishable, endless life as well as the supreme being.

For Shelley, these are poet’s metaphysical features which are a step more formidable than his literary duties that are concerned with applying stylistic elements, literary

devices, form of poetry, etc. as the elemental tools and ingredients. To summarize, Shelley asserts that for every entity and phenomenon in nature regardless of their material attributes, there are super-mundane values and this is where poetry's main function lies in. Not to mention, Shelley holds that poetry has the power to arouse human psyche and to extend the scope of it. Poetry also does hand over the psyche a storage of exotic contemplation. What is more, the language Shelley applies has got traces of both supernatural connotation and anarchic heterodoxy.

To say nothing of the fact that Shelley's revolutionary, chaotic and non-conforming ideas make him stand out particularly when he denotes a flourishing public determination has engendered well-founded British literature. In fact, Shelley tries to call his readers' attention to the fact that there is no ending point to the constant rebirth of poets and that they are to set up order and discipline among the ongoing chaos. In addition, one of the most notable traits of a poet is to benefit from the conventional correlation between vocabulary and contemplation so as to safeguard language from its strict command. Markedly, from Blank's viewpoint (1988, p. 73), "the Romantic polarization of poetry and politics enabled Shelley to claim Poets as *unacknowledged Legislators of the world*". In actuality, what Shelley means by this phrase is that poets evaluate the border, harmony and resonance of people's essence via their embracing, total and infiltrating psyche. Additionally, poets are most probably and honestly flabbergasted by its indications. In short, they are founders and generators of mysterious enthusiasm and illumination.

To put it differently, poets remodel not only the current time, but also the time to come. Their language and message go beyond the geographical boundaries to such a degree that individuals' mind and behavior get influenced by poets. They function as stimulus for those who are enthusiastic about their works. As well as, poets are not normally appreciated by the majority of the public since only a small number of folks are able to find out the worth and authenticity of their artistic productions. Besides, while living, poets feel unacknowledged because the affairs of the universe usually go against them and even ignore them. Tragically, only when they pass away and get buried under the soil, people begin to freak out on them. Lastly, despite the common belief that lawmakers and statespersons play a crucial role in our daily life, Shelley asserts that they will soon go into oblivion; plus, it is poets who remain and hold a super power over parliamentarians and officeholders, to be exact.

By and by, Blank's emphasis on the significance of Romantic literature is evident in *The New Shelley* (1991, p. 6) once he affirms, "Romanticism ... is the essence of literature, the force of a will to unity that knows in its figures, the tropes of its expression, all of the impossibility of the wholeness it intends". In effect, Shelley does not detach himself from the pioneers and the first generation poets of Romantic literature. He demands his readers to be cautious of the attempts Wordsworth and Coleridge made in order to establish fictional linkage between mankind and natural environment that adapts these poets domestically as they stem from the same origin which is the single joint life we have inside and outside. From this view, Shelley can be considered as a proponent of post-structuralism because he partly and non-verbally poses the concept of "Differance" later proposed by Derrida. To clarify, according to Shelley, meaning is always in a state of being postponed or deferred, for this reason, entities, due to being constantly redefined, are not thoroughly feasible to find out. Varner (2015, p.137) holds this up declaring that "Shelley's language leading up to the moment of creation is telling". Together with what went above, it should be cited that the poetry Shelley represents is unmeasurable and opaque. Shelley believes in a hierarchy of symbols that is one sign accounts for another. Furthermore, these indications have adequacy to demonstrate speculation. Shelley assumes that language is symbolic and is simply interwoven with permanent generation and contemplation. Last but not least, for Shelley the genuine reality is amorphous, unintelligible and implicit.

To bring it to a close, assuredly, Shelley's essential function in the Romantic tenet can by no means be denied. Although he went through a tough time, he could finally pull out of it, left an eternal name and built quite a fame for himself. In one view, Shelley represents a strong figure of Romanticism. To shed light on the above, poetry is full of dialectal tension as it is one of the most outstanding features of Romanticism. Actually, Shelley is regarded as an extremist Romantic poet applying hard-core style and subject matter. His poetry calls into question the complications of interpretation and language. For one thing, the poetry Shelley produces has an unearthly mastery from which breathing and spirited ideas originate. In *Defence of Poetry*, Shelley(2008, p.60) alleges that "the delight of love, the ecstasy of the admiration of nature, the joy of the perception and still more of the creation of the poetry, is often wholly unalloyed". From his point of view, his poetry is intertwined

with all-embracing love, intensive awareness and knowledge. Also, he states that one cannot achieve goodness unless he has conceived the notion of love. Shelley also believes that by virtue of love, we are able to actualize catharsis and get rid of villainy; simply put, without love, ethics cannot be nurtured whatsoever. Furthermore, the love itself is engendered on account of imagination.

It should also be remembered that Shelley's poetry suggests death is unavoidable and no one and nothing can hold it over; nevertheless, he stresses that one must focus on life while living and lay out the notion of death. At this point, the essential and undeniable role of imagination comes into play since it demonstrates the likelihood of survival and causes us to work out these probabilities. For this reason, imagination plays a very important role in Shelley's poetry and in his spiritual philosophy. During his short life, Shelley witnessed the loss of some of his dearest and nearest ones including his son, his first wife and his friend John Keats. In actuality, death is an inseparable concept in his poetry and a significant quality of his gloomy spirit. For example, Shelley (1905, p.581), in *To William Shelley* feels terribly sad over the loss of his son, William, as in:

*My lost William, thou in whom
Some bright spirit lived, and did
That decaying robe consume
Which its lustre faintly hid,
Here its ashes find a tomb
But beneath this Pyramid
Thou art not – if a thing divine
Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
Is thy mother's grief and mine" (1-9)*

Looking at these verses, Shelley's Platonic attitude reveals itself. He announces that his dead son's pure and polished soul now has joined eternity. He likens his son's corpse to a "decaying robe" that was temporarily used and lost its newness or freshness. The poet argues that though death is the ultimate stage of this worldly life and folks would go into oblivion once they are buried, his son's death has another

spiritual aspect, i.e., he regards William as bodily dead, but his soul lives in immortal world; otherwise, the poet and his wife will suffer from an unbearable pain. In point of fact, Platonic notion of life is so overwhelming on him that he cannot help having faith in non-religious divinity and a loftier level of life after human passes away. In agreement with Plato, Shelley holds that human soul is eternal. For him, death is simply a material devastation after which soul gets united with everlasting realm. In his elegiac poem to his son, he underlines the trivial dimensions of corporeal death which opens the doors of endless and peaceful life for William. In another poem, *On Death* by Shelley (1905, p. 524), the poet's curiosity is observed when he inspects the quality and type of life following the physical death as in:

"Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death?

Who lifted the veil of what is to come?" (25-26)

According to these lines, a sort of distress can be felt in the poet in regard to death along with a sense of skepticism about the time to come. Shelley's Platonic attitude once again comes into play as by "unspeaking death", he implies that after dying, the corpse goes back to soil where it has come from, but the soul couples with eternity. Strictly speaking, Shelley sets up a Neo-Platonic hierarchy on top of which the divine spirit and at the bottom lies the mortal body. For the poet, death is a critical point and a stage of change that opens man's eyes and exposes him to the things he hadn't seen or experienced before. Finally, from the very beginning of his young hood, Shelley was living a life which was more like a gradual death. His life tragedies dragged him closer to death; for this reason, a sort of pain, agony and discontent flows in majority of his poems.

In summary, as Artz (1962, p. 262) puts, "the whole approach to art is now through the senses and imagination rather than through reason". To demystify, he assigns a supplementary function to reason by the help of which imagination is able to expand its scope and boundaries in order to dig through the unknown and metaphysical entities. Despite Shelley's belief in the integration of the two elements to achieve reality, paradoxically he remarks that the reality attained by the merging of reason and imagination won't be an absolute one due to the fact that the process of interpretation might bring about relative reduction of reality though it will not be totally wiped out. To make the long story short, not only does Shelley mull over the integral role of reason to contribute to imagination for reaching truth, but also it

seems to me that Shelley is attaching a more paramount significance to pure imagination itself as the building block of arriving at truth.

In *Ode to The West Wind* (Abrams et al. 1987, p. 1750), emancipation from life's restrictions and the sense of independence play a major role. As in the following:

"Oh! Lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" (53-54).

The speaker also likens this sense of freedom to leaves of fall, moving clouds blown by the wind and waves of the sea. He wishes to be itinerant and brought up just like wind instead of dealing with life vicissitudes as they cause him to suffer a lot as if he has been constantly harassed and his body wounded. Elsewhere Shelley says:

"A heavy weight of hours has chained and blowed

One too like thee tameless, and swift, and proud" (55-56).

Regarding the above verses, the persona expresses dissatisfaction with time (an element of this world) which has fallen over, fettered human and spread through his life. He wants to get rid of "heavy weight of hours" and leave ordinary human characteristics behind by becoming wild, prompt and beyond natural life as the west wind is. The persona thinks that this is how truth can be achieved. The speaker compares himself with the forest when he says:

"Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:

What if my leaves are falling like its own!" (57-58).

As the forest acts like a musical instrument upon which wind plays, he wants the wind to do the same on him with its severe power to propagate his poetic creations just like the lyre which can spread its tune all around the universe. Also, as it has come below, the persona desires to be merged with the wind as a result of which oneness comes out:

"Be thou, Spirit fierce,

My Spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!" (61-62)

In other words, he desperately wishes to be unified with the nature and physical world. Once more, the Neo-Platonic notion of unity draws attention to itself. Chiefly, in his 1819 essay "*On Life*", Shelley shifts to an extremely materialist view, seeming

to reject any type of Platonic Idealism. Starner (2008, p. 5) repeats Shelley's words in "I confess that I am one of those who am unable to refuse my assent to the conclusions of those philosophers, who assert that nothing exists but as it is perceived". To shed light on the above, at times Shelley was of incompatible and incredulous remarks which were quite contrary to Plato's tenets. In other words, a sort of discrepancy can be implied as to whether Shelley is still committed to the philosophy of Plato that physically tangible entities are tiny little signs of *Ideal Forms*. Here, obviously we can figure out Shelley's uncertainty as if he no longer believes in what he used to take for granted.

For instance, Shelley asserted that human beings cannot gain knowledge unless they come into contact with things via sensory perception whereas Plato declared that anything in nature represents reality in a hierarchical sequence according to which, smaller units roll out the higher ones. Having said so, it can be realized that from time to time Shelley's earthly tendencies outweighed his utopian orientations and sometimes the other way round. As a matter of fact, Shelley combined Platonism with sensory perception or sense experience. To exemplify, in *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley (2008, p. 41) remarks, "the pleasure resulting from the manner in which [poets] express the influence of society or nature upon their own minds, communicates itself to others, and gathers a sort of reduplication from that community". Genuinely, Shelley introduces reduplication that is re-echoing of Mother Earth to the singing bird. Raimond & Watson (1992, p. 186) announce that "In Coleridge and the later Shelley, nature is often interpreted in Platonic or Neo-Platonic terms". Shelley states that the world and people in it have a strong inspiration on his poetry which results in a divine pleasure for the poet that can be reduplicated by creating poetry. Simply put, Shelley reckons that every physical entity is predominantly divine, and poets are able to multiply this supreme holiness in the Mother Nature and then show and return it to the nature.

In *Defence*, Shelley elaborates on the idea of "divine" which shows his being affected by certain aspects of Christianity; nonetheless, his description of sanctity is more Platonic rather than Christian. What is more, Shelley parallels divinity with reality. He tries to present a novel definition of reality that is not necessarily the same as Plato's; that is to say Shelley depicts reality as intrinsically divine, rather than being a copy of the Forms. Although Shelley did not exult being a philosopher, in his

works there are some traces of his philosophical inclinations. To put it differently, his emphasis on poetry ironically leads him to a particular sort of philosophy which is intrinsically and distinctly different from poetry in general sense. In short, for Shelley poetry opens a new philosophical horizon and is not only for literary or didactic purposes.

In conclusion, in *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley begins to really solidify his metaphysical beliefs by creating a compromise between strict materialism and strict idealism. As cited in Starner (2008, p. 5), Shelley describes poetry's function as follows: "it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty which is the spirit of its forms". By this, Shelley affirms that theology and the everyday reality are interwoven so that there seems to be a reconciliation between them. In fact, he defamiliarizes divinity by saying that under worldly things lies Deity that has to be discovered by poets. In keeping with Wu (2012, p. XI), "Shelley reduces the deity to the divine control deep within the self". To put it another way, I suppose Shelley degrades the high status of divinity to a point over which corporal objects are placed. In doing so, Shelley substitutes the divine Platonic reality for the material one.

2.12 Neo-Platonic Notion of Eternity in Shelley

In his poem, *Adonais* (Abrams et al. 1987, p. 1790), Shelley illustrates a notable concept of Neo-Platonism that is infinity. When Shelley says,

"And death is a low mist which cannot blot

The brightness it may veil" (391-392).

He parallels inexistence with haze dangling near the earth to eradicate any form of living beings, but it loses out. Besides, in *Adonais* again, which is also considered as Shelley's mournful poem for John Keats, he suggests that in spite of poets' physical absence after death, their message and influx would be perpetual. Shelley draws a parallel between the poet and fire which still carries on even after the flames extinguished:

"So long as fire outlives the parent spark,

Rose, rob'd in dazzling immortality

"Thou art become as one of us," they cry," (408-410).

Shelley considers Keats as a highly gifted and penetrating poet who is just like a flame or drop in the Ocean of poetry that never extinguishes or evaporates. He also states that Keats will rise up from the grave and will be dressed in splendid eternity. By "Thou art become as one of us", he shows again his Platonic proclivities that underscore a superior and more desirable version of life. Shelley depicts a dramatic scene as if those who are dead will be gladly receiving Keats. The poet believes that Keats has joined the other world dwellers who look forward to dignifying and honoring him the king the way they are. De Man (1984, p. 116) appreciates Keats' perception of beauty which he expresses as follows, "beauty is truth, truth beauty". For Shelley, a poet like Keats never dies. He also goes on by saying that Keats is just as holy as Christ and he, like Jesus, will rise from the dead and become one of us. Therefore, Shelley uplifts the poet's position to a sacred being like a prophet whose message will be everlasting. This notion once more accounts for Shelley's being impacted by Neo-Platonist idea of immortality and his preoccupation with reincarnation. Last but not least, Neo-Platonist belief in transcendental reincarnation can be evidently featured in Shelley's *Adonais* on Keats.

In *Adonais*, Shelley pursues a Neo-Platonist attitude that the One is the origin of everything in life including the animate and the inanimate with their various forms. In fact, the poet declares that the One is the permanent power to whom *Adonais* goes after he passes away so as not to be decayed bodily as the poet and other physical beings will. Besides, Shelley highlights being merged with nature as in "*is made one with Nature*" (370); for all that, rather than being intermingled with nature, he discloses nature and its celestial force by poetry.

According to Plato, the material world is ephemeral and aimless leading individuals to bewilderment and shallow affairs just like shadows in the cave which is not truth, but the surface of it. However, Shelley upholds the worldly entities as the building blocks for achieving eternity and truth. For instance, in *Alastor*, he assigns humanlike attributes to truth. To illustrate, the perception has been manifested in the form of a feminine figure. Since nature is traditionally viewed as female, Shelley attaches the reality to this Mother Nature or tangible world. Shelley's use of perception in *Alastor* has a material source, i.e., fire, an essential component of nature or mundane

universe. Furthermore, Abrams et al. (1987, p. 1723) refer to Shelley's *Alaster* depicting the physical death when he says:

"That wondrous frame ...

No sense, no motion, no divinity" (665-666).

Here, the poet expresses pity for human body which once was a miraculous creation and structure now has turned into a senseless and lifeless corpse. It can be felt that for Shelley, death is a deplorable event which takes away man's sprightliness and meaning of life. Nevertheless, he implies that there must have been a more valuable and excellent phase of life which lacks all these iniquities and baseness. This matter endorses Shelley's belief in reincarnation and a different life that is a major concept in Neo-Platonism.

Elsewhere in *Adonais*, the poet says:

"... I would give

All that I am to be as thou now art!

But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!" (232-234)

As shown in these verses, an analogy is made between the poet's extinction and the perpetuity of the perception on the one hand, and Urania's eternity and her son's, *Adonais's*, fatality on the other. By "Time", Shelley refers to dealing with the predicaments and vicissitudes of life as well as fleeting things of this universe. It can also be hypothesized that the poet regards life and this natural world as a process which goes temporally towards self-destruction. This, in turn, confirms the Platonic notion that human life and this material world are mortal. I think here the poet has expertly presented the evanescent and permanent figures that have been restricted by time. Nevertheless, rather than dying, these everlasting figures have been "chained to Time"; that is to say, they have to live inasmuch as time does.

Adonais is dead and gone, but his mother is not able to join him since she is enduring and the only thing Urania can do is to feel deep distress for his leaving which signifies a sort of deficiency in the eternity. We should bear in mind that considering Plato's concept of divinity and eternity, his definition of immortality is by no means influenced by death as it is constant and changeless the way it is shown in the *Ideal Forms*. But in *Adonais*, Urania gets involved in the temporal issue namely her son's

death. Another case in point is *Alastor* in which the poet interweaves with the perception. There is one difference though; when it comes to *Alastor*, the speaker finally dies, whereas in the case of *Adonais*, we encounter an eternal character, Urania, who becomes an alternative for death.

Additionally, both of them ignite a spark in the brain of their beloveds. In fact, Shelley struggles to contrast the eternal power of his poetry with that of Urania whose immortality bears a kind of shortcoming. He persists in the fact that poets are the only impeccable, supernatural beings and since Urania is not, her immortality is associated with a sort of defection because such a so-called celestial character herself is the product of poetry and it is the poetry that sheds light on her. It is also significant to point out that in both poems, the personas are rather similar in that they feel sad over the loss:

*“Stay yet a while! Speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart! (226-234)*

Comparing the above lines of *Adonais* with the following ones from *Alastor*:

*“Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly (179-180),*

The reader encounters an emotionally moving and pathetic scene. Urania imploringly begs Adonais not to leave this world and talk to her; as if Adonais was the truth she had been seeking for ages and now it is on the verge of being gone. Shelley depicts Platonic eternity when he says, “a kiss may live” and “that kiss shall all thoughts else survive”. Besides, in *Adonais* and majority of his other poems, there is a sort of sad tune as in “my heartless breast and burning brain”, with food of saddest memory”

and “now thou art dead”. However, this physical death or bodily decadence sounds like an unavoidable gateway to Platonic immortality which everyone must finally go through: “I would give all that I am to be as thou now art!” On the other hand, once again in *Alastor*, the poet projects another tragic scene close to death once he says, “bending eyes”, “parted lips” and “pale, and quivering”. It can also be concluded that there is a change of direction between the desire of a female character (Urania) to the male one (Adonais) (as in *Adonais*) and a masculine to a woman (as in *Alastor*). In the former, the female personage bears hardship since she functions as permanent reality just the way “*intelligible reign*” in Plato’s the *Allegory of the Cave* does. However, in the latter, the female character leaves the poet behind, thus he is brokenhearted and lives through a chagrin.

What is more, despite the fact that the speaker in *Alastor* lacks the perception or it is better to say it has been taken away from him, simply because he is transient, in *Adonais*, the feminine figure is dispossessed of him (her son) because she is permanent. I suppose in these two poems, Shelley tries to say that the concept of perpetuity is deficient the way imagination or poetic inspiration strikes instantaneously or as Abrams (1987, p. 1814) recollects from Shelley’s *A Defence of Poetry*, imagination is “a fading coal which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness”. In *Alastor*, the perception can be equated with “the invisible influence” which illuminates the mind of individuals shortly, yet it disappears right away. Simultaneously, Shelley’s representation of Adonais is an audacious one who overcomes a plethora of impediments in order to find an eternal haven. Of course, Adonais fulfills his wish and finally remains alive spiritually though physically dead:

“The thorny road

Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame’s serene abode” (44-45)

Indeed, Adonais’s power got compounded with the soul of Keats:

“He is a Presence to be felt and Known.

In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,

Spreading itself where’er that power may move

Which has withdrawn his being to its own” (373 – 376)

Shelley remarks that although Keats is dead, his soul has joined eternity and has been a ubiquitous “presence” whose power is overwhelming and can be found anytime of the day, anywhere and in anything: “in darkness and in light, from herb and stone”. The poet also stresses that other than man’s spirit which is immortal, nature and its elements tend to be eternal as they have been over the millenniums despite human body that is mortal. It has been noted by Faflak & Wright (2012, p. 219) that “Shelley’s high Romantic elegy for John Keats, *Adonais* (1821) – with its famous sublime ending, sweeping both poet and reader up into the “intense inane” – provoked satirical responses that can highlight Shelley’s scaffolding in useful ways”. In the end, though *Adonais* dies and his corpse decomposes, his soul reaches eternity. Using an allusion, in *Adonais*, Shelley draws an analogy between Icarus’s very near flying towards the sun which he cannot bear and certainly would lead to his self-destruction and disappearance on the one hand, and on the other, the poet’s intolerability of divine power that is as strong and burning as the sun force :

*“Not all to that bright station dared to climb
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time?
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And yet some live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame’s serene abode”* (38-45)

The poet’s tone changes as he renders a transcendental, glamorous and happy status which Keats has achieved after death namely eternity. Another important point Shelley highlights here is that not every human is capable of reaching such a high position as it belongs to “God”. He implicitly says that only poets such as Keats and those with poetic imagination can climb up there where eternity exists if others dare to do that, they will “have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime”, i.e., they will vanish and nothing will be remained of them. Finally, he states that those who, like poets, contemplate as well as grin and bear the hardships of this tough life, will fly

spiritually beyond this life and settle down in peace and quiet. Repeatedly, Platonic eternity is streaming across these verses.

To put it differently, Shelley tries to say that since earthly existence is mortal, it cannot achieve divinity; therefore, he makes use of poetry by which the perpetual sagacity can be seeped in him. Having taken the other lines of this poem into consideration, once more Shelley depicts his endless devotion to Platonic eternity as in *"he is made one with Nature"* (370). Here, he portrays his poet friend, John Keats, as a savior like Christ. For the poet just as nature is eternal, so is Keats. It can also be implied that Keats' death for Shelley is simply a physical disappearance, but his spirit has joined the nature which symbolizes immortality. Again in the tenth Stanza, the poet refers to the eternity of Keats' mind in *"... Dream has loosened from his brain"* (87). In fact, the speaker assigns an inferior status to death calling it "dream" that has no power over the "brain" since mind is eternal despite death which is perishable. On behalf of Keats' mother, Urania, about her son, Shelley metaphorically thinks of all human beings as creatures *"... chain'd to Time"* (234) while they are living; however, once they pass away, they won't be under the limits of time and their soul can fly above this universe and reach truth as Keats has done so.

Also in the following:

"Far from these carrion Kites that scream

below;

He wakes or sleeps with the enduring

dead;

Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now" (335 – 337)

The speaker addresses Keats again declaring, that his dead poet friend is living in a spiritually different and better world; ordinary people and children's kites are not able to even approach him. For Shelley, this transcendental place and status only belong to poets. It is where life never ends and they are not mortal there. Paradoxically, Shelley alleges that after dying, Keats would be *"kept alive"* (230) in a higher level than when he was living before death as in *"...he is not dead"* (343). Markedly, it can be realized that the concept of Plato's eternity shows itself almost in

every stanza of this poem. To me, Shelley doesn't believe in the hereafter the way believers of religions do, but the gist of his life philosophy is that human being is not supposed to and cannot perish; he is to live a perpetual life which follows a hierarchical order from the material life in the least point to the spiritual life in the highest. Nevertheless, as long as man does not get use of his imagination that can display itself best in poetry, this goal cannot be achieved.

Elsewhere in "*Nought we know, dies*" (177), Shelley asserts that in this world no creature or entity dies or perishes, but it changes from one form to another. Put it differently, it just undergoes transformation which is to say nothing is permanent. This attitude of the poet highlights Platonic eternity.

In addition, in the lines below:

*"Peace, peace! He is not dead, he doth not
Sleep,*

He hath awaken'd from the dream of life" (343 – 344)

The poet repeatedly emphasizes that human shouldn't be agitated about physical death as it is a transitional stage. Indeed, bodily disappearance doesn't lead someone to oblivion and dream; rather the speaker stresses that life is a dream and via death we just wake up of this dream. Therefore, by referring to Keats' death, he tends to teach his readers that death in itself is a kind of life which is one of the significant assumptions of Platonism. Furthermore, Shelley makes an analogy between death and mist when he says:

"And death is a low mist which cannot blot

The brightness it may veil." (391 – 392)

He refers to the weakness of death against life; just as mist can approach the earth and seemingly cover all over the place, but because it is temporary and hollow, it won't be there forever. The same is true for death Shelley says; it can get close to life, nonetheless, it is not able to uproot or eliminate it. Once more, Platonic eternity comes into play.

The poet puts forth a good question in:

"What Adonais is, why fear we to

Become? ”(459).

More evidently, he asserts that death is not an unfavorable and tragic event; but he implies that it is an evolutionary stage and a delightful experience; thus, “why should we be afraid of it”? His Platonic philosophy reveals itself here again as the poet considers death as the beginning of life and not the end of it. Another pertinent example is *A Defence of Poetry* in which Shelley (2008, p. 63) upraises poetry: “Poetry turns all things to loveliness;... its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms”. Taking the above into account, poetry can cause a defect to be immaculate and level up the virtue. Besides, it is an amalgamation of contradictory concepts such as enthusiasm, dread, sorrow, joy, immortality and mutation. It is strong enough to domesticate and bring together discordant and antagonistic entities. For the most part, poetry is able to metamorphose any figure and structure; it also evinces internal revolution. This transformation is not physical, but it takes place on a metaphysical scale. On balance, poetry holds a superb potential that can turn the known universe to an exotic and unknown place.

Ultimately, it removes the barriers and reveals the undercover elegance. In the same fashion, Shelley likens the force of poetry to a potable elixir which acts as a panacea that can treat all maladies and save all human beings from death. In other words, here Shelley highlights the concept of eternity that happens to Keats in *Adonais* as indicated below:

“Awake him not! Surely he takes his fill

Of deep and liquid rest forgetful of all ill” (62-63).

From these verses, it can be implied that Shelley sees Keats in the hereafter joined eternity in which neither pain, malady, impediment nor deficiency are permitted to get in. To me, this vivid interpretation alludes to the next world in Platonic philosophy to which Shelley expresses his inclination. In *Alastor*, the persona arrives at the steep cliff of mountain, nevertheless, ultimately he passes away there once his investigation for intuition and discernment fails:

“The Poet’s blood

That ever beat in mystic sympathy

With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still" (651-653).

Here, Shelly employs and talks about a Neo-Platonic concept, "mystic". According to him, the blood running in the veins of a poet and every beat of his heart are in a kind of "mystic sympathy with nature's ebb and flow". However, he displays how Alaster, who represents all human beings, "grew feebler" before the Almighty power of nature. Shelley's use of the word, "mystic", accounts for a long and deep-rooted as well as holy union of man with nature. Despite *Adonais*, in *Alastor*, the persona holds less union with the natural world; his only sense of compassion for the nature does not bring about eternity for the poet though it does for Adonais due to his joining up with the universe. Unlike Keats in *Adonais*, *Alastor's* poet is not capable of going beyond the mortal essence because his physical world's scope cannot be extended to achieve divine illumination; for this reason he encounters downfall and is doomed to die and cannot be immortal. In the following lines of *Alastor*, it can be inferred that Shelley deliberately stands against Plato as to the female gender:

*"He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
Her panting bosom" (182 – 184)*

Alastor is primarily one of the most somber poems of Shelley. In this poem, the poet is somehow burst with a saddening situation. *Alastor* includes a lot of uncertainties. Plus, having joined together with a phantasmal woman as in "the veiled maid" (151), the poet depicts confrontation with vision embodied in a female body who is not easy to be interpreted and worked out as it is more like an opaque pattern that reader would face problem understanding it. This gorgeous woman seems to have mesmerized the poet so that he thinks she is the best and exemplary as well as visionary soul mate for him. Thus he becomes determined to go for and reach her. This visionary picture of her draws a peculiar image in the mind of the poet and since she cannot be found in the real tangible world, he must either die or sleep in order to reach her. He chooses the first way. Metaphorically, this matter displays extreme passion, struggle and love of the poet to achieve perception or truth which has inspired him through vision, obtained from his rich imagination. Owing to this, Shelley, on the one hand, venerates femininity by upgrading and equating woman with reality; on the other hand, the point he stresses is that imagination is such an

incontrollable force that if strikes, it can make a turnaround in human to such a degree that he will be acting like a real lover going after his beloved no matter what even though it costs him his life.

Here, Shelley assigns a significant role to femininity by displaying a sensual scene with a woman in order to pass on her information and intelligence to him. This female character is perception. Evidently, this way of presenting romantic feelings by the poet is slightly bizarre which is totally opposed to Plato's attitude concerning love. Regarding *The Allegory of the Cave*, Plato wants to show the flaw of the natural world and tries to degrade it. To do this, he makes a distinction between the physical universe and the supernatural domain. To exemplify, he equates the palpable materialistic world with the shine of fire and the divine realm with the flash of the sun. Indeed, the sunlight is way more severe than the glare of the fire. In other words, Plato stresses that for the cave dwellers to perceive the genuine light, they need to be subjected to the sunlight though the glare of the fire serves as the supporting element to comprehend the ultimate reality, sunlight. Thus, for Plato, the sunlight represents the ultimate truth and the glare of fire speaks for shadows.

Likewise, Shelley also utilizes an analogy of fire as the counterpart example of Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*. With respect to the lines below:

"Soon the solemn mood

Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame

A permeating fire" (161 – 163)

Just like Plato, Shelley's symbolic example here in *Alastor* consists of the perception as the supreme reality which is analogous with Plato's sunlight, and "cold fireside" (in the following verses) that is equal to Plato's shine of fire. Apart from this, the fire of the maid in this poem is considered as a segment obtained from the supreme reality since it originates from "*the solemn mood / of her pure mind*". All in all, ultimate reality in Shelley has been epitomized in perception residing in a female character:

"Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme

And lofty hopes of divine liberty" (158-159)

Shelley here elevates the status of the maid to such a degree that she can acquire “knowledge” that can somehow be equated with Platonic truth. Whereas as announced by Ferrari (2003, p. 152), Plato thinks of women as the ones who are second-class citizens as in: "Can you think of any human activity in which the male sex is not superior to the females in all these ways? Or do we have to give a long account of weaving, cookery and baking cakes – things the female sex is thought to be pretty good at, and where it is particularly absurd for them to be second-best?'. In the above quotation, Plato clearly rebuffs any parity between men and women. He thinks that the main undertaking of the female sex is to deal with house works including preparing food, sewing and making clothes. He sarcastically and disparagingly pokes fun at women and asserts that they are quite skilled at fulfilling these kinds of ventures. He also goes on by saying that there would be of no use for the male sex if he becomes better at women-related affairs. Another connotation of this statement of Plato is that men are so intelligent and capable that if they seriously want to perform these feminine chores, they can even carry them out greater and more desirable than their female counterparts.

As can be seen, Plato makes a sexual discrimination both occupationally and socially by lifting men up to such a status that they are just excellent at undertaking any task while women fail to be as much efficient and accomplished. As a whole, Plato stresses the male authority and supremacy both intellectually and bodily. His language is somewhat enigmatic as he takes masculine dominance for granted and overlooks some exceptional females who often stand out and make a difference by performing a lot better than some men in a wide variety of expertise. Nonetheless, this absolutist language of Plato projects his single-minded attitude against women. However, that is not the case for Shelley as it went earlier and is to be more discussed in the subsequent parts. As a whole, on account of being a Romantic poet, Shelley once again resorts to nature and its force when he decides on an element of nature, fire, which mirrors the reality. Besides, there appears that Shelly is in a closer contact with nature because he uses fire that is an element of nature. However, Plato’s definition of ultimate truth goes as high as the sun in the sky which is not easily accessible and close to the earth.

With regard to the lines below from *Alastor*:

“[...] every sight

*And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great
Or good, or lovely, which sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had past, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.” (68-77)*

Shelley sanctifies the nature for its “sight, sound, earth, and air” inspire the “heart” that seeks truth. By the phrase “choicest impulses”, the poet means that once human activates his imagination, nature would reward him the best such as motivation, inspiration and passion. Shelley exemplifies *Alastor* in a rather mystical manner by calling him the manifestation of truth in which the “fountains of divine philosophy” have flowed. *Alastor* for Shelley is a representation of truth-seeking poet who leaves the material things, “fireside and home” behind in the hope of unearthing the ultimate reality. Some sort of specific diction which is similar to that of Plato can be observed and felt here. By “he felt and knew”, Shelley wants to say that unlike Plato who holds that poets have only opinions, poets possess knowledge and they know anything which is good, “all of great or good”. In fact, this interpretation of Shelley is opposed to what Plato discussed in *The Allegory* in which he asserts that poets are not capable of stepping into “the intelligible reign” that stores truth. This reign, according to Plato, is much farther away from the world of objects or this natural cosmos and just as the sun has been situated high above this planet. Anything under this territory is solely the shadows of that intelligible reign. In a nutshell, what we see here accounts for a kind of poet’s restlessness and tension between his agnostic and Platonist tendencies. Shelley’s *Alastor* functions as an allegory in response to Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* about spiritual and supernatural outlooks.

Notwithstanding, Abrams et al. (1987, p. 1783) bring up Shelley’s “*To a Skylark*” in which the speaker commends the nobility of the Skylark:

“Teach us, Sprite or Bird,

What sweet thoughts are thine?

I have never heard

Praise of love or wine

That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine” (61-65).

To elucidate, the bird is like an extraordinary creature whose brilliant song and high-up flying make it as immortal as the spirit. Additionally, the persona puzzles over the divine song of the bird which is even better than poetry. It can be implied from the poem that the speaker wants to be as free and cheerful as the Skylark since this is the best way to avoid death. In fact, the Neo-Platonic concept of immortality is highlighted here once again. As can be seen, in the initial lines of *To a Skylark*, Shelley sanctifies the bird:

“Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!

Bird thou never wert” (1-2).

In this poem, Shelley asserts that for anything that is death-dealing, there is no absolute cheerfulness as it is inevitably interwoven with sorrow. Moreover, the poet states that perishable human lives with thoughts of the past, looks on the dark side of life and regrets for his lacks: *“pine for what is not”* (87). The terminable hilarity of individual is *“fraught with some pain”* (89). Besides, this ephemeral creature’s *“sweetest songs are those that tell of the saddest thought”* (90).

Nevertheless, in:

“Yet if we could scorn

Hate, and pride, and fear

If we were things born

Not to shed a tear

I know not how thy joy we ever should come near” (91-95)

Supposing that humans were able to do all this, even if they were inherently unable to moan and cry, Shelley casts doubt on humans even to approach the amount of pleasure that the skylark has been feeling. Indeed, the poet sets forth that even the

most delighted and fortunate people in the world cannot be as happy as the bird, not even close. This is because of skylark's sweet-sounding and heavenly song and that it has surpassed the borders of time and space. Shelley as a Romantic poet uses the bird as a symbol of nature to unfold the Platonic fact that genuine pleasure lies somewhere beyond this physical realm that the bird has achieved. By extension, the skylark's song also refers to the life after death where every human will experience the real bliss and gratification which is one of the major concepts in Platonism.

To put it differently, in spite of the fact that Shelley distinguishes the skylark from other temporary and perishable beings, he believes that all these short-lived creatures are vital to reach truth. He posits that the ephemeral and decaying entities can only arrive at truth or divinity once they relinquish their terrestrial essence.

Using simile, Shelley likens the skylark to:

"...a poet hidden

In the light of thought,

Singing hymns unbidden,

Till the world is wrought

To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not (36-40)

Shelley sets up a link between an element of nature namely the bird and the poet who represents art, i.e., poetry in order to inquire into art's interaction with nature. He also asserts that his composing poem is quite spontaneous or "unbidden" which stems from the poet's imagination and talent. This nature-art exchange will create an ideal world, he announces. Besides, once more the speaker makes a simile between the song of the bird and his poem which is a sort of "hymn" that refers to a religious song. Shelley wants to alter the universe via creating a shared feeling or "sympathy" among everyone and everything though the world doesn't give care to "hopes and fears" of individuals. The poet emphasizes that this mundane macrocosm is unquestionably interwoven with sense of hope and fear the way sun reflects the light and shines the world during the day as in:

"Like a star of heaven,

In the broad daylight" (18-19)

Yet, by using the word “Wrought” he wants to say that sympathy, truth and delight can be made solely by poetry because it has the power to awaken novel emotions and cause humans to wash their eyes and view their surrounding universe differently. On the other hand, as stated in Abrams (1987, p. 1810), in *A Defence*, Shelley depicts the poet in a somewhat akin way: “A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why”. To explain, the bird’s chanting is kind of impulsive and instinctive or as the poet says “unbidden”. The skylark sings not for a particular group of viewers or hearers, but for attaining self-satisfaction, pulling itself out of isolation and being surrounded by peace and quiet. Nonetheless, unlike the poet’s and the bird’s internal will, they get hearers and admirers, and this is the magic of poetry that can project forward an earthly creature with a divine quality both at the same time. As well as, it displays a hierarchical sequence of achieving reality which begins from the corporeal namely the poet and the skylark to the divinity or truth that is poetry and sweet-sounding song of the bird, so to speak. The lines below elucidate this hierarchy:

“What objects are the fountains?

Of thy happy strain?

What fields or waves or mountains?

What shapes of sky or plain? (71-74)

Here, it can be implied that though the skylark, which is the symbol of the poet, is flying high in the sky and seemingly does not make a physical contact with the land, it just like the poet, gets its motivation or enthusiasm from the physical entities specifically nature elements. Having employed these terrestrial things, the bird or the poet will be able to generate a heavenly song or eternal poetry. On the other hand, having said “*Scorner of the ground*” (100), the speaker lifts up the dulcet and melodious song of the bird to the point that even poetry and music fail to emulate with it. Then he wants the skylark to let him know and experience:

“Half the gladness

That thy brain must know” (101-102)

Because having learned this much pleasure and delight would make the poet be deluged with “*harmonious madness*” (103) so that his poetry just like the song of the bird could be heard by all people. Indeed, this tendency and fascination of Shelley account for his being tremendously impacted by Platonic ‘Eternal Ideas’. That is to say, he passionately seeks immortality and unity with nature. It is no exaggeration to say that Shelley wholeheartedly worships the nature as a source of purity, divinity and perpetuity. Surprisingly, Shelley seems to be wavering between Platonic Godly doctrine when he depicts the skylark as non-earthly: “*Higher and still higher*” (6) and worldly philosophy once he mentions that skylark comes from and belongs to the earth: “*From the earth thou springest*” (7). Having said that, I assume that this ideological fluctuation of Shelley accounts for his belief in divinity’s hierarchical organization. To make it evident, Shelley considers supreme godliness as something that derives from mundane matters.

Indeed, both the poet and Deity have been portrayed in the bird particularly when the poet says “*Like a poet hidden / In the light of thought*” (36-37). Although Shelley juxtaposes the bird with element of nature in

“*A glow-worm golden*” (46)

“*Like a rose embower’d*

In its own green leaves,” (51-52) or in

“*Sound of vernal showers*

On the twinkling grass,

Rain-awaken’d flowers,

All that ever was

Joyous, and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass” (56-60).

Shelley again expertly utilizes nature elements such as “glow-worm, rose, green leaves, showers, grass, and flower”. His imagery and personification are so delicate and hairsplitting. He talks about how flowers, just like humans, awaken when it rains. In fact, by attributing human quality (waking up) to an element of nature Shelley tries to narrow down the distance between man and nature and make them the same. He even takes a step further and lifts up the majesty of the bird song calling it a tower above the nature’s other elements. Besides, he stresses that the

eternal quality of the skylark is its melodious song, which is more cheerful, pure and refreshing to the senses than any music, rather than its physical glancing existence. On the other hand, in “*Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*” (Abrams et al. 1987, p. 1744), the word “intellectual” suggests an important, dynamic and evocative concept in Neo-Platonism. Plato literally presumed that human sensory perception is not reliable because it is restricted; therefore, for man to tower above the bodily senses, he needs to be outfitted with another better faculty that is called intellect. This term plays a salient part in Platonism since the ideal forms are found in this more formidable domain than in the physical dimension. At any rate, Shelley, due to being a Neo-Platonist, seems to have chosen this title of the poem on purpose so as to contrast it with physical beauty and to hold it up to a transcendental level. It also encompasses definite facets of Aristotelian philosophy. The focal point in this poem is that regardless of this material universe and our reasoning power, there is a supernatural power which cannot be seen and is mysterious to people; nevertheless, intellectual beauty has resemblance to

“THE AWFUL shadow of some unseen Power

Floats tho’ unseen among us, ---- visiting

This various world with as inconstant wing

As summer winds that creep from flower to flower ;”(3-4)

For Shelley, intellectual beauty has an awe-inspiring shadow along with a power which is invisible. This power keeps moving gently and secretly among people. The poet likens this power of intellectual beauty to a bird that flies aimlessly and randomly the way “summer winds” haphazardly blow in nature “from flower to flower”. The speaker tends to drive the point home that nature is an inevitable source of inspiration, knowledge and intellectual beauty which can only be perceived in poetry since after all, it is poetry that can draw such an intimate human-nature reciprocity.

In addition, this divine power looks in on

“... With inconstant glance

Each human heart and countenance”(6-7)

Regarding these lines, I suppose there is a sort of defect here as Shelley's description of the power (intellectual beauty) is rather unsystematic because the power's glance keeps varying and is not perpetual or stable; that is to say it is constructed via disparate things or phenomena. The poet's fictional perception of this power thus, bears an underlying and central shortcoming as this kind of power is not based upon steady or consistent pillars. It is simply empty. Besides, the creepy point is the connotation of the word "glance" meaning that this invisible power "visits ... each human heart and countenance" with a fleeting look and it doesn't stabilize on human. This failure of Shelley in explaining the mechanism of the intellectual power appears to be a drawback in his work. However, just after this metaphysical power fades away, the only thing which remains is

"...our state,

This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate."(16-17)

In reality, the speaker declares that Intellectual Beauty is "*unknown and awful*" (40). Moreover, he has no idea of the reason for this divine power's impulsive stopover; yet the poet expresses that whenever this unfamiliar force maintains itself "*with [its] glorious train firm state*"(41)in the heart of human, then and only then one can call himself "*immortal and omnipotent*" (39). It is also important to note that this supernatural power that Shelley frequently poses, derives from imagination which strikes sporadically. Here again we can feel Shelley's being inspired by Plato's philosophy of divinity. In a word, this transcendent quality which can be abundantly found in Shelley's poetry is the direct outcome of his rich and productive imagination so that he finds it worthy of being celebrated and idolized as in:

"To one who worships thee,

And every form containing thee" (81-82).

Shelley regards knowledge as an appeasing and sedative experience. What is more, he equates intellectual beauty with "spirit" which bears mesmerizing potential. Shelley is captivated by knowledge of the world and transcendence and for him, this knowledge causes humans to be intellectually beautiful. Last but not least, by activating imagination, Shelley assumes that knowledge of nature which is the underpinning of beauty and even spiritual felicity as in "spirit of beauty" (13) can be achieved as well. All in all, for Shelley, intellectual faculty is a unique power in

human that cannot be grasped by sensory perception. In other words, what he means by beauty is concerned with intellect or reasoning power not things which are physically attractive or dazzling. This matter also has recourse to Plato's school of thought that finds beauty not in concrete and material entities but in conceptual and abstruse things which are closely associated with truth and transcendental imagination proposed by Shelley.

"Thus let thy power, which like the truth

Of nature on my passive youth

Descended to my onward life supply

Its calm to one who worships thee,

And every form containing thee," (78 – 82)

Regarding these lines, Shelley wants the intellectual beauty, which is as strong as nature, to be forced in him and in his future life. Apparently, the poet compares his immature and indifferent childhood when he was delving for truth in nature with his current life that he considers intellectual beauty as the ultimate reality. For him, intellectual beauty exists in every single entity and it is associated with a sort of serenity and equanimity that deserves to be bowed down to and worshiped. What is more, the poet figures out that the relationship, which his imagination establishes with intellectual beauty, occurs at the time of tranquility, observance and receptiveness. Having said that, the speaker remembers the first time he came across a supposed spirit while "passive youth" and a curious little boy. The poet believes that it is the power of imagination that, once released, can lead to the formation of beauty which deserves to be worshiped. Shelley's nature symbolism, like trees, rivers, mountains, birds and so on, comes into play when he thinks of depicting the end of life. What is quite certain about Shelley is he had a curious mind and discerning eye to catch on the ontological philosophy of this ephemeral world and subsequently the quality of afterlife. He seems not to abide by the cruel events of nature such as death which displays his hope for eternity. In my opinion, Shelley doesn't hold the scales even towards immortality because he deliberately and specifically attributes it to poets as in the case of Keats in *Adonais*. Besides, Shelley's vacillating thoughts on divinity, eternity, materialism, etc. turn him into an ambivalent but thoughtful poet.

According to McLane (2000, p. 41), “Shelley was obviously not unambivalent about his chosen craft of verse. A case in point is when he stipulates that “I wish I had something better to do than furnish this jingling food for the hunger of oblivion, called verse”. Ordinarily, upon reading Shelley, the reader follows a track of peculiarly fluctuating insights that are sometimes contradictory. What is evident is, in my opinion, Shelley had anxious psyche, preoccupation and suspicion on the one hand, which we understand from the way he depicts pure, profound and genuine feelings towards nature as in *Ode to the West Wind* and *Mont Blanc*; on the other hand, he drags human mind to unknown and enigmatic territories as he criticizes religion, deity and philosophy of creation as in the *Necessity of Atheism*. Besides, the word *Necessity* is a frequently used term by William Godwin from whom apparently Shelley borrows. *Necessity* comes into play when we come across ample haziness or hesitating question as for the existence and mechanism of the universe which according to Shelley leads to the birth of imagination. To me, it seems that Shelley’s belief in enchanting power of imagination is closely tied with his immense curiosity towards experimental science particularly science of matter or alchemy in which a substance can function as a panacea to cure all diseases the way imagination is capable of acting as an extraordinary force to compose poetry without having learned stylistic and poetic techniques and elements.

In any event, Stauffer (2005, p.123) holds that “Shelley’s own oscillation between caustic skepticism and progressive idealism finds its expression in this pattern, which allows for satiric anger and masque-like visions of hope in the same work of art”. One more contradictory point about Shelley is that primarily for him, imagination was quite an abstract entity, however, elsewhere in *The Cenci*, he assigns an eternal role to imagination like a creator and at the same time he gives a bodily existence to it in order to save its perishable appetite. What I see in Shelley, from the very beginning of his literary work to the end of it, is a gradual and perceptible maturation not an inadvertent extreme ideological turnover that finally dragged his philosophical stance to atheism. For instance, he left his previous alienated thoughts of early literary life and stepped up to the status of an intellectually sophisticated and mindful poet. I suppose Shelley struggled to pass judgment on religion, deity and abstract things through attaching them to the imaginative faculty which is the highest and supreme source of creation. Shelley’s philosophy is man-oriented that is no mind-

blowing and celestial force can tamper with human's essence, otherwise individual's inner self and balance would get out of control.

In brief, every so often, Shelley appears not to have transparent idea as to whether he is doing the right thing by bumping up the poetry and its leading constituent part, imagination. There are times when Shelley is not of a stable attitude which makes him an ambiguous poet. Moreover, he was dwelling in a kind of scattered and dubious world. Indeed, Shelley represents a forerunner who is seeking out a real human with both sentiments and intellect. To fulfill this, he goes through a plethora of ups and downs. Truly, Shelley occupies a position between the abstract and concrete world. He tries every single way to get to know the philosophy of existence even at the cost of rebuffing the divinity by becoming an atheist.

2.4 Shelley: From Reality to Atheism

From Burwick's point of view (2015, p. 312), "atheistic Shelley relied on a Platonic version of immanence". In *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, Shelley exalted the status of intellectual beauty to a divine being. He states that rational virtue is comprehensive and includes every single aspect of our life which is what Plato names *Ideal Forms*:

*"Its calm – to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all humankind"* (81-84).

Shelley also holds the power of intellectual beauty in a higher regard in a way that the world of palpable forms or material domain serves as a prerequisite for apprehending the divine or supernatural realm. Additionally, the poet assigns a magic quality to this power that can precipitate human and his spirit turn around. Then again Shelley shows off the potentiality of poetry without which neither of the above could be attained. Overall, this poem demonstrates the speaker's being enthralled by the power of mind and its connection with existence or being. As stated by Shelley, the intellectual beauty is of a spellbinding power which simply serves for "spirit fair" or divine affairs. It keeps human away from the evils and teaches him to be affectionate and "love all humankind". By "To fear himself, and love all mankind",

Shelley means that the fair spirit has impressed him to such an extent that he has affection for every human and he has been away from egotism and vanity that is why he “fears himself” not to fall in the trap of these evil characteristics.

Here human intellect has been equalized with ultimate reality which at times is daunting though so genuine. In addition, Shelley, searches for tranquility and relief in human wisdom not in resorting to God. This attitude suggests Shelley’s atheistic desires. Philosophically, one of the major reasons that led to Shelley’s atheism was his being influenced by Plato. Not to mention that from Christian perspective, Neo-Platonists are considered as unbelievers. Having noticed the term “Hymn”, Shelley’s atheism comes out once again. To illustrate, hymn is a kind of poem for praising God or a religiously divine being; nonetheless, in this poem, the speaker commends the power of intellect or wisdom which yields knowledge. He turns away from God as he is invisible and celebrates intellect and spirit as important aspects of beauty since they are more genuine for him. The following ratifies this:

*“I vow’d that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine: have I not kept the vow?”
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in vision’d bowers
Of studious zeal or love’s delight
Outwatch’d with me the envious night:
They know that never joy illum’d my brow
Unlink’d with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery,
That thou, O awful LOVELINESS,
Wouldst give whate’er these words cannot express.” (61-72)*

In this section of the poem, Shelley promises and crosses his heart to devote all his power and capacity to serve for the intellectual beauty. By posing the rhetorical question of “have I not kept the vow?” He implicitly underlines that he has not broken his promise. In order to prove his allegation, he bears witness of his “beating

heart and streaming eyes” as well as “the phantoms of a thousand hours” to substantiate his claim that he had already dedicated himself to intellectual beauty. Very oddly, Shelley seeks to prove his loyalty and commitment to intellectual beauty by declaring that in the past he had been making a plethora of efforts, reading, writing, contemplating and purifying his soul at nights rather than wasting his time in pursuit of “love’s delight or the transient joys of this world. To me, this claim of Shelley sounds a bit paradoxical because throughout his life, he was permanently in relationship with various women; therefore, “Love’s delight” could be one of his priorities.

The second possibility is that experiencing these worldly pleasures could be for the purpose of hierarchical order of reaching truth or intellectual beauty. I think he on purpose tried all these things to awaken the giant spirit within him and strengthen his faith that the only everlasting entity which is worthy of being worshiped is the intellectual beauty since it “wouldst free this world from its dark slavery”, and it also has such an unrivalled power to the advantage of people and ameliorating them that the poet’s language fails to explain.

Taking the following into consideration:

“No voice from some sublimer world hath ever

To sage or poet these responses given:

Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,

Remain the records of their vain endeavor” (25-28)

Shelley’s objective of employing Christian forms such as “Demon, Ghost, and Heaven” is to ironically mocking the religion. He cries out that no wise man or poet has ever received any holy message from the heaven nor have they heard any voice from or seen any Ghost or Demon. More subtly, he says that those who fall for religion simply are beating a dead horse and losing their efforts because the only thing which is “sublimer” is the intellectual beauty and human mind that can lead him to knowledge and truth not a holy creator or a sacred divine world. It is understood that as an atheist, Shelley rejects religion by applying words such as “Ghost” and “Heaven” (27). Besides, he underscores that it is quite irrational and meaningless to adore and implore for a holy being when he says, “*departed dead*” (52). Shelley initiates a philosophical discourse by asserting that since imagination

and its by-products (intellect and beauty) are evanescent, individuals mostly resort to God or religion simply because they are not able to have knowledge of this cosmos' intricacies and wonders. He argues that their efforts will be abortive and "vain" (28). Then Shelley's language gets bitterer by storming the unfounded and insane theistic beliefs he faces around. Opposing this, he states that "*grace and truth*" (36) can be achieved once people incline to reason and intellect.

Furthermore, he holds that for human to be "*immortal and omnipotent*", (39) he has to "*keep thy glorious train within his heart*" (41). In the next stanza, Shelley again carries on his atheistic doctrine referring to his adolescence obsessions with Deity. He considers them fruitless attempts and pleas which were not finally answered by the Holy Being. He even reviles these so-called divine messengers and calls them "*poisonous names*" (53). Another noticeable point in this poem goes with "*listening chamber*" (50) in the church which Shelley draws a parallel between that and "*cave*" of Plato's in the *Republic* that refers to a location folks go in order to find out the name of the objects via recognizing the shadows of them while they don't ever look at these objects. Nevertheless, having used the word "*shadow*", the poet implies genuine knowledge which seems to be the lacking element in him; therefore, the speaker "vows" to "*dedicate his powers*" (61) to intellectual beauty so as to acquire knowledge and reach truth.

On the contrary, Shelley states that pursuing religion or Deity would culminate in "*dark slavery*" (70). The poet optimistically longs for a better and more real way of knowing the surrounding universe which can protect humans from gloom and murkiness. In the last stanza, the poet uses the words "*serene*" and "*noon*" (72-73) to indicate that his superstitious, naïve and immature days of childhood have come to end and that the "*autumn*" (74) is coming closer which figuratively hints at the time for being mature and learning knowledge. Indeed, this is a sort of new chapter in the poet's life. As a matter of fact, Shelley blatantly condemns superstitious beliefs which can be seen in "*demon*", "*ghost*", "*poisonous*", "*spells*" and admires knowledge by calling it "*solemn*". On the other hand, as for his atheism, suffice it to say that for Shelley, Deity or an All-powerful Being is a supposition and by its very nature has to be substantiated. To further, Shelley presumes that even God's being has not been and cannot be authenticated that is why it still remains as a hypothesis. According to Shelley, people usually do not consciously single out their belief

system, but it is imposed upon them as belief is a mental concept which is unknown and subsidiary and cannot, like Great Spirit's existence, be substantiated because there is no adequate witness and attestation to prove it. He goes on by confirming his atheist ideology expressing that the worst thing is even human, who is a so-called manifestation of God's creative might on the Earth, is not able to prove his reality through physical senses and power of wisdom. Last but not least, Shelley sarcastically mocks at institutionalized religion and Deity by justifying that humans could have made this world a better place to live in had they spent much of their time and energy to the material and concrete things that they were enthusiastic about.

Plus, he recommends people to notice the betterment, cultivation, maturity of their knowledge and manner as well as social rules rather than waste their endeavors for seeking to find and affirm the creator. To illustrate, Shelley never claimed that atheism is an unconditionally well-founded and sensible school of thought, at least he found it as a more rightful option remained. He unequivocally argues that reality does not lie in God, but in a knowledge-oriented and investigative mind; this matter in turn endorses Shelley's atheism, so to speak. Another case in point for Shelley's atheistic propensities is when in *Defence of Poetry*, Shelley (2008, p.57) speaks of Milton as in: "Milton has so far violated the popular creed (if this shall be judged to be a violation) as to have alleged no superiority of moral virtue to his God over his Devil. And this bold neglect of a direct moral purpose is the most decisive proof of the supremacy of Milton's genius". To demonstrate, Milton was truly a pioneer who attacked the cherished religious beliefs and institutions unknowingly. Indeed, Milton became a member of Devil's party while he had no idea about it. Besides, in *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley reiterated that in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Satan's figure is unrivalled, tremendous and unparalleled whose power occasionally outweighs that of God which is kind of humiliating God. From this, we can trace Shelley's atheistic proclivity partly back to his wide reading of Milton.

Another key point underlined by Curran (1993, p.230) is "wherever one senses the presence of Milton in Shelley's poetry, this is what it constitutes". To explain, Shelley believes that majesty and liveliness of Devil's character are insurmountable. He uplifts Satan to a more high-ranking status than God. In so doing, Shelley's depiction of Devil would become similar to that of Milton's God which pictures a sort of congruity and balance between them. As a matter of fact, Shelley, Byron and

Keats unanimously persisted in that no human being is flawless. More specifically, Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound* highlights the equilibrium between righteousness and wickedness that confirms the deformity of man. Still and all, from my viewpoint, obviously Milton played an undeniable role in enlightening, inspiring and opening a new horizon before the eyes of Shelley which led to his atheism. Generally, Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Christianity have a number of theoretical commonalities and differences, each of which somewhat left its impression on Shelley. For instance, Christianity holds a firm belief in individual's union with God. Shelley overruled this supposition following Platonists and Neo-Platonists who are of a man-centered philosophy emphasizing man's mystic but irreligious consolidation with the Plato's One (who is not necessarily God) which in turn can be achieved via contemplation and rational argumentation than worship. This Gnostic standpoint has been crystalized in Shelley's poetry as went above.

What is more, Watson (2004, p. 36) posits that "Shelley linked the whole business of war with the breakdown of the world's rationality and morality". The point often overlooked is Christianity bears a nearly fraternal relationship with Platonism that does not hold true with Neo-Platonism. Indeed, Neo-Platonists were more materialistic and worldly knowledge-oriented who left an immense impression on Shelley's works. Particularly in *A Defence of Poetry*, readers can figure out Shelley's materialistic tendencies when he stresses on the power of human rationality which has little to do with divinity. Of course, being Neo-Platonist doesn't mean Shelley totally refuted theology, but rather for him, visible and concrete entities take precedence over the divine and abstract. To find it out, suffice it to take a glance at Shelley's works in which both facets of Neo-Platonism have been indicated.

On the other hand, Priestman (2000, p. 219) is of the opinion that "Shelley, Byron and Keats all fit easily into almost any definition of infidelism, and actively and unashamedly declared as much". Albeit, in my opinion, Christianity had a profound influence on the amendment of Shelley's ideological approach, then Shortly after, he began to be suspicious of the nature of Christianity as he thoroughly elaborated on religion and God in *The Necessity of Atheism* which culminated in his atheistic beliefs; of course, this is not to say he repelled Christianity because it has a number of commonalities with Platonism as well, however, Shelley became a critique of organized religion. Later on, Shelley became a die-hard disciple of Platonism which

itself at some points is in correspondent with Christianity particularly as to spiritual immortality, the philosophy of creation, etc., that have been manifested in one way or another in Shelley's works.

Having perused Shelley's prose and poetry, I realized that Christianity opened a new horizon before the eyes of Shelley; in fact, institutionalized religion led to his being critical of deity and not rejecting it as he is sometimes misunderstood as an atheist. Furthermore, Platonic understanding of reality reveals itself in Shelley's deeply perspicacious thoughts and his belief in The One, but not in the religious sense, once he portrays spirituality, eternity and virtue in nature element such as bird, mountain, wind, people, etc. On the other hand, Shelley's interest in contemplation, non-religious spirituality, beauty, unity, intellectual reasoning and knowledge was principally affected by Neo-Platonism. To elucidate, Neo-Platonic redefinition of knowledge has been reflected in Shelley and resulted in his comprehension of intellect and wisdom. Besides, Beer (2009, p.214) has argued that "Shelley's deepest beliefs reflected, like Coleridge's, an attempt to trace the divine in the depths of human consciousness"

Unlike Christian interpretation of knowledge which puts the abstract knowledge in the spotlight, Shelley's Neo-Platonic knowledge attached greater significance to perceptible entities and natural phenomena as the underpinning, prerequisite and building block of true knowledge, which in itself sprang from Aristotelian knowledge. This attitude of Shelley does not discard or neglect the divine knowledge, but simply it places tangible things at the bottom of the hierarchy that is also opposed to Platonic realization of knowledge, to be exact. Unquestionably, one of the reasons as to why Shelley became a Neo-Platonist, is Neo-Platonism's relative theoretical dominance over Christianity (though politically Christianity was more dominant) due to its non-biased, novel, more logical and realistic description of soul, essence, body, self and knowledge. Given these points, one of the root causes of treating Neo-Platonism as devious is its long-lasting battle with recessive currents and movements. In other words, Neo-Platonism made the voice of emancipation be heard from the beliefs held in centuries of suppression, superstition and conflict which almost all have been disclosed in Shelley's *The Necessity of Atheism* and in political poems like *England in 1819*, *Song to the Men of England* and *The Mask of Anarchy*.

From my perspective, Neo-Platonism heralds a world and a being that are comparatively protected against perversion and decadence. It contends that soul, which is neither wholly spiritual nor completely material, but somewhere in the middle, should be preserved from worldly and bodily dependencies and this exalted spirit should pay attention to theosophical insight which yields sheer knowledge, superego (as Freud put it) and true pleasure. Then and only then, humanity would hold itself back from vanity and transgression. In reality, human psyche passes the heavenly energy from the infinite spirit on the material universe, that is, it performs a go-between function. With this in mind, the soul bears a supernatural power and metaphysical nature which is ubiquitous, unidentified, unbounded and full-scale. In the final analysis, Shelley iconoclastically picked up where Neo-Platonism had left off through challenging his contemporary philosophical inveterate tenets and heralding more competitive later Neo-Platonists. In essence, as for Neo-Platonism, suffice it to say that this school of thought did not descend from candidly philosophical, sophisticated and impeccable sources; on the contrary, at times it was of perverse currents which made a considerable contribution to the maturity and rebirth of Neo-Platonism.

As a point of fact, Mortensen (2004, p. 183) argues, “The Romantic will turn to nature or the creative imagination as his places of last resort”. All in all, on the one hand, Platonism’s and Christianity’s metaphysical influences are visible in Shelley and on the other, Neo-Platonism’s materialistic and nature-based philosophy can be distinctly observed in Shelley. Therefore, it is a misconception if one thinks that Shelley was entirely and purely a Platonist or a Neo-Platonist, but it was like an evolutionary hierarchy which began from Christianity, went on with Platonism and ended in Neo-Platonism to which he adhered sincerely until his untimely death. Hence, Shelley is primarily a Platonist; however, ever since Plato rejected the power of physical senses to reach the One which had already been taken for granted by Shelley, he turned away from Plato and became a Neo-Platonist and finally an atheist.

As I will elaborate in the following, Shelley’s interpretation of truth is rather experimental and palpable which of course derives from how experiential science in general and chemistry in particular drew his attention. In his booklet, he very modestly begs his readers to assess and pass judgment on his ideas by presenting

strong-founded evidence so as to lay the foundation for the upcoming discussion and realization of this branch of learning. In *the Necessity of Atheism*, Shelley (2015, p. 3) says, “our knowledge of the existence of a deity is a subject of such importance that it cannot be too minutely investigated; in consequence of this conviction, we proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced. It is necessary first to consider the nature of Belief”. To shed light on it, it should be cited that Shelley is very cautious about the quintessence of the Divine Being. He furthers that such a concept as God or supreme Creator is full of twists and turns that needs to be scrutinized meticulously. This shows the fact that Shelley’s atheism is not simply an immature denial of God.

He seems to pursue a highly methodical guiding principle which only and only deals with tangible evidence to drive his point home quite objectively and succinctly. To do this, he turns to the gist of deity which is the belief itself. Shelley’s approach as to the concept of deity is basically systematic which can be discovered through experimentation; nevertheless this attitude of his is occasionally tagged as atheism. His material and scientific doctrine is illustrated in: “the senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind, consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent”(3). From this, it can be deduced that Shelleyan knowledge is materialistic. He holds that physical proof is the most reliable basis of achieving truth. In line with Shelley, he illuminates the concept of knowledge asserting that our ordinary knowledge of things is called conception; however, when this knowledge goes under our evaluation and gets criticized, it becomes truth. Although Shelley lived during Romantic period, his ideology was at some points pursuant to that of Neoclassicism. In a word, Shelley’s experiential philosophy throws itself into observation because in keeping with material science, human physical senses bring perception which itself yields conception.

Therefore, if someone lacks sensory perception, s/he won’t be able to conceive the notions which have connection with a particular physical feeling. Elsewhere Shelley asserts, “The decision of the mind founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree” (3). He traces the substructure of human knowledge back to our initial impressions and sentiments that we undergo. He goes even further maintaining that our physical senses generate wisdom and reasoning. In

Shelley's book, imagination and sentiments provoke language which is regarded as an animate and biological entity.

Obviously, Shelley prioritizes sensory perception over the mental function; in other words, he considers the latter subordinate to the former rather than the other way round. Furthermore, Shelley hypothesized that if one believes in God, this Divine Creator must be capable of satisfying human physical sensations to prove the presence and being of Himself, Absolute power. Shelley goes on by saying that how we can have faith in the infinity and perpetuity of the Almighty Creator while the immortality of this material world itself cannot be substantiated which is claimed to have been created by Him. In fact, Shelley argues, that the world has been brought into being is conspicuous; nonetheless, that God has made it, cannot be verified. He points out a very significant issue which is even today questionable and that is when human fails to figure out a concept or an entity, s/he attributes it to a supernatural source or God. Generally speaking, Shelley's atheism is not simply rejecting the existence of God, rather he digs into human mind and psyche to ignite a sparkle of thought and wisdom in him by reminding that man is not only the product of his circumstances to be surrounded by traditionally inculcated and imposed ideas and beliefs on him.

But, he is expected to glimmer his imagination so as to question anything around him even at the cost of stamping on religious beliefs and social stereotypes, to be exact. Moreover, in other part of his atheistic pamphlet, Shelley derides at folks who claim to have seen the Almighty Creator as in: "Those to whom the Deity has thus appeared, have the strongest possible conviction of his existence"(4). It seems as if Shelley admits that there are a vast number of things in the universe which are inconceivable, however, ascribing them to God is ridiculous. In a roundabout way, Shelley wants to prompt people to extend the scope of their imagination and subsequently reason to go beyond the borders of religious, traditional and social conventions to unearth the truth. Indeed, Shelley is not against Deity, but he's opposed to ignorance, superstition and lack of Knowledge.

Shelley finds it quite unwise to believe in supernatural occurrences and following the orders of a Supreme Being to be repaid and honored in the hereafter while being chastised otherwise. It aggravates Shelley to put imagination, knowledge and experiential science aside and have faith in such unfounded and illogical things

which unquestionably paralyze human intellectual faculties. Other than that, in this pamphlet, he utters: “we can only command voluntary actions, belief is not an act of volition, the mind is even passive, from this it is evident that we have not sufficient testimony, or rather that testimony is insufficient to prove the being of a God, we have before shown that it cannot be deduced from reason, ...they who have been convinced by the evidence of the senses, they only can believe it” (4). Here, Shelley argues that God cannot logically issue order or exercise his power on human beings to have faith in Him because order and authority should take into account people’s willpower and their right of choice and since belief doesn’t include either of them, it is not rational. As a result, owing to the fact that religious belief fails to provide human with another option, as it is dictated and imposed on human imperatively, it can by no means substantiate the being of Divine Creator. Afterwards, Shelley refers to the provability of experimental sciences via reasoning, tests, proofs as well as sensory perception versus religion blatantly is deficient in attesting the existence of Absolute Being in a reasonable way.

For Shelley, genuine belief is the one that originates from scientifically provable and well-grounded claims along with sensible feelings; only then truth would be more reliable not by blindly following a bunch of ideological dos and don’ts, so to speak. To back up the subject under discussion, in his booklet about atheism, Shelley argues, “as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality can be attached to disbelief, they only are reprehensible who willingly neglect to remove the false medium thro’ which their mind views the subject” (4). To enumerate, Shelley tries to hold the scales even between belief and disbelief. He underlines that simply because having faith lies in the interest of human mind, it doesn’t necessarily mean that not having it would make a person immoral and senseless; the other way round, Shelley rebukes those people who readily and knowingly overlook and refuse to accept the fact that their way of thinking or attitude concerning belief might have been wrong. These are the ones Shelley calls blameworthy. Hence, personally speaking, he implies that there is nothing and no one absolute being in this world which is worthy of being believed or worshiped dogmatically as long as it/he can propose a rational justification against or in support of itself/himself. All things considered, Shelley’s mild and fair tone can be clearly felt from these lines that he’s a man of reason and merely seeking tangible and prudent evidence to go for or against something in order

to achieve truth. Shelley concludes his discussion by asserting that a sound mind wouldn't ever believe in Deity as it cannot be proved by any means. He also goes on by saying that truth is not found in religion, but in science and concrete phenomena which are capable of broadening and deepening human mind ultimately culminating in truth.



3. SHELLEY AND THE SUBLIME

3.1 The Sublime and the Beautiful: Their Meaning and Importance in Romanticism

Normally, we hate being made to sense humility. Almost no one desires to get to know his/her triviality and unimportance nor do we want anyone to jog our memory on how minor and low-ranking we are. Assuredly we get affronted and resentful. Sublime connotes uplifted, immense and high-reaching. In modern use though, it implies a very pleasant thing; for instance, a sublime glass of champagne, a sublime plate of scrambled eggs with truffles, etc. Lyotard (1994, p. 52) maintains that “it might be said that in the sublime feeling, thinking becomes impatient, despairing, disinterested in attaining the ends of freedom by means of nature”. Unquestionably, Romantic writers were particularly fond of nature. For them, the elements of Mother Nature such as streams, plains, canyons, etc. were sources of exaltation, admiration, peril, fascination, achievability and even consternation leading to their experience of sublime; that is why the notion of sublime is of a paramount significance for the Romantics.

Given that, they assert that upon encountering natural surroundings, a sense of fear and majesty overwhelms the onlooker right away which is not easy to express and make it understood. Perhaps the reason why Romantic poets overvalued nature was that it was too intricate to be expressed or discovered through reason or based upon human’s intellectual faculties. Thus they resorted to sublime which was beyond the scope of human wisdom and theoretical knowledge. According to Brady (2013, p. 107), “the Romantic Sublime extends Kantian ideas, bringing out the metaphysical dimension in ways that reveal connections between concrete particulars and an expanded sense of the self beyond the individual”. To clarify, once we see a gigantic waterfall, it gives us a sense of might, captivation, liveliness, dread and praise. In other words, sublime is the output of the combination between nature and arousal of strong feelings. It goes without saying that the Romantics’ use of sublime was a

reaction against the Enlightenment emphasis on science and reason. As a matter of fact, sublime needs to be practiced and learned by oneself. Romantic poets unanimously underscored the individual experience of the observer since it is different from one person or scene to another.

As Gunderson (2015, p. 85) puts forth, “the sublime spectator beholds a spectacle as bright as if the noon-day sun shone on it: the death of everything. Men, lands, Mountains, Seas: everything will be destroyed”. A case in point is when one sets off to experience harmony, order and peace in nature once by hiking the very large hills and once via going on voyage by himself. In fact, sublime is a sheer personal emotion which can by no means be put into words. According to Shelley, only poetry can express it. It should also be pointed out that sublime causes the beholder to touch a sense of nothingness before the nature. Vallins (2003, p. 95) conceives that “Coleridge described the Sublime as contradistinguished from the beautiful. Beauty consisted in the relation of parts to the whole. The sublime was an image of which you neither see the wholeness, nor the parts”. In the meantime, Coleridge stressed the annihilative aspect, drive and vigor that we occasionally get from the sublime nature; as well as folks’ debility before nature, all of which form in us a sense of sublime. End of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century were coincided with a wide variety of social, cultural and political metamorphoses which provoked and expanded a different understanding of sublime way beyond the tangible nature.

As postulated by Bloom (2010, p.5), “First and foremost, the sublime is a certain kind of linguistic event, a mode of discourse that breaks down the differences and involves a merger between speaker (or writer) and hearer (or reader)”. Sublime is considered as one of the most splendid qualities in literature. It deals with grandeur of a physical shape, thought, emotion as well as spirit. The contemporary definition of sublime is manifested in the form of linguistic excellence and phraseology; also it does provoke ecstasy. It is generally assumed that a piece of literature builds up quite a reputation for its literary devices, stylistic elements, diction, musicality, thought, etc., nevertheless, sublime, I suppose, acts as a driving force and impetus to picture the moral, emotional and imaginative aspects of a literary man’s work.

As a way of illustration, an ever-widening gap amongst social classes, the ostentatious facilities of the privileged families with mansions, lands and cultivated fields, early technological and philosophical advancements and finally increasingly

exacerbating political conditions awoke people and made them look around themselves with astonishment, reverence and apprehension once more, but this time quite differently which turned a new chapter as for the novel comprehension of sublime. Then again, Vallins (2003, p.7) argues that “as Coleridge himself puts it in a comparison of the beautiful and sublime, No object of Sense is sublime in itself; but only as far as I make it a symbol of some idea”. Then again, for Romantics, solely a prodigious mentality is capable of generating sublime and it can entice brilliant deliberation; it has the power to brighten every single entity just the way fire bolt does. Moreover, it occurs quite instantly and demonstrates the individual’s total power in that particular instant. Romantic poets also hold that sublime is a learnable concept, that is to say it has nothing to do with intrinsic traits of man. Additionally, they state that pure and genuine sublimity neglects its interlocutors’ interests, lifestyle, attitudes and dialect; instead, it does inspire them to be overcome by happiness and fascination.

Likewise, Stokes (2011, p. 144) suggests that “the sublime is the point when a form (in some cases, like the metaphysical lyrics, the world itself) can no longer be perceived with gradation, part, whole and distinction, but only as boundlessness and all-ness”. For Romantic writers, sublime is such a strong stimulus that can raise human spirit, levitate his thoughts and moderate his strong desires. On the other hand, sublimity can lend to using appropriate poetic terms, literary devices, decoration of style of speech and even glamorizing syntactic texture. With the arrival of the 19th century and rather to the end of the Romantic period, sublime roughly became people’s everyday issue. Back then, art was on the verge of flourishing whose nobleness was not assessable and in some sense, it turned into something daunting which appealed to the public because up until then, people’s lifestyle was of a routine and monotonous trend of the same old the some old; however, with the advent of revolutions that went above, the concept of sublimity was coined and emerged which later became a fundamental and principal term employed by the Romantics.

In summary, as reported by Frey (2010, p. 136), “in rewriting the Romantic Sublime, Austen replaces the vision that the Romantics usually accord to imagination with tenderness”. What is more, the driving force behind sublime was a particular type of force that could be reinforced by imagination. This imagination is not supposed to

create only positive feelings like pleasure, excitement, expansion of supreme human emotions, etc., but it also has the power to generate adverse feelings such as horror, bad dream or experience, disgust, and so on. Besides, Edmond Burke as well elaborated on sublime spelling it out as a peculiar sense merged with amazement and dismay which will be discussed in the following. With respect to beauty, Silverman & Aylesworth (1990, p. 112) maintain that “The beautiful achieves a conformity to the law of the judgment in its freedom in the regular and well-proportioned play of the faculties of imagination and understanding, whereas the sublime achieves it in the relation between imagination and reason”. It is said that the Romantic definition of art is of two major qualities: beautiful and the sublime. As for beautiful, there are a wide range of views as to what makes something beautiful. Many of these traditions converge on the idea of beauty as a positive or pleasurable thing. Hedonists, for example, might contend that various entities and phenomena become stunning because they delight or please people.

Taking a conventional understanding of beauty into account, one may declare that an object can be called charming due to its accurate and consistent array of constituent components. A case in point could be a dulcet tune which has the potential to create joy and bliss because of its harmony. In other words, the parts are arranged in such a way that they are sound or proper into a whole. In addition, still others equate beauty to love, but generally the commonality between these conceptions could be the fact that beauty is of an affirmative essence no matter via delight or its interconnection with passion. Some people claim that it is through unity. Nevertheless, there are some conceptions that attribute beauty to something other than these. But this is kind of a general and more common view. Regarding sublime, on the other hand, just as there are cornucopias of views as to what beauty is, conceptions of the sublime are quite varied as well. Unlike the beautiful which is merely positive and pleasurable, the sublime is not only an intermixture of good or pleasing, but of bad or menacing. I will examine various views on this as the argument goes further.

3.2 Emanuel Kant and Edmond Burke on the Beautiful and Sublime

Shelleyan sublime is intermingled with what Emanuel Kant and Edmund Burke had already talked about sublime. These two thinkers left a major impact on Shelley’s understanding of sublime. Ferguson argues that “Burke and Kant are virtually the

exclusive exemplars of eighteenth century and Romantic discussion of the philosophical issues”²⁰. In order for the readers to figure out sublime in Shelley, suffice it to study two of his canonical works namely *Mont Blanc* and *Cenci*. In the former, Shelley presents a conventionally Romantic and nature-based argument of sublime; nonetheless, in the latter, we come across an awfully grotesque illustration of sublime which later mostly becomes his dominant understanding of it. By providing numerous examples from his poems, both sides of Shelleyan sublime will be inquired into via turning to the resemblances and differences of his sublime and that of Kant and Burke.

In the first place, the question we might want to ask with regard to aesthetic judgement is ‘what exactly is it that makes up these aesthetic judgements?’ Obviously they are concept less; they don’t have to do with any particular thing we’re thinking about, but clearly they exist where some kind of inconstant thinking is going on. However, another question that arises here is, ‘what is this kind of inconstant thinking?’ When we make an aesthetic judgement we come to kind of realize this aesthetic sensibility in a work of art or in some aspect of nature; nevertheless, again we encounter the question of ‘what is it that we’re recognizing?’ Kant points out two basic parts of our aesthetic judgements. There are actually more than this in the entire critique of judgement when he talks about this, but there are two that are going to concern my discussion here in particular: the beautiful and the sublime.

Quoting from Kant on the beauty, Hoffman & Whyte (2011, p. 5) explain that “the beautiful in nature has to do with the form of the object, which consists in the boundary. The Sublime, on the other hand, is to be found in a formless object, insofar as in it or by occasion of it boundlessness is represented, and yet its totality is also present to thought” As examples for Kant’s concept of beautiful, we can say that seeing sunset, hearing a symphony or smelling some sort of delightful scent coming from flowers or meal. We have these particular senses fit together to awaken our imagination which is the building block of happiness, amazement and extraordinary

²⁰Frances Ferguson, *Solitude and the sublime Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individualism*, (New York: Routledge, 1992).

feelings that culminate in the formation of beautiful; whether it is a beautiful scent, a beautiful sight, a beautiful sound or a beautiful thought or whatever it is, is constrained. Moreover, it possesses a particular nature, identity as well as a deep-rooted virtue.

Besides, this matter becomes focal for it is its own special way of being in the world. This is what is meant by the beautiful for Kant. Beauty is only one dimension of this aesthetic: What's expressed or what's contained within aesthetic judgement and artistic work; in addition, there is another feature I guess of aesthetic judgement that comes out that is just as moving in some ways even more moving and bears an odd strength which the beautiful lacks. Nonetheless, it has definite and specific traits that make it be kept in the mind. This characteristic is what Kant calls the sublime. For Kant, sublime also meant wisdom outweighs the imagination, which is contrary to what Shelley conceived of sublime for whom imagination takes an upper hand over reason. Kant's categorization of sublime was a dichotomy of computative and productive. According to computative sublime, wisdom is by far stronger than imagination in terms of boundlessness. Furthermore, Kant elucidates his point asserting that imagination deals with tangible and terminable entities which are also concerned with experimental and numerical information we have picked up. However, our reason and ability to use mathematics allow us to conceive of the entirety of complete things of infinities; in fact, that feeling or impression of something that is infinite which we cannot imagine, but we can reason about or do logic or math about, is the feeling of the mathematical sublime.

The dynamic or productive sublime, on the other hand, is coordinated with Burke's understanding of sublime. That is to say wisdom bears this power to triumph over dread and fright which come up as a result of witnessing a threatening situation or scene like stormy weather, rocky height, etc., but it does not enforce any peril. They're often very large, very powerful or dangerous things but items which don't hold out any risk, for example, while we are sitting inside our house nice and safe and we see this massive stormy weather. It's something that if we were out in the middle of a field, we might be afraid of it, but because we are safe, we have this feeling of sublime. what Shelley means by sublime is once an individual initiates to ponder upon natural scenery, not only do his self-knowledge and comprehension augment, but also his awareness of the universe in which he lives will increase. It

goes without saying that Shelley's perception of sublime was unquestionably morose since he portrays macrocosm just like a vigorous and unyielding external force that mocks human's debility and desperation before it. For Shelley, sublime sentiment is too intricate to be put into words as it exceeds wisdom. Besides, he states that only a particular type of imagination which is held by awareness and strong emotions can lead to the establishment of sublime which is a pretty instantaneous, complicated and multifaceted sense. Nonetheless, Wordsworthian sublime is only found in poetry not in prose as in *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, he prioritizes verse declaring that 'the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once'²¹.

Additionally, if we were dangling off the precipice, we would definitely have a feeling of fear, but because we can look at it from afar or look out over it, such a feeling does not strike us, rather, we have the feeling of sublime. In particular, in *Critique of Judgement*, Kant refers to sublime as an indispensable and inseparable feature of human mind; plus, he furthers that organic entities have been manifested subjectively by sublime namely it discloses the summit of the entity which has altered. In the meantime, Brady (2013, p. 85) argues, "In sublime experience, we resist the powers of internal and external nature and have an awareness of the capacities morality requires of us. But with both the beautiful and the sublime the most we can say is that they prepare us for moral experience, not that sublime feeling is identified with or assimilated to moral feeling". In reality, the sublime, a word that doesn't get used nearly so much and when it does, it gets used in a lot of different ways. So it's not always easy to track exactly what it means but with Kant thankfully it is virtually facile to make a candid difference between the beautiful and sublime. To clarify, once Kant puts forward the idea of sublime, what can be realized is something which brings about horror, a state of surprise, veneration, bewilderment, not beauty, not the sort of inherent dignity in which the senses somehow play upon one another, work on each other and have a new idea emerge from it; rather there's a feeling of infinity aroused. In plain English, this mental and emotional state surpasses the boundaries of our imagination. In this respect, it is noteworthy that Kant and Shelley are like-minded.

²¹William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads And The Miscellaneous Pieces Of The Author, With Additional Poems, New Preface, And A Supplementary Essay*, Vol. II, Paternoster-Row, London, 1815: 389

By the same token, Shelley sheds light on a murky sublime. His description of it derives from horror and dread. Shelleyan sublime hints at a sort of frailty to avoid that sense of uneasiness and despair as his sublime is living deep down human mind. A case in point is the following verses from *Cenci*:

“Might I not drag her by the golden hair?

Stamp on her? Keep her sleepless till her brain

Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine?

Less would suffice” (IV. I: 6-9)

This horrifying sublime atmosphere can be explicitly felt in Cenci's remarks. He so barbarically seeks to force torture and misery upon his daughter, Beatrice. It is such a horrendous scene that the reader would get mad and terrified at how a father and by extension, a human, can be so cruel and evil-natured that for raping his flesh and blood, he resorts to drastically violent acts. The poet expertly dramatizes a sublime setting here once he refers to the degree of Cenci's savagery towards his daughter. Cenci's atrocious behavior and revengeful intention adds oil to the fuel of drama's sublimity. In order to domesticate and enslave Beatrice, he does everything in his power such as pulling her beautiful blond hair by force, stepping brutally on her body, taking sleep away from her just like a torturer to make her dreadfully run-down and even by keeping her hungry or tying her up like prisoners. Then he realizes that Beatrice would not be strong enough to bear all these torments; thus, he says a little bit of it will be adequate to bring her to heel. From what went above, it can be deduced that Shelleyan sublime, for the most part, incorporates dread, horror and intimidation.

Elsewhere, emphatically Shelley once again designs another sublime scene of Cenci's bestial and bloodthirsty demeanor; but this time, he directs at his sons:

“God!

I think thee! In one night didst thou perform,

By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.

My disobedient and rebellious sons

Are dead! (I. iii: 40-44)

Here, Cenci throws a banquet and celebration for his acquaintances. Quite shockingly he, right before his relatives' eyes, expresses gratitude to God for causing his sons to die because it was something he had been looking for doing, "*the thing I sought*". This is a horribly breathtaking thanks-prayer of a father. His diehard and maniacal beliefs even cross the limits of traditional masculinity and make him think that God took his side to such an extent that whatever he wishes, God will make come true. He feels so glad that God, in a mysterious way, took away his children's lives simply because they were defiant and unmanageable. It can be seen over and over how Shelley reflects his peculiar definition of sublime which is associated with an overwhelmingly alarming and menacing air. In fact, in these lines, Shelley supplies the readers with a superb view which agonizingly plays with their feelings and even devastates their mind.

On the other hand, I suppose here Shelley aims to kill two birds with one shot. First, he pictures a wrathful and revengeful God as an abstract sinister being that can easily be manipulated by individuals for their own vicious intentions and goals. Second, almost nowhere in this drama and on a larger scale, in his other similar works, do we see Shelleyan God serving for the prosperity of humanity. In other words, this representation of God by Shelley goes in harmony with his expression of sublimity, that is, an abrupt strike of intense fright and awe in the reader or beholder. Aesthetically speaking, beauty for Kant is restricted, however, sublime is endless and immeasurable. Here one might ask 'what is it that the sublime does in aesthetic judgement'? As a matter of fact, it keeps us real and makes us aware of ourselves. Furthermore, sublime's privilege is that it provides the spectators with a genuine knowledge of oneself when they come across dread, astonishment and trepidation. It also supplies them with whatever aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgement present us. Moreover, as stated in Librett (1993, p. 149), "the sublime is the feeling of the infinite. Nature is thus sublime in those of its phenomena the intuition of which arouses the Idea of its infinity" (149). Accordingly, sublime is a very important tool for artists and also for aesthetic judgements in general because if everything was about beauty, then obviously things would be in one way or another restricted. We might surprise ourselves, we are not supposed to lie to ourselves by these perpetual experiences of the beautiful; nonetheless, we also wouldn't fully be

ourselves because part of the way in which aesthetic judgements become important, I suppose, is that they remind us, instruct us and help us be more of what we are.

Following Morse (1982, p. 67), “the sublime presents itself as a reminder of the possibility of freedom”. Indisputably, humans are confined and are of qualities such as eminence, restriction and ambition. They also have advantages, disadvantages and failures considering the different aspects of their individuality; plus, nature and the sublime give us a mirror of the infinite and emancipation. It is a concept to begin and reconsider every animate and inanimate being around us. One other point I want to bring up here is the way in which the sublime and the beautiful are included into the works of art and how Kant understands this when he talks about art. Indeed, Kant, in my view, is a decent theorist of art. Nevertheless, there are those who consider art in craftsmanship like in watercolor, drawing, harmonized melodies, compositions, technological designs, etc. Noticeably, the way art is interpreted varies from one person to another. However, what Kant wants to say is that there is a particular kind of art which he differentiates from the other typical artistic works that are created simply for the purpose of being carried out. Kant’s definition of art is closely intermingled with internal worth and nobility. He argues that art has no specific purpose and that is what makes art, art.

In the end, Kant asserts that a true work of art has the potential to be ubiquitous, dynamic and different from before. A case in point is the books we read. They have this quality of change; not just as we undergo transformation, but they seem to change almost themselves the way a person does with the ability for engendering a picture perfect piece of work with internal nobility and value which obviously reveals the objective behind producing it though it never gets impeccable. Finally, these are the criteria based upon which Kant expresses his exclusive understanding of art.

Burke thought that sublime experiences could be rather wonderful, and quite important, too. In his masterpiece work, “*A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*”, he developed and elaborated on the notion of sublime. Burke defined sublime as that which excites sensations of terror, the most powerful of our emotions; he also pointed out that sublime nature is best enjoyed at a distance perfect for painting. Kuhn (2009, p. 72) furthers that “I may be forgiven my desire for that sublime tranquility which surrounds us when we stand in the solitude

and silence of nature, vast and eloquent with its still voice". More specifically, Burke finds sublime interesting simply because it provokes a sense of unimportance and repose in us. For him, once human feels humiliated and serene before the nature, s/he takes great pleasure and this is what he names sublime which was quite a novel concept at his time prior to which no philosopher had ever explicitly put forth. Edmund Burke conceived the sublime as something which inspires fright, but along with joy, and this dread is not indicative of any peril or damage to the viewer. One of his key examples is storms, the vast dark skies are oppressive, the wind is horribly powerful, large trees are overturned. Having faced them, the onlooker comes to a sense of triviality.

To illustrate, even when we see a picture of a barren desert, it gives us a sense of sublime because we are a little bit afraid of it as it inspires the sphere of kind of awe of there's no water to be seen and if we were there, we might die. However, its sublime is not just because of that fear, but since we see the picture and realize with that feeling of pleasure returning that we're not actually in that desert and there is nothing to be scared of. To put it more transparently, sublime is interwoven with a sense of diminutiveness. It makes us be lowered to an inferior position associated with realizing the infinite power of the Almighty Creator or Mother Nature. Plus, I should point out that Shelleyan sublime deals with the force of nature not God that is perhaps the best way of thinking of it. So, we find many nature symbols like cliff, tall trees, singing birds, etc. which in turn are closely linked with sublime imagery such as actions occurring in the untamed quarters of the earth and individuals getting astray in the wilderness. As shown above, there are these strange high places, these exotic wild waste places in nature, but perhaps those can be in some way explored.

In the same fashion, Burke holds that feeling minor before the insurmountable force of the nature can compel several decent aspects to be revealed in one's personality. For instance, if one is rather more conceited, s/he will be turned into a more modest and patient person. Equally important, Burke states that sublime is a psychological maneuver that can provide us with merits like when we have a sort of disproportionate leaning towards something special or once we get stuck in the thorny conditions of life. Sublime landscape has this in common with Gothic territory that it gives us the free sort of danger without the risk.

Moreover, Burke (1909-1914, p.122) contends that “a mode of terror or pain is always the cause of the sublime”. Burke was a materialist as he struggled to hunt for and determine palpable roots of human feelings and speculations. For Burke, primarily sublime springs from agony that is manifested in the form of scare or dread. In addition, he states that the philosophy of human creation is composed of two major elements: agony and delight. Indeed, Burke doesn’t regard agony as an adverse constituent, but a pleasant one which results in a state of self-protection. In contrast, the criterion of an entity or mood to be called sublime in a transcendental or divine sense is not to be necessarily unfavorable or affirmative, but rather it should bring about a sense of inability or littleness. Shaw (2005, p. 71) points out that “the Burkean sublime with its emphasis on the psychological effects of terror, proved decisive in shifting the discourse of the sublime away from the study of natural objects and towards the mind of the spectator”. It should also be noted that other than Burke, thinkers such as Kant, Herbert, Goethe and Herder also made a large contribution to a diverse and better understanding of sublime and its connection with other forms of art which later on Romantics employed and furthered it. As for beauty, Burke asserts that it is a characteristic which galvanizes a sense of affection. His rendering of beauty is in contrast with that of Aristotle’s who considers beauty to be minute and flowing and that which undergoes imperceptible transformation as well as that which is subtle and includes shine and luster.

As mentioned earlier, Burke scrutinized the material origins of feelings. According to him, human reaction towards sublime and beauty is of a concrete basis. To demystify, for Burke, human physique can reach a state of tranquility and affection upon being exposed to a gorgeous entity or scene. Notwithstanding once the mortal part is subjected to a sublime landscape or object, not only does it give rise to a sense of fright, but also it causes the physique to be under pressure. Accordingly, material entities are of a double function: they can both stir up sensations and bring forth palpable reactions to them. Another point to be taken into consideration concerning Burke is his attention to phraseology. He contends that since utterances yield thoughts in the mind of acceptor, they are capable of inducing sentimental reactions. He furthers that the minority of utterances designate tangible entities while the majority of them speak for simply conceptual thoughts. Moreover, Burke’s work on the sublime and beautiful paved the way for and justified the watchfulness of

incongruous and flamboyant design of buildings as well as the massive barrens and wasteland of namely Gothic genre. Another point highlighted by Burke on the subject of sublime goes with ambiguity. Burke makes his point strongly that ambiguity plays a primary role in causing entities to be dreadful and since sublime basically roots in dreadful things, in that event, vagueness can come out with sublime. Regarding the binary opposites, ambiguity and transparency, Burke draws his readers' attention more to vagueness. As can be inferred from him, hazy speculation carries more sentimental aftermath compared to that of transparent one.

Notably, Rousseau (2007, p.174) points to sublime's deep effects on the human psyche, "Why does the sublime produce such a great effect? It is because this simplicity in great things makes one assume that they are familiar to the one who is speaking, and that they have nothing extraordinary for him". For the most part, this is due to the fact that half or little knowledge incites human appreciation and mostly accelerates the outbreak of joy. We should keep in mind that awareness and familiarity as well arouse sentimental outcome, but it is less than half-knowledge. In a word, charisma and transparency don't impress the mind as much as ambiguity and peril do. Furthermore, Burke puts forward the concept of ability which can originate from either agony or delight. Nevertheless, the severity of agony is by far more powerful than the amount of delight.

The notion of agony is ever more highly rampant and stronger. To put it differently, in order for one to be cheerful, she does not have to be powerful or make a lot of attempt, but that is not the case when we get involved in dread. In other words, agony is imposed on people, however, delight is something that we need to grab and not let it go. To be delighted, we don't need to be powerful, but for getting away from agony, we must be equipped with a considerable amount of power. In truth, the ability Burke discusses here gives rise to the formation of sublime which emanates from agony, rage and consternation of which this power is the underpinning; and of course imagination unquestionably lays the foundation for generating such strength. Coupled with Burke, Kant broadened more the concept of sentimental reactions in the study of beauty. As I will be exploring in the following, sublime appealed to the Romantics; thus, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron were essentially preoccupied with sublime. Moreover, another key point that must be remembered is inasmuch as medieval literature and Gothic design of buildings as well as genre are

concerned, they entailed a large number of elements including intense fear, dismay, intimidation, nothingness, etc. It can be presumably concluded that they made a remarkable contribution to the up growth of sublime immensely utilized by the Romantic poets.

Romantics also explore the existential meanings of the sublime. Slocombe (2005, p.47) suggests that “the nothingness at the core of Being explains the relation between the Romantic Sublime (in its various forms) and nihilism, and why certain critics have observed nihilistic elements in Romantic Poetry”. To put it another way, sublime landscape has aspects in common with nihilism that it gives us the free sort of danger and pettiness without the risk. There is a commonality between sublime and nihilism; both are related to getting upset and a little frightened associated with a sense of worthlessness. Overall, the notion of sublime goes beyond landscape. It signifies a particular feeling of nature being stronger than human. For instance, the very key point in Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* is qualms, disbelief and fear upon facing the view of the mountain that brings everyone back to limitations mankind has within himself which serves to lower and frighten him before the might of the natural environment.

Moreover, this force of cosmos and the feeling of fear were used and fostered by Romantic writers which, in some sense, provides humans with a place in the cosmos while simultaneously calling to the mind that man is capable of overstepping his worldly status. Describing what precisely sublime is would be baffling. In reality, it drives from that which comes into our mind all of a sudden. At times, it refers to an entity which permeates in during the time another mechanism fairly is going on. Nevertheless, the way sublime was figured out at the end of 18th century was relatively different. The best way to explain what sublime meant then was unfolded by Edmond Burke. He digs into sublime in regard to knowledge we gain such as while one is staring at and startled by a massive natural landscape such as a gigantic torrent or deluge.

3.3 Sources of Sublime, Moral Knowledge and Poetic Inspiration in Shelley

The turn of the 19th century is also a time when we start to see the development of lots of reading groups and communities. These groups were slowly beginning to

organize (certainly well-organized) in England and in other areas like in North America. The language here is very simple and direct, some interesting images and associations. There is a long tradition that says: poets write back to great poets and doing so in a way that venerates them, highlights what for the author is significant about the poet who has passed away. In the following, I will be elaborating on these Wordsworthian influences and inspirations on Shelley by providing appropriate discussions and reasons as well as relevant examples. I assume that Shelley's description of sublime primarily springs from Wordsworth's depiction of nature. Prior to Shelley, Wordsworth had speculated on and realized the individuals' enthrallment by the dynamism and marveling of natural environment. Nevertheless, the way Shelley presents nature in his poetry is more untamed and pitiless compared to that of Wordsworth. As a way of illustration, in *Mont Blanc*, Shelley says:

*"Dizzy Ravine! And when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings"* (34-38)

Both *Mont Blanc* and *Tintern Abbey* talk about the reciprocation of man and natural environment and its importance which is what sublime is about. As for *Mont Blanc*, Shelley projects forward a sublime setting in which he has been fascinated by the titanic marveling of nature. The height of the mountain, its cliffs and majesty give a whirling sensation to the speaker. Its physical grandeur captivates human mind and attention. For the poet, just a discerning eye can get to know the sublimity of nature. The reason why the speaker employs nature elements is their perpetuity and staying power. Shelley assigns an inferior position to man and life since they are short-lived, but nature is everlasting.

Whereas in *Tintern Abbey*²², Wordsworth puts, "*Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her*" (122-123). Here we witness that nature has been portrayed as a docile and caring potential that enlightens, alleviates as well as cares about folks. Nonetheless, by applying "*Dizzy Ravine*", Shelley stresses its majesty leaving him in

²²M. H. Abrams, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 5th edn, 1987: 1377-1378

a kind of hypnotic and half-conscious state. Moreover, he demonstrates nature in a manner that as if its grandeur is out of the range of the power and understanding of humans. In *Tintern Abbey*, on the contrary, that is not the case for Wordsworth when he says:

*"....; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being." (108-112)*

For Wordsworth, nature welcomes anyone who is found of knowing and being familiar with it. He portrays nature as a being which can be perceived by human language, i.e., poetry; as well as, human is able to discover it through physical senses. The poet holds nature in highest esteem from which flawless and genuine rumination emerges. According to the speaker, nature acts as a caretaker, counselor, and the protector of human existence be it his body or soul. At the end, Wordsworth calls nature the axis of righteousness and virtue.

Nature's sublimity has been frequently demonstrated in Shelley's *Mont Blanc*, as in the lines below:

*"Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
Its destin'd path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and Shatter'd stand: the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaim'd" (107-114)*

Here, Shelley describes how dreadfully the melted snow in the form of flood is streaming down the mountain as if something horrendous is falling down from sky. It is such a swift river that doesn't stop and keeps moving ahead. Then he refers to

another sublime feature: stretched-out vegetation with enormous trees situated at the foot of the mountain which the flood of the water has to go through. The poet also depicts a deformed area where trees are scattered around and “the rocks” have been dispersed every which way. The scenery sounds like an utterly disorganized place that can by no means be brought into usable condition. As a whole, Shelley’s description of Mont Blanc is somewhat terrifying and lugubrious. In agreement with the above verses, river functions as both a marvelous and destructive mechanism. On the one hand, it serves as a vehement strength which no human is capable of possessing. On the other, it is the source of refinement, acknowledgement and artistic taste. Therefore, Shelley’s holistic description of nature is tied with raising the value of inaccessible integration of vigor and elegance. He recommends people not to equalize physical attractiveness with serenity. However, when it comes to Wordsworth’s *Tintern Abbey*, nature is pictured as a source of comfort which does not bear any vicious features. I should also mention that both Shelley and Wordsworth view natural cosmos as an eminent and immortal being. Unlike Shelley, Wordsworth appears to be looking at magnificent nature through his rose-colored spectacles as in:

“And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts: a sense of sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man” (94-100)

By “presence”, Wordsworth means the overwhelming force of nature which despite Shelley, surrounds him with a strong sense of pleasure. It also provides the poet with an odd heavenly feeling that raises his spirits and speculation. He calls it sublime that is intensely interwoven in him. This sublime sensation is such a fabulous feeling whose existence and power make the sun set, create oceans and generate the fresh air. Wordsworth goes on saying that this “presence” has kept “the blue sky” over us. Finally, the poet concludes that the word “something” is an unparalleled power lies only in human mind. Comparatively, once again, it can be inferred that unlike

Shelley who places nature over man, Wordsworth glorifies and celebrates the faculty of human mind which is in control of nature. Wordsworth's attitude as to the universe is not an externally weird impetus that mankind has to make a stand against, but natural setting is a pacifying existence which every individual forms a piece of.

To elucidate, Wordsworth's poetry is almost all about nature in sublime terms. In *Tintern Abbey*, he emphasizes the stunning faces of nature and enthusiastically begs for reverting to it as something absolutely illuminative and pleasing. Furthermore, in another part of this book, he depicts a natural spot to which he has come back after quite a while that fills him with a sort of sublime placidity. Having revisited the place, he begins to contemplate on the effect of this place on him once he left there several years ago as well as its influence on him at the moment he's composing the poem. This physical attraction of the location arouses a sense of strong excitement leading to

"A motion and a spirit that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought

And rolls through all things." (102-104).

Wordsworth is still talking about that awe-inspiring "presence". He takes it as a dynamic force or energy and a metaphysical awareness as well as a sort of consolidated spirit in nature that drives ahead every conscious, animate, pensive and even inanimate being. This "presence" can also be interpreted as God who is in the center of believers' religious ideology. Wordsworth doesn't specify who or what this "presence" refers to which makes his readers be suspicious of his religious tendencies. However, Shelley refutes out loud the existence of God and regards nature as an alternative for him. Evidently, Wordsworth pictures a sublime feeling and experience here which later laid the foundation for a rather different realization of sublime by Shelley. Nonetheless, Wordsworthian sublime is a power that secures and leads human's incorruptible actuality in spite of Shelley's sublime whose frightening grandeur looks down on the man and instills a sense of worthlessness and dread in him which puts these two poets' attitudes against each other. On the other hand, in *Imitations Ode*, Wordsworth paints a very intimidating picture of nature instigating consternation and tepidity in the observer. I presume that this harsh interpretation of sublime nature both influenced Shelley and was utilized by him. To

figure this out, in *Imitations Ode*, let's take the following verses into consideration which first display natural universe as the source of grace and virtue once the poet was a young boy; nevertheless, it began to provoke peril and horror when he grew older:

"The things which [he had] seen [he could] see no more" (9).

Elsewhere, he also states,

"While the birds thus sing a joyous song

And while the young lambs bound" (19-20)

Considering these lines, Wordsworth expresses a sense of lamenting that good old days are gone. When they were closely connected to nature, they were way more delightful than now that they have been drifted away from nature. Last but not least, no matter how Wordsworth represents natural creation, if it is demonstrated in angelic or sublime terms as in *Tintern Abbey* and *Imitations Ode*, it will one way or another influence human beings in a wide variety of impressive ways. Essentially, Vermeulen (2010, p. 86) admires Wordsworth remarking that "Wordsworth's poetry gives a determinate shape to, and thereby affirms, a mere potentiality". Significantly, in *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth demonstrates the way natural landscapes can arouse sublime feelings in human through uprising and intensifying their brainwork and sensations which itself inflames imagination. According to White (2013, p. 121), "Wordsworth insisted that poetry must involve some kind of spiritual transcendence". In fact, Wordsworth revitalizes his readers' mind and imaginative faculties by drawing their attention to natural surrounding elements so as to cause them to delve into their mind, build up awareness and reawaken desires way back then for mitigating these emotions at this moment. Moreover, he tries to connect the majesty of sublime to the notion of transcendental.

Furthermore, Wordsworth asserts that sublime cannot be perceived unless one steps in and touches the nature. By the way, the nature he describes is not simply a bunch of flowers in gardens and suburban parks, but it is a place which instigates feelings of magnificence, apprehension and amazement just like when we confront Mount Everest, Grand Canyon, abysmal lowlands, steep rocks, etc., Wordsworth defines sublime as a sense of both dread and stupefaction at the same time. As a leading critic of Shelley, Travers (2001, p. 7) thinks that "Shelley granted the imagination the

capacity to broaden the moral sympathies of mankind". However, Wordsworth's perception of imagination was a bit at odds. To him, universe can by no means be admirable, beautiful and perceivable if one does not apply imagination; so he fell back on poetry to actualize it. For instance, he creates a fantasy world where a night is shattered through a seductive amour of a fairy. She is abandoned in a terra firma in which flowers and plants got faded away, rivers dried and birds stopped singing. Such an outlook accounts for how strong imagination can be utilized to transform a range of various sentiments to a totally different and separate sphere and at the same time become a tangible force.

As well as, Crouter (2005, p. 182) adds, "The lesson to be learned in taking a closer look at the Romantics is that they are by no means all alike". In addition, imagination is the vessel Romantics made use of in order to release the most profound senses, mentally dynamic states and tenderness. Furthermore, it pumps via their minds just like blood pumping through their bodies and bleeding out like ink on the paper. Indeed, the Romantic poets' use of imagination in literature allowed and prepared the ground for scrutiny into the internal world of theirs. Additionally, it turned into a witness showing the capability of one's discernment so that it culminated in the formation of a literary school namely Romanticism in the 19th century as to enabling human being as well as framing an epoch of self-observation or contemplation. Furthermore, Snell (2013, p. 130) upgrades imagination by proposing that "the exercise of imagination could lead to a heightened awareness of man's irredeemable nature". As a matter of fact, the endless force of imagination to form, change and generate, inflamed Wordsworth when he called poetry as "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' which made poets conceive the relationship between the heart and the mind. It also removed the barrier of their way to see and experience the cosmos realistically and differently. Simply put, Wordsworth called it sublime.

For him, the grand seas, gentle breeze blowing in the nature, as well as naïve and unpretentious rural life, blended together in order to reduce the beholder's stillness, placidity, affection, trust and calmness. Milnes & Sinanan (2010, p.134) note that "As Perkin notes, much of the appeal of Wordsworth's poetry of sincerity lies in the trust it generates". In a word, Wordsworth's understanding and application of love is closely tied with a grandiose and idyllic meaning of it which is precisely what sublime implies. Therefore, no wonder then when Romantic poets like Shelley and

Wordsworth were highly impressed by splendid sceneries such as *Mont Blanc* and *Tintern Abbey* and put their sense of inspiration into words.

One of the most important things to remember is that writers are oftentimes not the best readers of their own. So we might read *Tintern Abbey* and we could have a number of reactions to it that are not anticipated certainly by *The Preface to Lyrical Ballads*. I also need to point out that these questions matter for a number of reasons in terms of how we read these poems; for example, we look at the description of that sublime experience that occurs about more than one third of *Tintern Abbey* where the poet starts to speak of this sense of the sphere that rolls through all things and out; also reaction to that can take a number of reforms we might call it an aesthetic reaction. Another compelling example showing Shelley's being affected by his posterior first generation Romantics goes with S.T Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* cited in Abrams (1987, pp. 1555-1556) in which we witness a sublime scene due to taking drug. This narcotic has generated such a vigorous imagination and hallucination out of which a sublime setting has emerged. To demystify, when Coleridge says:

"And all should cry, Beware! Beware!"

His flashing eyes, his floating hair!

Weave a circle round him thrice,

And close your eyes with holy dread

For he on honey-dew hath fed,

And drunk the milk of Paradise." (49-54)

He devises a fictional scene. Coleridge serves as an example for the question of spiritualism or the metaphysical. The agent of these verses is the captivated person who fails to keep on his life like an ordinary man once he saw the astonishing properties of this macrocosm in Xanadu that is regarded as a paradise for Coleridge. He seems to be speaking about an offbeat creature or being who is more terrifying than the land of Xanadu, Caves and high seas. By the word "Beware, Beware", and its repetition, Coleridge draws a conjuring scene which looks more like a spellbinding as a result of taking a sleep-inducing drug as though he is calling up a spirit to strike terror in others specially when he says "his flashing eyes" and "his floating hair".

In the next line, there is again a sense of fear that one must shut his eyes and pray not to see or feel that “dread”. By “weave a circle round him thrice”, the poet portrays an extremely horrible creature which must be avoided and one must watch over its harm. Due to his hallucinating mood, the poet doesn’t determine the identity of this bizarre being that has been fed by “honey-dew” and has “drunk the milk of paradise”. What is certain is this elegant description connotes the solid imagination of Coleridge which, in line with Shelley, presents the domineering strength and shadow of nature over the frailty of man. In another language, this unusual creature can represent the poet himself, the stentorian authority of his poetry or a real ghost whose spirit has been blown into Coleridge and speaks on his behalf in such a sublime fashion.

Additionally, in

“It was a miracle of rare device

“A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice” (35-36),

He epitomizes a supreme and dreamed-up place where Kubla Khan inhabits. Over again, we see Coleridge holds in respect the fascination of nature in this poem. Nevertheless, the noteworthy point regarding this poem is the way Coleridge portrays natural setting. He, just like Shelleyean sublime, opens to view a perilous and menacing face of natural environment. Here, Coleridge pictures an outlandish characteristic of Xanadu. He has a taste for displaying magnificent concepts before the eyes of human beings with the help of the natural scenery in a very exaggerating way. For instance, in the case of describing the “dome”, paradoxically, he applies “sunny” and “ice” jointly. This to me signals the fact that in Coleridge’s poetic philosophy, there is a harmony among all the elements of nature even between the opposite ones. Coleridge in his other poem, *The Nightingale*, suggests a notion similar to that of Shelley:

“Most musical, most melancholy bird!

A melancholy bird! Oh, idle thought!

In nature there is nothing melancholy.”(13-15)

In these lines, Coleridge ennoble the nature by exemplifying an element of it, bird. Again in a hyperbolic manner which gives it a sublime sense, the poet acclaims the

divine chant of the bird. Then he reproaches those who think the nightingale sings a gloomy song by calling their way of thinking abortive and worthless. Coleridge just like Shelley holds that mourning, pain and anguish have no room in nature as the nature is the cradle and manifestation of felicity, contentment, and jubilation.

Another case in point is *Ode to the West Wind* going as follows:

“Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below

The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear

The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear

And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!” (38-42)

Here, Shelley uplifts the power of the west wind giving it an unparalleled authority under whose control everything lies. The question that may arise here is: By the west wind, does the poet simply mean an ingredient of nature? Or does he imply a supernatural being with an exclusive power that can subdue and tame everything? In either way the answer be, Shelley obviously believes in a supernatural omnipotent presence against which nothing and no one can stand. It is such a power that upon hearing its voice, every single constituent of nature including the divided gigantic valleys, the plants at the very deep bottom of the seas, oceans and leaves of the forests abruptly get scared. Moreover, its splendor makes them shiver and devastate. This metaphysical force is in control of natural world and can change the cover and shape of the nature. The sublime in this poem lies in its emphasis on the puissance and greatness of the “West Wind” causing the other natural elements “*grow grey with fear*” as soon as it starts blowing. Once again, human’s infirmity before the inevitable and unstoppable force of the nature is displayed. Analogously, the same theme of sublime can be found in “*Ozymandias*” (Abrams et al. 1987, p. 1746):

“Nothing beside remains: round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,

The lone and level sands stretch far away.” (12-14)

Similarly, here a tremendous and perpetual function is assigned to the natural world which can uproot and eradicate the pillars of culture and societal foundations. Over

and over, Shelley projects forward the eternity and extraordinary mastery of the nature; evidently, the nothingness and transient existence of human against the nature get highlighted. It seems as if there is no escape hatch for human's innate deficiency once he encounters the force of the universe. In plain English, once more nature imposes its undeniable and unrivalled force on human and shows that it possesses the potential to eradicate all nations and cultures by its power. Actually again we can clearly realize that Shelley underscores the inability and mortality of human once s/he confronts this megacosm. Shelley holds that the intensity of sublime directly arises from the magnitude of imagination. In *Ode to the West Wind*, Shelley's perception of sublime is closely associated with the wind's force of alteration. As a way of illustration, Shelley longs for the wind to spread his poem all over the world the way it throws around the leaves in the forests. In fact, Shelley likens this ability of the wind, which moves the lifeless leaves, to a revitalizer which can enliven his poetry:

"Drive my dead thoughts over the universe

Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!

And, by the incantation of this verse," (63-65)

Shelley believes that his poetry is of such a telling and striking competence which can "drive the dead thoughts" like "withered leaves" all over the world so as to "quicken a new birth" that symbolizes how winter ends and spring arrives. This change in nature is itself figuratively indicative of renewal and revitalization of mankind, cognizance, freedom, imaginative faculty as well as virtue. For Shelley, only poetry is able to bring about such a transformation and rejuvenation. Indeed, the poet expressly couples the power of his poetic art with the sublimity of nature. These lines account for the poet's profound inspiration from nature along with a robust imagination that has been embodied in various elements of nature.

In other words, metaphorically speaking, he has a passion for the "West Wind" to propagate his message, viewpoints and understanding in the universe. Also, I assume that Shelley wants to be a potential for transformation the same as the wind is:

"Be thou, Spirit fierce,

My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one" (61-62)

Having been inspired by the wind as an element of nature, Shelley assigns such a sublime force to his poetry as equilibrium between the external natural environment and internal realm of his. Needless to say that this is a common inclination in almost all Romantics. As stated in Shelley, the West Wind heralds fall, but as it goes to the final verses of his poem, we feel a sense of spring which is to say, he establishes a parallel between the rebirth of fall by coming spring and rejuvenation of his poem at the end. This can also be metaphorically interpreted as an upheaval that is expected of his society, to be precise. Hence, reiteratively we come across another manifestation of sublime in Shelley's poetry. On the other hand, in *Mont Blanc*, Shelley addresses the nature element rather than human; that is to say he somehow holds nature superior to men; while Wordsworth underscores man via talking to his sister. To put it differently, much of Wordsworth's poetry highlights human's reciprocal relationship with nature, but when it comes to Shelley, simply nature regardless of man's role in it is in the spotlight. The following verses of *Mont Blanc* elucidate this claim:

"Thus then, Ravine of Arve – dark, deep Ravine –

Thou many – color'd, many-voiced vale,

Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail

Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene" (12-15)

Shelley here expresses his strong interest in nature by referring to "Ravine of Arve" which includes a sublime and "awful"- meaning full of awe and inspiration not its modern negative connotation- scene because it is incredibly "dark" and "deep". The poet addresses the abyss through pointing to its grotesque coloration and widening gap in which the voice can be wonderfully reverberated. The speaker is still captivated by the height of canyon with its tall trees, rocks, and caves on which there is an exotic landscape of "sunbeams" and "cloud-shadows" appearing and disappearing. He calls this view awe-inspiring and stunning. Actually, Shelley's explanation of natural setting is superb and rigorous. It is such a dynamic power that human is not able to subdue it. Despite the fact that Shelley acknowledges the generous glory of nature, he does not believe that glamor and serenity are the same. In contrast, for Wordsworth, they are corresponding parts of an entirety which is called nature. What is more, another instance confirming Shelley being influenced by

Wordsworth is the title and content of the poem “to a skylark” which is an imitation of Wordsworth’s “To the skylark”. To explain, for the two poets, the skylark represents divine and otherworldly affairs. This bird reminds Wordsworth of “*ethereal minstrel! Pilgrim of the sky*”²³(1), but for Shelley, it pictures “*Hail to thee, blithe Spirit*”(1). Moreover, the bird for these poets is like a creature, unlike human, that is totally away from and unable to perceive grief, distress and agony. Let’s take the following verse into account:

“*Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?*”(2)

Here, Wordsworth questions the bird whether it dislikes this world that is replete with woe and remorse. Afterwards, he characterizes the skylark as a bird capable of moving back and flying down to the perch tranquilly as well as levelheaded as in:

“*Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,*

Those quivering wings composed that music still!” (5-6).

Likewise, Shelley also seems to understand and feel every song of the bird. He concludes that such a matchless sound does simply stem from a prudent and contented soul. In the last verse, “*or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?*” (85), Shelley asks the bird to instill in him the knowledge of vivacity and cheerfulness. In the case of dissimilarity between Wordsworth’s poem and Shelley’s, I should point out that in the former, the poet regards the bird as a permanently visible entity whose existence is exalted by the sun. Indeed, Wordsworth sets the bird against nightingale that all the time remains unseen in the gloomy forest as in: “*A Privacy of glorious light is thine*” (8). Unorthodoxly, in the latter, for Shelley, the bird symbolizes unseen charm and fairness just

“*Like a high-born maiden*

In a palace-tower” (41-42) or “*like a glow-worm golden*” (46) reflecting dazzling brightness which is not visible for everyone since it’s concealed in the garden. In a word, the bird’s comely and musical harmony can be attended to by Shelley though he can’t view the skylark rising up in the heavens just in the same manner as Wordsworth does. Broadly speaking, Shelley has a special interest in spreading his

²³enotes, What is the meaning of phrase “ethereal minstrel” in “To a Skylark” by Wordsworth, UK, viewed 24 August 2018, <<https://www.Enotes.com/homework-help/meaning-words-ethereal-ministrel-268591>>

views all around the world just like the river streaming ahead by likening the stream of river to his mental and intellectual blossoming, a sublime simile indeed, as in :

*“To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness ...”* (36-42)

Regarding the above, Shelleyan sublime is a particular state occurring not just internally but externally as well. It functions instantaneously dragging the observer or human to the weird and remote areas of mind and universe as in “wild thoughts” and “wandering wings”. In other words, sublime moves narrator to a wide variety of superb moods and weird realms which bears on pungent essence. Shelley explains sublime as a reciprocal action between one’s natural surrounding and perception as if something takes place between two different entities. Moreover, sublime has to do with not only the outward world, but also the inward world of beholder. River bears a sublime force to the point that it is capable of destructing not only human, but also his entire constructed things in its way. Another sublime aspect Shelley refers to here is the concealed and perplexing dynamism of river and mountain together with human’s inability in getting the picture of nature’s force.

The poet believes that it is the natural environment with all its elements which can last forever rather than the mortal man. Shelley wants every human to be like river that passes forcibly through tough obstacles in an uncontrollable and unrestrained manner. Of course it shouldn’t be inferred that the poet persuades people to be violent; the other way round, what he says is that as river is the source of animation and liveliness for all living creatures, so can human. Considering “*dizzy ravine*”(34), Shelley expertly depicts the mutual action of our perception and the cosmos. Obviously ‘ravine’ doesn’t feel bewildered, but the narrator does so. Here again the communication of brain and the outside world has been pictured. Furthermore, upon facing and pondering on the mountain, he calls it, “*the everlasting universe of things*”

(1) on which man cannot even contemplate and against which he finds himself powerless, a true manifestation of nature's force.

Other than that, the height of the mountain which makes the observer feel confused, cliffs, extensive vegetation and giant snow around it assign another aspect of sublime to it. One is not able to ruminate easily on the brilliance of mountain to grab its sublime in the true sense of the word. The interesting point is that this sense of inability is an endless process. In these verses, Shelley states that even turning to folk tales of the past for figuring out the sublimity of natural world cannot do the trick. In the following verses, Shelley insists on the timelessness and perpetuity of *Mont Blanc* and that our life is evanescent; whereas this mountain was, is and will be way longer than man's life. The reason is human being lacks this eternity that nature possesses. This mountain is an unrestrainable force of the nature. In the final verses, Shelley wraps up his point by saying that *Mont Blanc* represents the genuine soul of the nature and makes him feel sort of both delightful and lonely.

Personally speaking, it seems rather certain that Shelley must have perused and been affected by *Tintern Abbey* to such a degree that *Mont Blanc* has a lot in common with Wordsworth's poem. For example, both works depict how important the reciprocation amidst nature and mankind's intellect is. Similarly, Shelley's symbolic use of river is also to demonstrate the ability of "*the everlasting universe of things*" (1). He further states that as man's knowledge evolves by the passage of time, river also keeps moving through plains, hills and mountains to make its way up. Indeed, in *Mont Blanc*, we witness an analogy between human's extreme weakness and nature's mind-blowing force. Therefore, the narrator concludes and admits that the phrase "*everlasting universe of things*" touches upon the natural world rather than individual's intelligence. Shelley poses a rhetorical question: how can man and his highly restricted intellect work out appropriately the magnificence and immensity of this gigantic natural environment?

Altogether, the way he presents nature is tough and relentless. He demonstrates human being so vulnerable and emaciated. An appropriate case in point is his other poem, "*Ode to the West Wind*" in which he accentuates the wind's vigor and prestige and pinpoints further natural elements with the influx of the west wind, '*grow grey with fear*' (41). In a nutshell, Shelleyan sublime, this intuitive sense, bears upon the status of humans in this universe and their being exposed to the splendor of Mother

Nature as well as finding out their deficiency. The interesting point is that, at times, Shelley confesses that he doesn't know the accurate source of sublime puissance. In other words, it mostly stems from a bizarre and cryptic beginning not solely from the glamor and glory of nature and its realization. In the meantime, he believes that his incentive from nature serves as the building block for the formation of his imagination.

In fact, our receptive understanding or what Shelley names imagination provides us with an exclusive and various talent to delve into the natural world and realize in what manner it looks to humans and by what means it has come into being. Consequently, in terms of competence, a parallel is made between the nature and our mind, on the one hand, and between the beholder and the recognized entity with regard to the understanding of allure and refinement, on the other. In addition, since Shelley is aware of man's function in molding natural surroundings, he presumably cannot ascribe the potentiality of cosmos to omnipotent creator or any theistic origin. Given these points, Higgins & Ruston (2010, p. 99) conclude that "Shelley's work offers rich opportunities for considering the relationship between visions and the visual, particularly where the ideal knowledge which the poet seeks is on the one hand unseeable, but on the other, is mediated by the language of visual perception". Furthermore, the Romantic notion of sublime accounts for this macrocosm and the way human conceives it via his sensory perception which is openly inestimable. Shelley, having put forward this concept, aims to depict how speculating on nature can be paralleled with augmenting one's self-awareness, his status here, as well as his knowledge of the universe. Shelleyan sublime is sometimes of frustrating and negative feature. Therefore, we see this kind of promotion of the moral and artistic values of the poet across time. This is happening outside of a scholarly or academic context. I think poets are always jockeying for attention at least this could be the case for the Romantics and there's a certain amount of effort to show off and outdo each other.

I suppose Shelley is aware or at least trying to push a little bit against the tradition or the works of Wordsworth which is what Harold Bloom's famous line upholds as the anxiety of influence; hence, Shelley is a poet who is very cognizant that he's trying to define himself against some tremendously powerful voice. Notwithstanding, O'Halloran (2016, p. 112) runs counter to Wordsworth as in "a Romantic poet was

not necessarily a man speaking to men as Wordsworth propounded". It goes without saying that friendship with nature and expressing affection to it is a *sine qua non* of Romantic poets; moreover, it is an integral element of Shelley's poetry which has been laid out through imagery. Nonetheless, as for Shelley's poetry and his specific attitude towards nature and the world itself, a distinction needs to be made in the case of the word nature with smaller letter "n" which refers to trees, valleys, forests, mountains, seas, etc. and with capital "N" meaning truth. To further, Shelley is regarded as poet of truth who manifests poetic genius. He remarks that poetic genius does nothing but fashion truth; it also creates and announces truth to the people who encounter the poetic genius. A case in point of truth in the form of mortality is the following quote from Shelley's *To Wordsworth*:

*"Poet of nature thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may return"* (1-2)

Shelley again commends Wordsworth for his digging into nature and being inspired by that. Plus, the poet knows quite well that Wordsworth had toiled to reconnect human to nature. For Shelley, Wordsworth was totally immersed with nature so as to acquire knowledge and truth though there are things that might not be comprehensible. Simultaneously, the speaker implies his materialistic and atheistic beliefs that man is given only this worldly chance to live and learn knowledge as there will be no other life and no way back after death. To summarize, Shelley was distinctly galvanized by great literary figures prior to him that dramatically shaped his ideology as well as affected his poetry. Moreover, he struggled to show the right way to his addressees by his poetry and scrutinizing both the very facile entities and the most intricate but common issues of human life. In actuality, Shelley proved to be a man of wide reading by drawing out ethical insight out of poetry which principally and seemingly is regarded as a literary genre. What is more, Shelley's poetry expresses an unveiled language in which pain and pleasure have been intermingled. At the same time, Shelley challenges, criticizes and appreciates his Romantic counterparts. It seems that the concept of truth had immersed Shelley. Indisputably, Shelley turned a new chapter in Romantic school through posing novel outlooks.

In keeping with Mccue (2014, p. 79), "Shelley offers a definition of poetry broad enough to include all branches of the fine arts. Crucially, he also takes as a premise

that everything exists as it is perceived". For Shelley, poetry has a preternatural power to stir up this awareness. This interpretation of poetry is similar to that of Coleridge, for whom poetry ties the knot with delight, amusement, chagrin, fear, variation and immortality. By way of explanation, almost all the first and second generation of Romantic poets were keen on the concept of perception. To illustrate, they believed that human being is equipped with a metaphysical competence to observe and be cognizant of the universe. This power of cognition leads to the constitution of a new world man can dwell in.

In effect, Romantics propagate a message of human progress and that he should break the limits and approach a sublime level of life which is what Robinson (2006, p. 38) puts as "Romantic poets and poems, of course, write growth-and-development into their work". On these grounds, it can be argued that Shelley was aware of this human exclusive potentiality, nevertheless, he kept struggling with narrowing down the void between the Utopian world and the genuine one. He was an anti-determinist. He held that every individual has the capacity to surpass the others to become unrivaled and if they cannot achieve this stage, it is simply because they don't want to. As well as, Shelley's utmost dream and expectation of his readers is to attempt for arriving at transcendence whereas his least hope is that the poet himself prudently opts to pass away and by doing so, he makes his getaway from the physical and transient world

From Shelley's viewpoint, human mind is extremely strong and at the same time agonizingly restricted. He assigns the most majestic model of adroitness to poetry; for Shelley, poetry has this aptitude to snatch up the gloomy mask of life by emancipating the observer from the trivial concerns of this ephemeral world, as well as by rescuing the world from its obsolete acquaintance. According to Shelley, poetry has the power to break the spells that make people be exposed to the influences encompassing them. He also goes on by saying that poetry is so productive that is capable of generating another existence inside us. Poetry can make over a new world by demolishing the previous one in human mind and through altering our perception. Moreover, imagination lays the first stone for having a true perception. Shelley holds that the stronger the imagination, the more debilitated the iniquity in human. In other words, for Shelley, a poet with robust imagination is apt

to rectify human's perspective via revitalizing the enhancement of our faculty in order to visualize actual affection, comeliness and reality.

Markedly, Shelley struggles to drive the point home that the moment imagination strikes is not definite and it is independent of any particular time and place. Nevertheless, for the sake of being exposed to surrounding and inspiring factors, imagination bangs in one way or another which brings about the creation of poetry. To put it differently, Shelley's grandiose imagination is a perceptive force that delves into the world and turns it inside out so as to stack up sensation and solidarity denoting his principles, values and passions. Moreover, this imagination is of a tremendously diverse, luxurious and representational charm.

The foregoing discussion implies that probably for the Romantics nothing was as much indispensable as imagination. They considered this world of imagination as the world of eternity. In Shelley's belief, imagination calls signals as a means of mutual fondness and understanding, as well as it is considered as an enormous paraphernalia to catch up to ethical and truthful values. Conforming to Shelley, the act of imagination is by nature an ethical one that recognizes what individual holds in high regard. As expressed by Clubbe & Ernest (1983, pp.44-45), in the famous words of his *Defence of Poetry*, "Shelley poses a higher union, embracing all mankind as in: 'The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our own nature and an identification of ourselves' with that which is not our own". Shelley asserts that realizing love is not possible without understanding imagination or perception. Perception is the fundamental constituent of wisdom which arouses the soul. Plus, it is the poet's most integral task. Shelley remarks that perception has the power to direct the poet and provide him with recognition to appreciate his being. Shelley would rather be engrossed in the theoretical and artistic world of imagination and perception which makes poetic craft rather than live a mediocre life. Once again, in *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley writes, "A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own"(47). In fact, here, Shelley insists that by poetry, one can achieve moral good. He also alleges that poetry broadens the scope of imagination.

Shelley maintains that affection and mercy have their origin in imagination that in turn relies on one's capability to put himself in other individual's status. Having said

that, Shelley seems to be the only poet of his era who accentuated the concept of virtue and beauty. In addition, he was of the opinion that art in general and poetry in particular have passionate and attractive force for amending society. Another key point is the interpretation of Tuan (2014, p. 29) concerning imagination which goes as follows: “the romantic imagination favors phenomena that are very large or very small rather than those of a middle scale”. After all, for Shelley, imagination, not reason, is the only source of vivacity for people which is of extremely interminable and unrestrained dimensions; plus, some poets take imagination into account more than others, therefore, they are the only ones who can provide felicity.

Indeed, Shelley does not cast off the power of reason, but in his philosophy, imagination functions as a whole of which reason is a part. What is more, Shelley asserts that reason is something formulated and calculated which pursues a certain track. However, imagination, he assumes, is transitory and can be incited by external and natural elements in the form of inspiration like an ash growing dimmer that can be lightened up through a gentle breeze or a massive waterfall streaming down a gigantic cliff which mesmerizes the beholders. Besides, perception supplies Shelley with a particular vision so as to transfer a comprehension of overwhelming imaginative poetic burden which is situated in happiness. In the words of Gray et al. (2011, p. 39), “most of our knowledge is through imagination”. Furthermore, Shelley expresses that human being can truly understand himself once he scrutinizes his imaginative faculties that give rise to acquiring knowledge.

For Shelley, nature paves the way for perception and articulation comes after perception. Curran (1993, p. 230) makes it clear asserting that “unquestionably, Shelley’s erudition and love for Milton influence his drawing so heavily on him”. Having been affected by Milton, Shelley inquires into the mind calling it the most essential apparatus of perception. To illustrate, Shelley holds that there is a close link between nature and perception. Given these points, it is the mind which creates pain or pleasure; poetry is also the output of mind. There is one difference though between poetry and mind: mind is capable of producing agony and joy; however, poetry overcomes the wickedness and hinders us from being exposed to unfavorable things. As stated in Shelley, poetic apprehension refers to contemplation and phraseology that spring from the preceding brainwork and change into the novel mental works.

As reported by Keen (2004, p. 240), “poetry was more a kind of spirit or mode of perception”. In a word, perception brings about a reconsideration of one’s real nature, going even further and determining his own substance with that of another. To conclude, Shelley’s poetic world is anarchical; for him, poetry duplicates and rehabilitates this ordinary world which human being apprehends and is a part of. Briefly, he supposes that poetry inspires being, discernment and imagination. Overall, Shelley’s description of imagination is a natural capability which consists of its primary contemplation derived from other opinions each of which incorporates its own totality. Indeed, from Shelley’s perspective, poetry has this ability to magnify the boundary of imagination through refilling it with contemplation. Meanwhile, poetry consolidates this capability that is part of every human being’s spiritual hypostasis, the way physical rehearsal builds up the body. All things considered, the Romantic imagination has remedial and restorative repercussions. This is precisely what Shelley means by poetic competence taken from mostly imagination which converges things rather than diverge them the way reason does. However, Pattison (2013, p. 123) believes that “the decision to view the world in terms of reason is not itself a decision that can be rationally justified. The hegemony of reason is thus always implicitly violent and coercive”. In plain English, reason plays a secondary and peripheral role towards imagination which is the primary and more outstanding constituent of mind. Ultimately, imagination has been externalized in poetry.

Last but not least, Shelley holds imagination in a high regard which can be triggered and employed by every individual. He calls it the most principal and inherent quality that lies in each person. Shelley also delineates that man possesses ingenious faculty other than his physical mass. Moreover, he elevates poetic language by saying that it is closely intermingled with one’s contemplation. Chiefly, this contemplation itself is derived from imagination. Once more we come to the point that imagination acts as a keystone resulting in accurate deliberation and decent phraseology. Therefore, it can be claimed that language mirrors not only people’s strong emotions, but also their individual deeds in a straightforward manner. In a nutshell, according to Shelley, no mastery or craftsmanship is capable of emulating poetry since it culminates in gaining tremendous amount of wide-ranging knowledge of which other arts are deprived.

Rawes (2007, p. 72) hypothesizes that “a reader’s response is governed by formal difficulties of knowing an interpretation, but Shelley’s fragment demands that a reader loyal to their meaning will, eventually, pass beyond its broken poetic form to an active life of living, knowing and suffering”. For the most part, Shelley’s language, his opponents assert, is hasty, ambiguous and fluctuating. He has a naked language which keeps portraying a dynamic life that is on the go and doesn’t look stable; everything in it is in a state of agility as if a target has already been set towards which everything heads for. His challengers also find Shelley too intricate to comprehend. Actually, a question that may arise here is: why was Shelley, of all other Romantic poets, more assaulted and insulted by his critics? To explain, I think Shelley was too early for his era. Some of his poems and prose texts account for issues that were beyond the understanding of the people of his time to perceive; modern concepts like impartiality, executive amendment, the power of one, exemplary social order, and so on were his major concerns that even his intellectual critics were somehow unfamiliar with. To me, given the above, Shelley wasn’t baffling to read, but it was his contemporary readers who were deprived of sufficient knowledge and deep consciousness to figure out Shelley and his awe-inspiring language.

On the negative side, some point the finger at Shelley for putting forward the incomprehensible assumptions in his poetry which causes the reader to go astray in it that appears to be a drawback for Shelley; perhaps this is the reason why Shelley has been criticized far more than other Romantic poets. Apparently Shelley has a sharp and realistic power of expression and progressive perspicacity which denotes facts of life as they are with no censorship or fear of consequences. For Fulford (2002, p. 27), “it is the Romantics who mediate between passive reception and active understanding”. As a matter of fact, Shelley comes to a point that wisdom or rationality is marginal, as well as run-of-the-mill linguistic models are inadequate for composing poetry; therefore, he resorted to contemplation and imagination as a way of expressing truth. In the meantime, poets have significant aptitude for social commentary. Shelley wants his readers to get his poems when they read them. He has an agenda in the poem by which he wants readers to see England as at that point in his time and it’s really important to have that broader context which is useful as well; however, they should just be reading Shelley on Shelley’s own terms. To figure

out Shelley's language, one should ask himself, what did England feel like back then? What did he use to represent England? Injustice, tyranny, public ignorance, etc., that have been examined in this enquiry scrupulously.

I suppose Shelley's unconventional appreciation of love and his naked language as to the quixotic community, governmental restructuring, rightful system of beliefs, etc. which lack material commitment served as the underpinning for the emergence of modern movements such as Beat generation and Bloomsbury group who seem to have read and been influenced by Shelley's philosophy. By the way, it should be kept in mind that Shelley's time was coincided with a number of metamorphoses both philosophically, intellectually and ideologically which have been manifested in his works. In fact, Shelley tries to keep his readers away from the routine and mediocre life. He intends to arouse their brainpower to take a step further and think above the determined limits to bring the unfamiliar to light.

In agreement with Shelley's realization of poetry, Schmid & Faubert (2010, p. XIII) allege that "Poets, by contrast, were earnest in declaring their dedication to pleasure. Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure, Shelley wrote". It would seem that Shelley and other Romantic poets share roughly analogous issues among which are pleasure, virtue, sensation, the natural world, independence, emancipation, inspiration and imagination. Indeed, the exclusive feature of Shelley's poetry is his grave connection with the topic. His works bear a striking volume for pleasure, passion and aspiration. Furthermore, Shelley strongly opines that a perfect joy is derived from virtue; he states that the principal cause of melancholy is the man's indolence which gets in the way of generating such an idyllic exultation. To make the long story short, the sublime emerged at first with respect to natural surrounding and the world of arts. Nevertheless, it reinforced and boosted a tremendously novel understanding of life, being and senses. With the Romantic Movement and Shelley in particular, we have come to a diverse and consistent perception of sublime as an indisputable and indivisible part of our life and emotions. Sublime can be no longer found only in museums, exhibitions or on a vacation to the heart of nature; nor do we look for it in churches, temples, historical places and the like. Briefly, sublime is that inner strength that pushes one over the edge to sense and see himself as an integral and constituent, though small and seemingly insignificant, member of human society and in interaction with others.

In the end, suffice it to say that any genuine and affirmative sentiment or reaction to natural phenomena or people around us is exhibited by the beautiful; however, the sublime arouses a degree of dread and consternation resulting in joy and amazement simply because that phenomenon does not put forth any imminent threat. Owing to Edmond Burke, a little but precious field of knowledge built up quite a reputation so that we can dig into it, elaborate on it and spread its scope over other areas in life more than ever. In plain sight, Shelley likens poetry to the picture of life which has been indicated in the form of perpetual reality; this is not because poetry epitomizes extraordinary power, but rather due to the fact that poetry awakens visionary ability. In other words, poetry is expressive, not commanding and it assists people to adjust their intellectuality with truth.



4. SHELLEY'S POLITICS

4.1 French Revolution and Shelley

Democratic leanings of the Romantic poets can be seen in the political content of some of their works. In this chapter, I will deal with questions such as their coincidence with social insurrections such as French Revolution, as well as in this literary school's unparalleled resolution to refashion the dominant and current state of political affairs that was governing the Romantic era. Particularly, I will look at Shelley's poems. He used a sharp and touching language in his poems. He reprimanded the society for ever-growing financial gap among various social classes which itself sprang from the unequal distribution of power and wealth amid them. Indeed, Shelley was inspired by 17th and 18th century English and German philosophers as well as the French revolution paving the way for the formation of current avant-garde notions and arguments. Furthermore, Mee and Fallon (2011, p. 1) state that "British literature and culture of the Romantic period are steeped in the discourse generated by the Revolution". Romanticism was coincided with American and French Revolutions. The latter, due to its rather more importance, impacted the content of Romantic poets' works. Among these poets, Percy Shelley stands out. He enjoyed the ideals of French Revolution in some of his poems such as *Queen Mab*, *The Mask of Anarchy*, *England in 1819*, *Ode to the Men of England* and *Ozymandias*. He puts forth revolutionary notions such as fraternity, liberty, human rights, civil disobedience, freedom of expression, etc. He also gruelingly pounces upon the exclusive prerogatives and immunities of the Royal Class and Churchpersons.

In this respect, it can be said that Shelley also shares a lot with the prevalent values of the Enlightenment. Indeed, the elder Romantic writers including Wordsworth and Coleridge were also influenced by the French Revolution in a very distinct manner than Shelley, however, later they were disillusioned. In the beginning, they were so pleased to witness the French Revolution and the glorious thoughts held in high esteem by the masses, but in the end, the two poets got disenchanted since they

found the revolutionary tenets in contrast to the basic Romantic principles. On the contrary, Shelley adhered to the revolutionary doctrines which became the noticeable traits of his poetry though he did not express explicitly anything about the French Revolution. It is worth mentioning that Shelley, in the same way as Plato, was an idealist.

Having been affected by the social and political tumults in France, the English society as well underwent public extensive unrests portrayed in some of Shelley's poems. His lyrical poetry discloses a yelling from the bottom of thrill, grief, astonishment, etc. As will be elaborated and exemplified below, in these poems Shelley pictures the exceedingly wide gap between the ruling class, among whom there were also clerics, and the impoverished ordinary people. As an illustration, let's consider the following from the poem, *France: An Ode* by S.T. Coleridge:

*"Thou rising sun! Thou blue rejoicing Sky!
Yea, everything that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me, whoso'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest liberty" (17-21)*

Regarding these verses, the poet, being inspired by the French Revolution, addresses the nature elements namely Sun and Sky that freedom is on the way to England and soon it will settle down in here as well. The point that we should keep in mind is that Coleridge calls Sun and Sky as they symbolize power and vastness. Then he wholeheartedly states that the soul of liberty has been blown into him. For him, freedom is kind of holy that can be venerated and glorified. As can be seen, similar to Shelley, Coleridge also was influenced by the French Revolution. On the other hand, Wordsworth also followed and was involved in the political and social events running in France. Between the years 1790 and 1792, he traveled to France two times. His second visit occurred simultaneously with the French Revolution. In fact, he was an eyewitness to it and even cooperated with the revolutionists and protesters. He thought of the French Revolution as the harbinger of freedom and comradeship as the verses below from *The prelude, Book Sixth* mirror this:

"But Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,

France standing on top of the golden hours,

And human nature seeming born again” (339-341)

Here, Wordsworth is introducing France as the paragon of bravery, awareness and betterment for all European countries. He asserts that the French Revolution electrified and enthused them. The poet exalts France by saying that from now on, the best and the most shining days are waiting for this country and the nation. He calls these novel circumstances a sort of renewal as if one comes to this world once again. Thus, conforming to Coleridge and Shelley, Wordsworth also pays a great deal of attention to the French Revolution and holds it in a high esteem. Although Wordsworth expressed profound sympathy for France and stood by the French Revolution, afterwards, he condemned it and turned his attention to Classic Romantic poetry. In the end, unlike majority of his Romantic counterparts, John Keats was not impressed by the French Revolution as none of his poems refers to it.

Furthermore, Shelley resorts to poetry as the only influential instrument to awaken his society, set up tremendous transformations in the mind of people as well as reconsider and reprioritize the ethics, principles, standards and dictated social and ideological patterns of his age. Conversely, Crouter (2005, p. 260) argues that “theologians and philosophers tend to this day to be suspicious of the term ‘Romantic’ and take for granted that it has connotations of instability, dreamy experientialism, and stand opposed to the tough-minded realism of serious academic reflection”. As way of explanation, when Romanticism emerged, it brought up numerous skeptical questions as to human, his life in this world as well as his status in society. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the leading proponents of this school of thought, was of the opinion that nature rather than society is where humans basically belong to since pure and genuine human sentiments can be found there. On the contrary, great thinkers like Immanuel Kant were rather skeptical regarding the natural universe and its potential to meet human needs.

In addition to these doctrines, there were also Christianity and French Revolution, each of which with widely diverse values and perspectives, that paved the way for the birth of Romanticism. Historically, it seemed to be a rather right time for its onset since prior to Romanticism, the Age of Reason had been casting its shadow on individuals and society. Therefore, Romanticism due to coming after the Neo-Classicism with far greater differences from and oppositions to Enlightenment, could

presumably be pregnant with skeptical ideas because ideological transition must not have been an easy task. For the most part, Shelley holds a rather skeptical, controversial and obstinate attitude as for the function of poetry and mission of the poet which overshadows our understanding of his works, personality and ideology. What is more, he believes in the potential of poetry for educating properly, bringing about knowledge, giving impetus to political movements as well as heralding social achievement. Additionally, taking action against corrupt dictatorship can be very markedly observed in Shelley.

Travers (2001, p. 8) proposes that “the Romantic Movement was a democratic one”. Shelley’s insubordinate soul drove him to pursue priceless individual and social values such as humanitarianism, egalitarianism, impartiality, peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and democracy. He firmly believed in overturning autocrats and authoritarians in a bloodless manner. He flourished the hope of establishing a society in which physical, emotional and intellectual differences wouldn’t discriminate or culminate in restrictions. He thought these are the underpinnings of giving a genuine shape to a human as such. For example, in *The Revolt of Islam* (qtd. in Hutchinson 40), Shelley wrote:

“We all are brethren — even the slaves who kill

For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed

On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed

With her own broken heart!” (1812-1815)

In reality, when the poet says: “*We all are brethren*”, he presents himself as a messenger with a universal message saying that all human beings are of the same rights regardless of their race, language, color, nationality, beliefs, etc. What is more, Shelley declares that retaliation doesn’t pay since it adds fuel to the fire and doubles the degree of wrongdoing. It can also be implied that once someone commits a crime or does evil, his act shouldn’t be returned by an eye for an eye, because it will bring about only despair. Using personification, Shelley likens the revenge to an emotional woman whose heart breaks when she gets used despite her will.

Elsewhere, in this poem, Shelley says:

“The rule of men was over now

And hence, the subject world to woman's will must bow" (3611-3612) (qtd. in Hutchinson 83, 55- 56).

Here, Shelley discards the sexist common attitudes of the society regarding the female. He raises the status of women to be worthy of ruling the country just like men. Besides, he equates women with men and stresses that women's power must not be overlooked because they are intellectually strong enough to run a country. He furthers that it is a high time that men stopped thinking of women as inferior and they have to admit women's capabilities and bow their heads to them. In agreement with this, Shelley asserts that *"can man be free if woman be a slave?"* (1045). Posing this rhetorical question, the poet cannot consider the possibility of freedom for man while his partner is regarded as a slave. Shelley evidently declines a patriarchal political and social system. He holds that the necessity of having a prosperous society is to involve both genders to actively cooperate with each other and participate in a wide variety of issues. Otherwise, one major part of society will be marginalized and there would be no bright prospect for that society and its upcoming; as well as, it will be inevitable to go through outrage, corruption, sexual discrimination, inequality and despotism. To me, Shelley's vegetarian life caused him to purge his soul and get to know the degree of brutality inflicted upon his country in general and on women in particular. Last but not least, Shelley is not an anarchist. He is just a strong supporter of justice and fraternity in all its aspects. He doesn't intend to overthrow any political regime as long as they are fair, unprejudiced and uncorrupted; however, once they get conceited and start oppressing people, the poet cannot shut his eyes to it and consequently he calls everyone to revolution.

According to Shelley, political authority unlike art is ephemeral. For instance, in *Ozymandias*, he appreciates the tremendous artistic virtuosity created by the sculptor. The poet prioritizes the work of art over the power of the kings and rulers because the former is long-lasting, however, the latter is short-lived. With regard to the following verses:

"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert Near them, on the sand,

Half sunk to a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,” (2-7)

Shelley humiliates the tyranny and political authority by saying that soon they will turn into soil and dust. His depiction of Ozymandias acts as a go-between regarding the vulnerability of man's authority and physical strength as well as about the time's impact on bringing to the light the historical facts. What is more, since Shelley is of an outspoken and sincere language, he shows his opposition to the haughty behavior and condescending language of the kings and rulers as it is the case for Ozymandias. He also discloses the fact that dictators' manner would never change as in 'frown' and 'cold command' which refers to all despots' character. Then, the poet admires the sculptor for making the statue, 'lifeless thing', appear as a living being with 'passion' as though the king still lives, but his majesty and might have been crushed by 'these lifeless things' namely the stones, which hints at the mortality of human and eternity of the art that has been manifested through poetry.

Therefore, it might be that we need a poet like Shelley who can imagine *Ozymandias* who understands something like the concept of time and claims that the ideas that have come before aren't going to function in the future. Ozymandias doesn't sound like a particularly commendable king and isn't nice to know that even when a king is not that admirable, he can be worn away and fall victim to the passage of time. In the past, there had been magnificent monarchies all of which toppled. In the next line, the poet says: "*The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed*" (8). Shelley employs the word 'mock' referring to both the carver's craftsmanship, which is a kind of mimicry of the real king, and at the same time he scoffs at the evanescent life, emotions, and power of the emperors. Besides, by the word 'heart', the poet expertly suggests how he instils human traits in a senseless statue and reanimates it which feeds the passions of the statue maker.

In lines 10-11, when the poet says:

"...king of kings

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

It can be inferred that the statue makes the reader visualize the strongest king ever whose valor and might would despond any onlooker and that no other king in the world has been able to match strength with him. Nevertheless, the moral lesson is no

matter who human is, a king or a beggar, ultimately they will be doomed to utter annihilation, death. For instance, in 'shattered visage', 'trunkless legs' and 'wrinkled lip', Shelley caustically ridicules all rulers' final destruction and nothingness that by extension entail every human being. Simultaneously, I assume that here Shelley also expresses tribute to poetry which is more powerful than any other art and even monarchy since it is the poetry that would finally narrate either of them and it is the only everlasting art. Thus, poets are stronger than artists and politicians.

Another case in point is *The Mask of Anarchy* which was composed by Shelley while he was living in Italy once he heard of the public unrest and chaos, rebellion and mass slaughter in his homeland. He didn't take a back seat and never became indifferent to events running in his country and on his people. These are the characteristics which make Shelley not only a political poet, but also an appealing-to-public and conscientious writer. The poet's patriotic and revolutionary inclinations have been openly revealed in this poem. As an English man, he finds it compulsory to be one of the unheard voices of his nation. As it will come in the following, Shelley was appalled by the amount of bloodshed, duplicity and a wide gamut of demolition escalating in England. He looks back at England and essentially this used-to-be glorious name, this now decayed and disgusting landscape ruled by the mentally retarded and doddering king as well as the villainous and the dysfunctional person in terms of his authority and religion, keep torturing Shelley.

In *The Mask of Anarchy*, Shelley demonstrates intolerable circumstances in English society such as starvation, joblessness, deprivation of voting right, etc. As the public protests rose, the king dictated the squad to send away the furious public. The soldiers, due to being unskilled and hot-tempered started striking the harmless, indefensible people atrociously; as a result, many were killed and injured. In this poem, "*The seven bloodhounds*" (8) refers to the coalition of seven states that had gathered together in England in order to maintain feudalism as well as lay over its abrogation. It is crystal clear that the disastrous political, social and economic situation was on the rise and rampant then that paved the way for Shelley to be the voice of his suppressed people. Furthermore, Shelley hints at the stupidity and dumbness of Britain's leaders; at the same time, he implicitly rebukes his own people for being indifferent as for the hereditary successors of the regnal class. The following verses from *The Mask of Anarchy* illustrate this:

*“And if then the tyrant dare
Let the ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew,-
What they like, that let them do.”* (340-344)

With respect to these verses, as long as the public are inattentive and uncaring, the oppressors will do whatever they wish such as assaulting people physically, ripping them apart, injuring, crippling as well as murdering them. The poet provides the people with two options: either “let them do” anything they desire or revolt against them and take the lead of your country. Moreover, using the literary devices such as symbolism and allegory like “blood”, “sword,” etc., in the following verses, Shelley intensely cloys on whatever he’s exposed to and happening around him. For example in *The Mask of Anarchy*, the poets says:

*“And a mighty troop around,
With their trampling shook the ground,
Waving each a bloody sword,
For the service of their Lord.”* (37-40)

Shelley here refers to an extremely fearsome scene made by the king’s armed forces who walk forcibly over the ground so that the ground trembles with their strong steps while carrying blood-soaked daggers to terrorize and dishearten people. In my viewpoint, Shelley wants to say that as these soldiers serve their King this passionately as their target, so should equally English people care for their aim that is setting their country free from despotism and planting the tree of liberty there. By saying “*The adoring multitude*” (40), Shelley admires his people, but expresses regret that even the non-violent and amicable British nation have been hoaxed by the autocratic and despotic government. Besides, he feels pity for the British people whose confidence and rights were stepped on by the State and religious organizations: “*Trampling into a mire of blood*” (39). Tragically, Shelley again shows his woe over connivers’ savagery towards the hapless people, referring to it as in:

“And with glorious triumph, they

Rode through England proud and gay” (45-46).

The poet says that as a result of public ignorance, indifference and misery, the rulers and their proxies find themselves victorious and legitimate to bring upon the poor subjects whatever fate they wish. This makes them be so ecstatic and haughty so that they will carry out anything evil they want anytime and anywhere. Shelley strongly condemns the iniquity of the officials who keep pulling the wool over people’s eyes and the poor folks naively hold them in high respect. Under such conditions, he claims that the riots would turn into the supreme leader commanding its warriors who are the ordinary individuals to gain the control of the city. In *Men of England* cited in Abrams et al. (1987, p. 1748), the poet’s attitude seems to be altering from sheer disappointment to hopefulness:

*“Men of England, heirs of Glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,
Hopes of her, and one another” (147-150)*

At this point, Shelley persuades the English men to rise up against the corrupt dictatorship and topple them. The poet stimulates the English men by calling them inheritors of greatness, avant-gardes of future history and children of the same potent Mother, England. He asks these men to be loyal to their mother land and each other. He persists that their country will be great again if they all flourish hope. Shelley calls for the people of England to wake up, be determined and remember their shining past and history so as to generate hope and spread it all over the society to save their country and nation though it is hard because everything is *“piled with the dust of death”* (95). To make this dream come true, the poet resorts to nature again as his permanent inspiration:

*“A mist, a light, an image rose,
Small at first, and weak, and frail
Like the vapour of a vale” (103-105)*

The speaker asserts that the great victories began from the very bitty and small acts. His use of the words “mist, light and image” substantiates his claim. In fact, Shelley calls all the public to join this national campaign in order to eradicate the existing

autocracy. He has a faith in the power of one and that things that appear petty and marginal at first may bring around staggeringly stunning outcomes at the end. In other words, as the large amount of mists come together to make massive clouds; as the extensive lights glue with each other to create sun and as the images blend with one another to generate an artistic work so can humans get united like drops of ocean which can remove anything on their way. Once more, we come across a scene in which Shelley changes the dismal air of the poem into an encouraging one by referring to a tiny little light as a ray of hope though with a low chance of success. In the following lines of the poem, Shelley, as expected, applies nature elements as the birthplace of higher energy that can overcome that of the authorities:

*“As flowers beneath May’s footstep waken,
As stars from Night’s loose hair are Shaken,
As waves arise when loud winds call,
Thoughts sprung where’er that step did fall.”* (122-125)

Here, the poet depicts a nature-oriented symbolism and inspiration. He encourages the people of England to wake up of their long dormancy just like flowers in May to shine like stars at night as every single star makes the sky lustrous. Finally, the poet thinks that his people are like a hidden energy which needs an impetus to strike; in the background, he presumes that his poetry is the best drive to do it the way robust winds make “waves arise”. Shelley assumes that human mind and thoughts are akin to these nature elements behind which there must be a stimulus or motivation. Indeed, Shelley’s rose-colored thoughts do not fade away even until the last moment explaining this horrible and barbaric setting not as an indication of England’s self-destruction, but rather for him these conditions are “dim” which never means everything is all over:

*“What if England toil and blood
Was poured forth, even as flood?
It availed, oh, liberty,
To dim, but not extinguish thee”* (242-245)

In these lines, Shelley gives notice of upcoming public outbreak. According to him, the drudgery and butchery that the Monarchy has brought on people will soon return

to the rulers themselves overwhelmingly. He furthers that once English men sacrifice and fight for freedom, it will be achieved though now freedom is like a paling light, it will never blow out, he proclaims. Taking *England in 1819* into consideration, we can argue that Shelley expresses his commitment to freedom and impartiality as the pillars of a self-governing society; at the same time, he voices his condemnation of autocracy and abusive political executives. In this poem, Shelley's tone gets much harsher by pouncing upon the hypocritical British Royal dynasty and its related religious foundations as in "*Religion Christless, Godless...*" (11) Because for him, they are the cause of the catastrophic conditions of the country.

Furthermore, Shelley implies that even with the death or removing of the present king, these social problems will not be sorted out. As a matter of fact, Shelley is fundamentally opposed to kingdom since he thinks such a governing system lacks sincerity and morality. The poet also expresses that the oppressive regime ruling his country is entirely dependent on the destitute and working class drudgery and they keep commanding people as long as the subjects submissively work for these absolutists as well as at the cost of smothering the civil. Therefore, people toil as slaves for the crown. In other words, the poet tries to depict a particular situation in which the public chagrin is incredibly augmenting with all state organizations and churchly foundations. What is more, he asserts that the royalty are just like freeloaders and scroungers who exist by taking a plethora of advantages from their ill-fated people; that is to say, it is the subjects who feed the throne by working laboriously and painstakingly. Indeed, the poet establishes a simile between his country's administrators and hanger-ons that get fed by their host. The following from *England in 1819* clarifies this:

"But leechlike to their fainting country cling

Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow." (5-6)

Shelley's language becomes so harsh and raucous that he places blame on the wrongdoing of sovereignty for abusing power and using religion instrumentally like a sword to rule the naïve people. The poet finds it necessary to ask the military force to join the people and stand against the corrupt throne:

"An Army, whom liberticidal and prey

Make as a two-edged sword to all who wield" (8-9)

The poet reminds the monarchy's gunmen of their highly prioritized mission which is protecting those who fight for freedom. By "two-edged sword", Shelley means that it is not possible to be both at the service of the king and supporting the subjects simultaneously. He declares that if the military forces do not separate their policy from that of the Royal family, they soon will also fall prey for their lords' excessive desires; hence it is implied that Shelley wants them to take the side of the people. At the end of the poem, it just seems to be like there is this parasitic government that is ruining everyone's life and lowering the value of people's life. He has the poetry in mind because he's already using poetry to illuminate the day as a poet and there is also Blake here in the background. He talks about the poetic genius which is the capacity to construct our understanding and experience of the world. Shelley sets his heart on taking a drastic action:

*"Are graves from which a glorious phantom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day" (13-14)*

The poet desperately cherishes the dream of a marvelous savior who will turn up some day and will change everything around dramatically. He will be spreading his radiance all over the place and these turbulent days will be brought to a close. He still believes that the people of England will revolt by their power of rationality and topple this callous regime; then peace, stability and public solidarity will return to England once again. Shelley emphasizes a wisdom-based upheaval that can discard the superstition and rawness. A social, cultural and political transformation that revives and replaces the political system with a better one through utilizing wisdom and being inspired by natural world. Shelley holds that for the people to reach justice, freedom and equality, violence cannot do the trick and must be put aside. Instead, the poet proposes that the public must be equipped with wisdom, knowledge and awareness rather than relying on political paper tigers and clergymen. Shelley immediately demands to establish a legitimate congregation of leaders to scrutinize the present state of affairs and take precautionary measures so as not to fall deeper in the hell-like situation that has been created. The lines below from *The Mask of Anarchy* elucidate this claim

*"Let a vast assembly be,
And with great solemnity*

Declare with measured words that ye

Are, as God has made ye, free” (295-298)

As a matter of fact, Cohen -Vrignaud (2015, p. 81) elucidate political intention of Shelley’s poetry stressing that “Shelley’s primary focus, after all, is not disorganizing schemes aimed at overturning the government but rather a people’s non-violent defiance of their rulers”. Shelley—just like India’s Independence forerunner and spiritual leader Ghandi—believes that massive but peaceful turnouts as well as non-violent continuous demonstrations can put the totalitarian regimes in disgrace and lead to their downfall as in:

“Stand ye calm and resolute.

Like a forest close and mute,

With folded arms and looks which are

Weapons of unvanquished war,” (319-322)

Next, he appreciates the past rulers of Britain who had knowledge, genuine human emotions and wisdom. The poet desperately asks his people to get up and take action bravely as the last resort, “*Rise like lions after slumber*” (151) once he realizes that nonviolent measures would not bring in any practical and fundamental alterations. In fact, Shelley is trying to plant the seed of sanguineness in the mind of individuals that victory goes to those who take a step for it and pay the price; otherwise, he thinks, emancipation from this obscure condition won’t be achieved. Shelley blatantly rejects British people’s naïve thought of liberty which is restricted to

“Clothes, and fire and food

For the trampled multitude” (221-222)

Similarly, in *Song to the Men of England*, Shelley desperately asks his fellow citizens to figure out the severity of the current circumstances and take action in order not to be under the torment of the dictators. He makes an analogy between the England’s bloodsucking politicians who have swindled people of everything since birth:

“From the cradle to the grave

Those ungrateful drones who would

Drain your sweat-nay, drink your blood?” (6-8)

He states that the ongoing situation will indisputably exacerbate the social injustices and turned people into slaves of corrupt politicians. Furthermore, the poet refers to the fact that the despot cannot survive unless the suppressed and have-nots pave the way for them. The situation seems more like an imperceptible process of dying as if people themselves have already prepared their burial place. As a whole, this poem functions as a political manifesto to the silent illiterate majority to get up and put an end to the ever-increasing vicissitudes of their life and country. Shelley is repulsive with the current circumstances under which crooked statesmen play with catchy words such as “egalitarianism” and “legislation” to their own benefits, whereas people are still suffering from social, economic disparity and discrimination and are deprived of an iota of liberty in the genuine sense of the word. Shelley is considered to be the advocate of the oppressed as he was criticizing and reproaching the oppressive regimes for abusing and taking advantage of the underprivileged. Shelley’s political awareness is obviously a few centuries ahead of his time. He thinks that people’s current circumstances are due to their mental poverty, negligence and on the other hand, because of the rulers’ disparaging policies.

A certain number of Shelley’s works such as *England in 1819*, *The Mask of Anarchy* and *A Song to Men of England* are more like political manifestos that call into question the monarchy’s illegitimacy and usurping power. Shelley is a libertarian poet who calls people for getting their rights by implementing fundamental changes and causing the downfall of their governors. In sum, Shelley is a full-scale poet who not only carries out his poetic duty utilizing literary and stylistic devices to express his tender feelings about his environment, but also he takes a step further to be a prognostic character and universal voice against corruption, murder, violence, bloodshed, superstition, discrimination, etc. As proposed by Morrison and Roberts (2013, p. 8), “the second-generation of Romantic writers and critics were not only acutely conscious of the political, intellectual, and social outcomes of the revolutionary era which ended with Waterloo, but clearly set out to fashion their cultural arena in ways that would, depending on their political predilections, retard or further the causes of social reformation ushered in by the revolution”. As a way of illustration, in Shelley’s time, people thought of him as poet of the public. They also regarded him as poet who backed up freedom and underprivileged people. Moreover, Shelley was different from his other Romantic fellows such as Byron who was solely

calling for defiance and civil disobedience; Shelley's poetry presented a realistic picture of the English society which appealed to the folks though his poetry was not read by the public as much as Wordsworth's.

Generally speaking, Shelley's poetry motivated majority of people to take action because it was influenced by the political atmosphere and events of his time which lead to the composition of some of his prominent poems such as *Song to the Men of England* and *the Mask of Anarchy and England in 1819*. Another point that has to be pointed out is that Shelley's canon consists of two major elements: optimism and perfection. By all means, the major part of Shelley's poetic career entails a humanistic approach placing him in the center of creation and life. Shelley also paid a great deal of attention to love, inspiration, reason as well as the intrinsically pleasant and valuable nature of man and his inherent gift to recuperate his conditions.

4.2 Shelley Inspires Marx and Darwin

Significantly, Richardson (2001, p. 37) gets the idea that "Percy Shelley served an intellectual apprenticeship with the works of Darwin and Caban is and flirted with a materialist view of mind". Still further, what is certain is Shelley's poetry is of a particularly resonant gist and is still well-regarded by those who hold uncompromising views both to humanity and affairs of state. In the background, philosophers such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels as well as the scientist Charles Darwin seemed to have been influenced by Shelley's dissident attitudes as they themselves alleged so. As Karl Marx once put, "The real difference between Byron and Shelley is this: those who understand them and love them rejoice that Byron died at thirty-six, because if he had lived he would have become a reactionary *bourgeois*; they grieve that Shelley died at twenty-nine, because he was essentially a revolutionist, and he would always have been one of the advanced guards of Socialism."²⁴

To clarify, Karl Marx expresses pity for Shelley's early death since he believes that had Shelley lived several years longer, he could probably have been a very leading socialist defender. As a matter of fact, Shelley was a ground-breaking poet who

²⁴Shelley and Socialism, Edward and Eleanor Marx-Aveling, To-Day, Viewed 29 October 2018, April 1888: 103-116, <[https://www. Marxists.org/archive/Eleanor-marx/1888/04/Shelley-Socialism.Htm](https://www.Marxists.org/archive/Eleanor-marx/1888/04/Shelley-Socialism.Htm)>

reinforced the idea that society in which individuals live must be essentially refashioned and metamorphosed. Compared to his other contemporaries, Shelley was the voice of autonomy and free will, enemy of totalitarianism and possessor of Socialist tendencies. He was an audacious critic of social evils. Another point suggesting Shelley's Socialist propensities is his constant stress on the worker's equal share of creating goods and that nobody is allowed to augment his possessions at the cost of incurring damage on others.

Another controversial issue concerning Shelley is his belief in evolution theory which was later proposed by Darwin. A case in point is his principle of infiniteness with respect to substance and transformation and that a wide variety of the same substances are capable of being converted to one another to a great deal so that some parts will be added to or dropped of them. Approximately a century later, partly having been affected by Shelley, Darwin came up with his theory of evolution. As for the concept of transformation on which Shelley underscored, Darwin appears to have perused Shelley quite well. I should also mention that one of the common pursuits between them was their passionate desire for experiential expertise. Plus, for both of them, nature was the primary inspiration. Shelley theoretically manifested nature in his poetry by elaborating on change and the way it is represented.

Nevertheless, Darwin went through the nature, penetrated into it and began to throw light on the proofs indicating transformation in it both practically and scientifically. By doing so, a kind of rapport was established between rhythmic literary work and body of knowledge. In addition, Shelley's maturing phraseology in his poesy and prose endorses an alteration in his poetic jargon which is one of the pillars of evolution theory. To sum up, it seems that major universal figures such as Darwin and Marx have read Shelley well and benefited from his tenets in the formation of their revolutionary theories. Shelley's reputation was not simply restricted to literature, but it went way beyond and had some bearing on biology, politics and philosophy. I do believe that Shelley was a multi-faceted figure whose appetite for acquiring knowledge and awareness as well as sharing it with people was never quenched. Besides, his poems were acting as manifestos with the purpose of awakening and ameliorating society. I assume that Shelley's atheistic thoughts laid the foundation for the creation of Darwin's most world-shattering claim which traces

humans and monkeys back to the common ancestor. At last, Shelley reiterated that society will not get better unless the public do uprising against the crooked rulers.

In the first place, McCann (1999, p. 4) alleges that “the development of Romantic thought in Britain, at least in its canonical Wordsworthian and Coleridgian forms, is informed by a similar move away from the political to the aesthetic as the basis of redemption and emancipation”. Taking a middle-ground position, I suppose Shelley tries to say that what *England in 1819* needs is a new vision and new poet. The Monarchy doesn’t work, the Church of England does not work; these things are not functional for Shelley. We need a new poetic genius who can create. Presumably the question can be: is Shelly that genius? I actually don’t know if he would conceptualize himself that way, but there are some other implications I would rather throw in here; it goes without saying that he is condemning the government, and the church. On logical grounds, there is no compelling reason to argue that Shelley traces back the root cause of corruption, evil and chaos in the mentality of people.

Shelley condemns the people of England for its current chaotic situation because of their narrow-minded behavior and backward brains. This political and societal wakefulness disclosed in his poetry, which will be dug into more detailed in the following, makes Shelley a poetic genius who is both cognizant of poetic style and techniques and has sharp ears and discerning eyes to the events occurring around him. To understand how Shelley’s ideology was constituted and who played a more underlying role in the formation of it, let’s take Milton into account and see how he was the driving force behind Shelley. As a matter of fact, Milton is regarded as a diehard nationalist with revolutionary beliefs. He publicly criticized sovereignty of the monarch, divinity, Absolute Being and the affairs of state. Moreover, he supported the idea of a free society, liberty of speech, social equality and all modern civil concepts. As to liberty, Milton proposes that “That to be free is the same as to be pious, to be wise, to be temperate and just, to be frugal and abstinent, and, lastly, to be magnanimous and brave; so to be the opposite of all these is the same as to be a slave.”²⁵ Milton projects forward a novel definition of freedom which is more compatible with democratic criteria of modern systems. To illuminate, he states that a free human primarily must exercise liberty inside or deep down himself by carrying

²⁵Frederick Miller Pownall, "A study of Milton's political opinions", MA (Master of Arts) thesis, State University of Iowa, 1913: 48<<https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/3632>>

out the righteous things and thinking of the common good rather than personal benefits. Additionally, Milton equates freedom with intellect and wisdom. Then he furthers that a free person needs to have a sensible behavior and to be self-controlled.

Another indispensable element of liberty underscored by Milton is to be economical and disciplined. Eventually, he attaches a particular significance to selflessness or being forgiving. He concludes that once these characteristics are absent in someone, he would be neither free nor even human, but simply a slave. Milton's description of liberty is truly well-adjusted to Shelley's definition of freedom in a democratic structure. In other words, as Shelley, in his *Defence of Poetry*, has spoken well of Milton concerning his religion and political views, it is no exaggerating claim to call Milton as Shelley's one of inspirations. Actually, Milton found it quite absurd to surrender to a supreme creator. Similarly, he harshly opposed to an exclusive right of a minority, be it royal family or any other totalitarian regime, to rule a country like England.

This approach of his has been brought about in his prose work, *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* where he says that...: "... will have little else to do but to bestow the eating and drinking of excessive dainties, a pompous face upon the superficial actings of the state"²⁶. For Milton, a system of government which is based on a King or a Queen is virtually abortive which can never come up with constructive opinions to create a peaceful, equal society. Likewise, he mocks at the supernatural being-- God--who psychopathically and sadistically singles out one of his subjects and makes him suffer so as not to thunder against and castigate other humans; and more stupidly his son takes the lead. Finally, Milton declares that God egotistically calls himself a highly intelligent creator and at the same time dignifying his son:

"No sooner had th' Almighty ceas't, but all

The multitude of angels with a shout

Loud as from numbers without number, sweet

²⁶John Milton, *The prose works of John Milton, To Establish a Free Commonwealth*. Vol.2, p.179

*As from best voice, uttering joy, Heav'n rung, (345-347)*²⁷

With Jubilee, and loud Hosanna's filld

Th' eternal Regions" (344-349)

In these verses, Milton alludes to a Biblical story when Messiah goes to God (his father) and asks for the permission to be tortured and sacrificed on behalf of all human beings and for their redemption. God admits his Son's request and endows him dignity and grandeur. Later on, all the angels admire this act and jubilate. Then Milton refers to the degree of delight and exultation breaking out in Heaven so that the angels grab their musical instruments and begin to sing a song reverberating everywhere; a music and ceremony that no one has ever seen or heard. This way of explanation by Milton accounts for his sarcastic sneering at religion and Deity.

In a like manner with Shelley, Milton scornfully delineates the atmosphere of Heaven where only a massive number of angels are kicking up their heels out of gladness and felicity along with loud-voiced cheers. This description of Heaven sounds like a highly material celebration in which God is like a party giver or a king with a plethora of servicemen and forces. Indeed Milton questions the saintliness of God by earthly degradation of Him. This portrayal of God is devoid of divinity and by extension, Milton repudiates any heavenly truth. This attitude of his is partly similar to that of Shelley. What is more, Symmons (1925, p. 429) stresses that Milton repudiates and casts aside the privilege of kingdom by calling it sheer lunacy: "But I trust I shall have spoken persuasion to abundance of sensible and ingenuous men [...] justly and timely fearing to what a precipice of destruction the deluge of this epidemic madness would hurry us, through the general defection of a misguided and abused multitude". Then he sticks up for the personal potential in man: "Me thinks I see in my mind a mighty and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks"²⁸.

Here, Milton's individualism parallels with that of Shelley because both believe in the power of one to lead the masses of folks. He sees himself not as one, but as many. Milton celebrates to have discovered an incredibly strong source of motivation

²⁷Ibid., The poetical works of John Milton: With Notes of Various Authors, Vol.1, Book III, Paradise Lost, p.183

²⁸John Milton, (n.d.), AZQuotes.com, Retrieved November 30, 2018, <<https://www.azquotes.com/quote/832435>>

in himself and his mind that can break any indestructible chains and surpass any impassable domains. He makes an analogy between his mental potentiality and the robust power of a nation. Just as a nation is able to rise up and change its destiny, human, he asserts, possesses this dramatic know-how to make amends and sort out the set of circumstances. All he has to do is to wake up of this heavy lethargic dream and take action. Like Shelley who believes that in unity there is strength, Milton holds that salient political and social transformations do not necessarily take place by a nation's massive turnout, rather, retrospection and individual awareness act as a building block to unearth this gigantic strength for making any impossible alteration turn out to be feasible. Consequently, Milton and Shelley are mostly on the same wavelength when it comes to politics. Both are the voice of silent majority and are the heavy-duty advocates of democratic movements based on non-belligerent measures.

Symmons (1925, p. 409) quotes from Milton asserting that "...pageant up and down in progress among the perpetual bowings and cringing of an abject people, on either side deifying and adoring him for nothing done that can deserve it". Once again, he feels repulsed with the Empire and implicitly God's kingdom. He goes on by saying that it is drastically humiliating to live in such an ignorant society with a despotic regime that simply thinks of abusing its subjects, beating them down and forcing them to love the government. Besides, I would like to argue that Shelley and Milton have one characteristic in common that is their joint curiosity and enthusiasm in politics and events taking place around them as Shelley (2008, pp. 57-58) in *A Defence of Poetry* puts, "Milton was deeply penetrated with the ancient religion and politics of the civilized world and its spirit exists in his poetry... of modern Europe. The one preceded and the other followed the Reformation at almost equal intervals". What is more, Shelley elevates Milton to a holy status who is never forgotten due to Milton's audacity and seeking spirit regarding the nature of ethics, faith and righteousness. Jarrells (2005, p. 103) benevolently speaks of Shelley when he articulates that "Shelley's intentions may be pure or good", Shelley expressed his utmost gratitude, indebtedness and devotion towards Milton so profoundly that have been manifested in his works.

Curran (1993, pp. 230-231) puts forward that "One reason Milton must have appealed to poets of the Romantic age was that he wrote his last works under similar

political pressures and in even direr political circumstances than those confronting them". To elucidate, like Shelley's era, Milton's time also coincided with a plethora of changes both socially, politically as well as culturally because it was during this time that the civil war in England (1642-1651) took place. This turbulent situation was the product of opposition between legislators and conservative parties. These conditions overshadowed people's lifestyle. As a result, an ever-growing gap was made between the ruling system and the public the way it reoccurred in the following century which clashed with Romanticism. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton wrote:

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime, [...]

That we must change for heaven, this mournful gloom

For that celestial light? (l. 242-5)

Considering these verses, Milton refers to his country, England and by extension the world. In reality, as can be felt, there is a sarcastic tone in Milton's voice here. He expresses pity for the country's lawmakers and decision-makers for not being able to make an upward mobility in society. Likewise, Shelley also argues this matter in his political poems as have been discussed thoroughly in this chapter. Moreover, employing the pronoun "we", just like Shelley, Milton puts the blame not only on the government, but also on the people who are in one way or another involved in the creation of such stormy circumstances. Indeed, Milton is a vigilant figure with a double character of both a conscious civilian and a far-seeing poet who enthusiastically aspires to play a constructive role in awakening his society and simultaneously warning the politicians of their duties. What is more, Shelley (2008, pp.45-46) remarks, "Milton is a philosopher of the loftiest ethical, poetic and political power". Therefore, it can be implied from Shelley that when we read Milton, it pleases us because it connects us with some kind of political attitude that we find meaningful. Moreover, we might find it a religious or spiritual reaction if we associate what is being described there with a particular dogma or religious faith tradition or we might start considering it in terms of the sublime which leads us to a discussion of aesthetics. In addition, Romantic poets were enthusiastic about contemplation with an investigative spirit the way Milton was. They sought the mechanism of acquiring knowledge, holding moral attitude and appreciating virtue.

According to Milton, "Virtue, the only genuine source of political and individual liberty, the only true safeguard of states, the bulwark of their prosperity and renown"²⁹. From Milton's viewpoint, the best form of personal and political freedom lies in ethics. He adds that no government, no human and no society can stand on their legs and reach freedom unless they resort to highly praiseworthy human values such as morality, righteousness and integrity. He even takes a step beyond and traces back the survival of the whole ruling system to virtue. In effect, moral principles play such an important part in Milton's political philosophy that he cannot even imagine a fortunate and flourishing nation without it. He calls virtue the guarantor of a nation's or government's continuity. All in all, pursuant to Milton, political or individual freedom will make no sense if human dignity and honor are not taken into consideration. Therefore, liberty means virtue for Milton.

Based on the aforementioned, it can be figured out that Milton's political and civic ideology had profound impact on Shelley and the maturity of his mindset. I assume that Shelley must have scrutinized Milton so that we can see a plenty of commonalities between these two outstanding literary figures. I will examine this matter in the following by probing some of Shelley's works. The point often overlooked in the 19th century is that we find the authors starting to stand up, who are no longer simply venerating the past, but are looking at it in a way that basically says the past is the past and it's not significant to what we need now that would seem to be rather revolutionary idea for poetic voice. In particular, Nersessian (2015, p. 180) hints at "*Defence of Poetry*, in which Shelley insists that despite the prodigious advances in human knowledge achieved over the last century or so, we yet want the poetry of life". Given the above, Shelley was a deep thinker who was watching over the stimulus in the background of thoughts and perception. Having lived such a contemplative and mindful life, Shelley took on this policy as a means of inspecting the mechanism ruling righteousness, affairs of state, abstract world and events of the past. What is more, Shelley paid a great deal of attention to the concept of reality in his poetry and its association with system of words, discourse and articulation rather than its linkage between induction or inspiration and deduction or logic. Furthermore, he contended that knowledge can by no means be set apart from imagination.

²⁹Frederick Miller Pownall, "A study of Milton's political opinions." MA (Master of Arts) thesis, State University of Iowa, 1913: 10, <<https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/3632>>

In essence, as mentioned by Ruston (2013, p. 24), “according to Shelley, The ‘poet’ in Wordsworth’s account is a man who is different physiologically, intellectually, and emotionally from other men; specifically, he is man endowed with more lively sensibility than others”. Moreover, he stipulated that for man to achieve knowledge, he has to set himself free from his being and character to something different. Besides, his apprehension of deductive reasoning is an affinity not a tangible entity. Concepts such as reality, phraseology, experimentation, spiritualism, love and knowledge account for his comprehensive realization of rationality. As stated in Shelley, figuring out that life entails a permanent dealing or unity with natural phenomena culminates in rightful resourcefulness of man which in turn refers to the notion of self-formation. In the end, from Shelley’s standpoint, these are the all-inclusive attributes which bring about poetic genius.

On top of all, Shelley was equipped with a sort of multi-faceted vision, penetrating eyes as well as sky-high mental agility. Of course, needless to say that Shelley’s particular outlook was to some extent, overshadowed by the prevailing havoc, rampant discrimination, unfairness, subjugation, exploitation, fanaticism and incredible rate of public destitution. I think Shelley attributes a Christ-like role to himself who can bring multitudes together to set them free from despotism and set up law and order among general public. As an example, in *Song to Men of England*, Shelley’s language seems to be so high and mighty. He virtually provokes the English people to revolt against the monarchy and bring them down. In fact, Shelley struggles to make his people open their eyes and notice the devastating conditions of England as in:

“The seed ye sow, another reaps;

The wealth ye find, another keeps;

The robes ye weave, another wears;

The arms ye forge; another bears.” (17-20)

Also in:

“Sow seed, ---but let no tyrant reap;

Find wealth, ---let no imposter heap;

Weave robes, --- let not the idle wear;

Forge arms, ---in your defence to bear.” (21-24)

Here, Shelley warns the people of his country of not allowing the autocratic unjust rulers to seize their properties and stamp on their rights and endeavors. To put it more clearly, the ruling system blatantly abuses its people by making itself more loaded and prosperous while the impoverished subjects submissively are meeting the needs of the political authorities.

Then again in:

“Wherefore, Bees of England, forge

Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,

That these stingless drones may spoil

The forced produce of your toil?” (9-12)

The poet uses a simile by applying the word ‘bee’. He regards not only the heads of state, but also the whole English nation as bees; the former bites, hurts and incurs pain, however, the latter produces honey that does good to others only. Having observed these debilitating and agonizing circumstances, Shelley asks men of England to be the attacking bee and use their poison against the enemy saying that enough is enough and they should no longer let these blood-sucking and abusive leaders take the advantage of and steal from the seeds of their efforts. In addition, the poet calls the government officials and the kingdom “stingless drones” that are kind of bees which do nothing, however, get fed by other bees and impose excessive control over the worker bees. As the poem goes further, the poet’s voice gets more unsympathetic once he points the finger at his people and calls them base-spirited and chicken-hearted who can’t rebel in groups; this can be seen in the following verse: *“Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells”* (25). Indeed, Shelley is very well aware of the difficulties, and repercussions of the public uprising, yet he encourages the men of England to take action and get their rights back from the oppressors before it is too late, otherwise he says, you *“Trace your grave, and build your tomb”*(30). The poet also expresses that one must be so foolish not to see and not to understand such an imminent disastrous destiny. In the final stanzas, Shelley seriously alerts his people that in case they don’t make fundamental alterations both individually and politically, they would on no account live through the pleasure of

parity and freedom which is what they are worthy of. The following supports this claim:

“And weave your winding-sheet---till fair

England be your Sepulchre.” (31-32)

By “Sepulchre”, on the one hand, Shelley metaphorically presages that if the English people don’t take any practical measures to save their country and glorious history, England will turn into a place of death and hell for them. On the other, once the patriotic blood initiates to run in their veins and they have faith in their individual capabilities, then England will be a place of perfection and genuine life just like Heaven. What is more, when the poet says:

“Wherefore feed and clothe and save

From the cradle to the grave

Those ungrateful drones who would

Drain your sweat---nay, drink your blood?” (5-8)

He feels so mad at English people who simply think of meeting their primary and basic needs such as eating, preparing clothes and rescuing themselves or saving money for the rainy day. He goes on asserting that forasmuch as people live with this mentality from the beginning to the end of their lives, not only will nothing get better, but also this can cause the selfish and unmindful parasite politicians to plunder the destitute and hapless people, abuse and take advantage of their efforts as well as suck their blood like a leech. He utters that as if the men of England don’t care about their current setting. They keep submitting to work laboriously to quiet down the well-to-do class. As a matter of fact, Shelley implicitly calls the English people brainless and imprudent who fail to figure out that it is the poor who cause the dominant class to augment their possessions and properties.

In short, Shelley seems to be fed up with seeing ever-increasing predicaments and people’s lack of sympathy and interest; hence, he tries to hearten his people to resort to engage in a civil disobedience. For instance, he asks them to stop working for the government and gives them confidence to rethink of their civil rights. Additionally, at this point it is significant to bring up that Shelley’s time was rather coincided with the French Revolution which in turn persuaded him to be the voice of the English

people. The bottom line is in every single political poem, Shelley sides with democratic movements and egalitarian policies even at the cost of losing lives, in a manner of speaking. Barcus (2003, p.117) is of the opinion that “what makes Shelley’s poetry different from that of his contemporaries and a decent subject for investigation is that the native splendor of Mr. Shelley’s faculties have been his safeguard from universal degradation, and a part, at least, of his genius, has been consecrated to theme worthy of it and of him”. In fact, Shelley presents a very peculiar inspiration in his poetry that makes it safe and admirable. To put it differently, he keeps flourishing his hope in the progress of the universe and human society in which there would be no sign of brutality, bloodshed, violence, etc. Once more, being influenced by Milton, Shelley says that a bright future will arrive when people’s life and behavior would dramatically undergo transformations for better.

These desires and aspirations account for a gloomy period Shelley lived in and a tumultuous political atmosphere that he desperately longed for passing. Evidently, Laniel-Musitelli & Constantinesco (2015, p. 90) unanimously agree that “Shelley was a political reformer, too, and his poetry tells us that ethical and political thought and actions can be productive under the conditions defined by the Romantic hypothesis, which takes us beyond Platonism and skepticism alike”. Besides, he never gave up on his hope and held a rock-solid dream for a more decent upcoming as well as eradication of wickedness, hypocrisy, and autocracy. With this in mind, another particular characteristic of Shelley’s poetry is its conceptual and otherworldly quality which somehow holds readers back from understanding it easily. Nevertheless, Shelley’s style and diction are elegant, discrete and delicate. He is also of a thriving and overflowing awareness. All things considered, the most salient allure of his literary works lies in his nonconforming mind and sensation plus in his generosity that gives impetus to his works. Lastly, having looked through Shelley, we would probably come across a dual perception of right and wrong or flawless and defective.

Overall, it should be noted that unlike his skeptical tendencies, Shelley has been captivated by life and the opportunities it presents. In other words, though life is quite evanescent and perishable, Shelley celebrates and acclaims it in his poetry for the chances and possibilities it puts forward. Other than life, as Martin & Jarvis (1992, p. 172) accentuated, “the imagination is the true fire, stolen from heaven, to

animate this cold creature of clay...” To sum up, Shelley presumed that imagination breeds symbolic language. In actuality, the reason why Shelley used the allegorical language was to act as a peacemaker and settle the dispute between the motive of passion and the suppressing force of life.

4.3 Poetic Liberalism in Shelley

In the first place, in *Mask of Anarchy*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Queen Mab*, *Prometheus Unbound* and *Cenci* (1886), Shelley vehemently shows aggression to statecraft, clergymen, holiness, superstitious beliefs, and institutions; he calls them deterrent factors that inhibit people from arriving at truth and betterment in general. On the other hand, as went above, in poems like *Ode to the west Wind* and *To a Skylark*, Shelley describes his utmost passion for nature. Poetry, for Shelley, acts as a language by which he expresses his thoughts and can communicate with his readers. As a matter of fact, Shelley’s use of nature elements is not solely for freshening up his poetry with imagery or a bunch of literary devices and symbols, rather, in so doing, he depicts vibrant aspects of life and nature’s recuperative power on the one side of which , there is destruction and death, on the other, lies its enlivening power. By the same token, Shelley says that human being also may encounter such ups and downs which are at times catastrophic and difficult to compensate for, nevertheless, he must get up and never remain pathetic and indifferent towards the surrounding events. In fact, Shelley desires to liven up a permanent ray of hope in every single human encouraging people that it is never too late to acquire knowledge, take action for the betterment of society and the amendment of political affairs. In his poem, *Ode to Liberty*, Shelley puts in plain words the necessity of liberty for imagination and resourcefulness. Moreover, this poem is of a riotous resolution which puts accent on independence. To illuminate, Shelley wrote the poem under the influence of revolution in Spain as in:

“A glorious people vibrated again

The lightning of the nations: Liberty

From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o’er Spain” (1-3)

In these verses, Shelley admires the courageous Spanish people so splendidly. The poet calls them a nation who have been enlightened by virtue of freedom to such a

degree that they all have been one and united wholeheartedly and from all walks of life. In addition, the poet implies that the power of unity acts just like a thunder which can end in liberty. In lines 181-182, Shelley asserts:

“England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?”

Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder”

As can be seen here, the poet sets the Spanish nation as a paragon for the English people. To illustrate, Shelley sarcastically mocks the men of England as the ones who have been dormant and apathetic despite their exacerbating life conditions which are on the rise; yet they have shut their eyes to the realities of their society. Furthermore, the speaker reminds his people of their country’s old and rich past and culture which have been existing for centuries. Having utilized the pronoun “she” for England, I assume, the poet subtly and intelligently assigns an inferior and fragile status for his country that is to say it is reliant on a superior male power, Spain. He demonstrates this by saying that the men of England must hear the voice of Spanish people and take it as a good omen to rebel against the dictatorial regime. Shelley even goes further and calls the Spanish nation “thrilling thunder” who strike suddenly and possess a tremendously destructive potential which can tremble and eradicate the pillars of despotism. Thus he wants the English people to set their Spanish counterparts as an example and be as brave as them to put an end to this horrendous situation once and for all.

In lines 192-195 when he says:

“Twins of a single destiny! Appeal

To the eternal years enthroned before us

In the dim West; impress us from a seal,

All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal,”

Shelley makes an analogy between Spain and England calling them twins who are doomed to similar fate and deserve the best of everything. He also holds Spain in high regard by referring to its precious history and originality even richer than those of England. Furthermore, the poet pays tribute to Spain’s political authority which is able to make an impact on any country. The speaker once again thinks highly of

Spain and the Spanish government's resourcefulness and capability which time would never forget or overlook.

Considering the following verses of the poem:

"Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle

Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,

That the pale name of PRIST might shrink and dwindle

Into the hell from which is first was hurled" (226-229)

Shelley optimistically heralds the ruling of wisdom and knowledge by the intellectuals of society who will rise up like Phoenix of their ashes and take the control of affairs and cast the light of prosperity and intellect on the gloomy and dark life of the English People. On the other hand, the poet expresses his disgust with organized religion and religious hypocrisy under the name of priest. Simply put, Shelley asks for a democratic and judicious government without the interference of clergymen whom he deems as evil spirits and creatures who have come from hell where they originally belong to. On the positive side, optimism is a conspicuous trait exhibited in Shelley's poetry. Furthermore, this cheerful spirit is provoked by his enthusiasm in improvement which appears to be a farsighted outlook. In reality, he thought that the universe is a place of dejection and flaw that will be turned into an exalted territory with independence, emancipation, affection, ecstasy, peace and quiet. Announcing that Shelley avidly expresses his hope and determination for superb alterations which are brought about by his poetry.

What is more, the poetry Shelley represents has to do with pensiveness, woe, grief, reminiscence and sentimentality. Over and above, Shelley had vigorous sentiments toward virtue and articulation which have been displayed in *To a Skylark* and *Ode to the West Wind*. He makes use of symbols in his natural surroundings with the intention of portraying his proximity with his flair. Recurrently, I am of the opinion that Shelley's poetic system of words primarily derived from pursuing his intuition. Therefore, his poetry possesses a greater intimate root compared to that of Wordsworth. Other than that, Shelley takes advantage of man's mental capability. To elucidate, Shelley did not have as many addressees as those of Romanticism's 1st generation poets such as Wordsworth and Coleridge; nevertheless, he was of a highly bright, alluring and fervent character. Furthermore, Shelley was almost always

making his way up; he was keen on pondering and being in quest of the phenomena in his environment meticulously. In other words, he was eagle-eyed and had perceptive soul towards the creation of man, human's philosophy of existence and the like.

Gamer (2017, p. 154) postulates, "Wordsworth wants to believe that a poem can be a dwelling" (154). What is more, Wordsworth himself talks about how he would come up with lines in his head, for example, in *Tintern Abbey*, he speaks of and writes about how that was supposedly composed in his head before he put it down, nonetheless, in Wordsworth we have a focus on the actual work behind the poem, the construction of the poem, but the recognition is a constructed document intended to have a particular effect or written with the hopes that we will have a special impact. Therefore, we have these very diverse views of poetry: one is that there is this kind of craft's approach to poetry and then on the other hand, there is this larger supernatural dimension to poetry and they lead into all kinds of different arguments and considerations and they help us look at the poetic works that we have been reading in many various ways. Generally speaking, Shelley holds that poetry reveals the unseen grace, delight and love by dismantling it and defamiliarizes the things which used to be known. In fact, he refers to one of the most outstanding features of poetry that is exploring techniques with the aim of reconsidering it to recognize and comprehend better than ever. Moreover, for Shelley, poetry functions as a practice that shares in what it exhibits. Poetry is an insight of cryptic association between existence and reality. The following stanzas from *Invocation: rarely, rarely, comest thou*³⁰, exemplify Shelley's illustration of delight and love:

"Rarely, rarely, comest thou,

Spirit of Delight!

Wherefore hast thou left me now

Many a day and night?

Many a weary night and day

'Tis since thou art fled away" (1-6)

³⁰ P. B. Shelley, (n.d), the Laurel. Fugitive Poetry of the XIX Century, Published by John Sharpe, Piccadilly, London: 169-170.

Here, we can observe a sense of desolation, exhaustion and hopelessness with which Shelley has been inflicted from the time when delight has turned back to the poet. He desperately longs for catching the attention of delight that could perhaps make him joyful once again. At the same time he knows well that the “spirit of delight” never comes to people who have been under unhappiness and distress; rather it belongs to the lovers, the contented and cheerful individuals. Elsewhere in this poem, Shelley maintains:

“I love all that thou lovest,

Spirit of Delight!

The fresh Earth in new leaves dress’d,

And the starry night;

Autumn evening, and the morn

When the golden mists are born”

“I love snow, and all the forms

Of the radiant frost;

I love waves, and winds, and storms,

Everything almost

Which is Nature’s ...”

“I love tranquil solitude,

And such society

As is quiet, wise, and good” (25-39)

In these verses, Shelley displays his love toward anything that engenders delight such as the arrival of spring which is like new clothes on the body of the Earth and causes it to look new and bright; the nighttime when the sky is ornamented with shiny stars. The poet also adores natural phenomena including tempest, breezes, floods, snow and cold. Shelley feels affection for the entire universe with its visible and invisible entities. Moreover, he is passionate about silence, loneliness, serenity, intelligent and decent folks. With this in mind I should point out that whatever mentioned above as the poets’ loved ones, are also jointly loved by the “Spirit of Delight”. Besides, the

reason why Shelley is keen on these elements of nature is because despite men's experience of sadness, nature is quite unfamiliar with it. In these lines, the poet obviously prioritizes nature over man due to its impeccable privileges. In other words, Shelley's portrayal of nature is utopian in which mankind's torments and vicissitudes have no room. Over and over, the poet emphasizes on his love for nature simply because it is far from regrets and pains of mankind's life. As a result, as Shelley is drowned in loving nature, he comes to a point which makes him very similar to the "Spirit of Delight". Nevertheless, there's a difference between them; that is to say, although Shelly finds himself blissful in nature, he lacks those characteristics that nature inherently does own. In the end, Shelley comes to the gist of the poem in:

*"I love Love-though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
"Spirit, I love thee
Thou are love and life! O come!" (43 - 47)*

With respect to these verses, Shelley displays his utmost ardor to the "Love" itself, as if the word love is the sheer source of exhilaration for him. Here the poet urgently seeks contentment because he thinks love is just like a bird with wings that can run off and move away as speedy as light does. To put it differently, Shelley speaks of fleeting feature of love that has to be grasped and appreciated. He also implies that love gives a different and bright color and meaning to one's life as it possess a charming and pleasing nature, so to speak. On the whole, Shelley backs up his discussion by noting that the language and message of poetry are imperishable and that they have the power of engendering and cultivating worthiness in people. Moreover, poetry is capable of expanding the scope of individuals' intellectual faculties so as to run across fresh contemplations. As a matter of fact, poetry is able to unwrap the very alluring things which are covert in our life and surrounding. Indeed, this feature of Shelleyean poetry is what was later called Defamiliarization by Russian Formalists. The purpose of defamiliarizing function of poetry, from Shelley's viewpoint, is to reach passion and get away from our ignoble individuality; as well as it serves to determinate people with admirable facts which are way outside

the limits of their physical senses and perception giving rise to their acquisition of ethics. Shelley also stated that one cannot achieve this privilege unless s/he expresses receptiveness, cares about the felicity of people and sympathizes with them once they encounter misfortune.

In short, Shelley asserts, other than revealing the elegance, not only does poetry celebrate the current pleasing and existing phenomena around us, but also it seeks refinement and symmetry in anything in life even if it is seemingly distorted. Plus, it is a sort of a magic potion that alters the substance of whatever it makes contact with and turns it to an extremely precious entity. What is more, in *the Cenci*, Shelley seems to be indirectly attacking institutionalized politics and despotism. In this play, he talks about injustice, brutality and abusiveness of individuals. Besides, it puts forth the highly developed advantage of civility and social cultivation such as jurisdiction, rules as well as spiritual prudence. Also, here Shelley dismisses the hierarchical power of things and creatures, male superiority, religious rituals and organized reality. By characterizing Count Cenci, Shelley makes a stand against autocratic regimes and religion in order to exemplify the intrinsic exploitation and crookedness running in them.

On the other hand, he portrays the suppressed people whom the dictatorial government puts under pressure through the character of Beatrice who also symbolizes a truly Romantic figure and interest, human's predicaments, and finally the power of natural environment versus the fraud and demoralization of the ruling class. What is more, in his work, Shelley refers to not only common issues and troubles in society, but also calls for a public insurgency to drive out tyranny and oppressors. Having perused *The Cenci*, one can easily find out that apart from Shelley's opposition with institutionalized religion and corrupt policy makers, he also discloses immortality of human soul. In Romantic School, hero is considered as the one who has a singular personality associated with strong emotions and internal challenges which all have been epitomized in Beatrice. That is to say, she possesses chastity, virtue, charm and kindness along with a remarkable degree of emotional power and rock solid resolution. As a girl, she finds herself helpless and defenseless particularly when her father rapes her, nevertheless, as an extraordinary representative of Romantic human, she is incredibly strong-willed and dashing. In fact, her character is of a combination of amiable and relentless. Needless to say that

these characteristics play a crucial role in Romanticism as Beatrice is deeply linked to Mother Nature due to the fact that she's a female. Nature reproduces life so does a woman; thus femininity is a significant concept in Romantic literature. As an important element of Romanticism, Beatrice gets stronger and more stable despite the fact that her life goes through petrifying conditions due to the external happenings, but her essence remains pure.

The point Shelley is trying to remind us is every human being is of a vastly refined spirit which should under no circumstances be polluted; however, once the external elements and forces keep pressuring constantly, it is then that human can act against his nature and that is what happens to Beatrice once she devises a plot to kill Cenci. As went above, Beatrice serves a decent example of nature's power which is delicate and constructive, but at times robust and destructive. It should also be remembered that Cenci's male power prefigures political and religious masculine force just like tyrant leader and God. To illustrate, let's consider the following:

*"If when a parent from a parent's heart
Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all
A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,
And when he rises up from dreaming it;
One supplication, one desire, one hope,
That he would grant a wish for his two sons,
Even all that he demands in their regard
And suddenly beyond his dearest hope
It is accomplished, he should then rejoice,
And call his friends and Kinsmen to a feast,
And task their love to grace his merriment,
Then honour me thus far –for I am he." (23-33 – Act I)*

In consonance with these lines, we come across a scene in which Cenci reveals his callousness and malignity. In addition, Shelley expertly brings up multiple connotations as for Cenci's character. For instance, here his religious hypocrisy catches the eyes of readers, though it is not explicitly mentioned in the text whether

he has faith in Deity or not, nevertheless, Cenci assumes that simply because he is a male figure and father of his children, his actions and beliefs are confirmed. In fact, these so-called theistic personality and loathsome duplicity, which all are deliberately utilized to serve Cenci to fulfill his horrendous goal, are strikingly irritating. He pretends to have been praying for the good of his sons before they sleep, supplicating again the next day they got up and hoping the best for them. Very deceptively is he trying to say that nature sometimes turns against us by taking our dearest and nearest (referring to his sons). To demystify, Shelley once again condemns religion and superior power in the character of Cenci for sabotaging genuine essence of every human. For Shelley, theology and despotism are like a poison that contaminates our soul and leaves nothing of us except for murder, insincerity and ignorance; therefore they must be avoided.

In agreement with the above, it is utterly mind-boggling to see a man or father takes pleasure of killing his own sons and raping his own daughter, his own flesh and blood, while using religious terms and tone sanctimoniously:

“All men enjoy revenge; and most exult

Over the tortures they can never feel –

Flattering their secret peace with others’ pain.

But I delight in nothing else. I love

The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,

When this shall be another’s, and that mine” (78-83 – Act I)

As can be seen, Shelley depicts Cenci as a man who takes joy in causing pain in people. He also does whatever he wishes, mostly heartless and barbaric, just under the name of religion. He is extremely narcissistic and wicked who prefers torment and misery for others, but bliss and satisfaction for himself. As a matter of fact, Cenci is an embodiment of Devil, institutionalized religion as well as totalitarian regime which Shelley is hostile to. Needless to say that once someone delights in forcing discomfort and misery upon others, s/he would have an uncontrollable hunger for domination which is what Cenci represents. This megalomania for power in Cenci has come to such a degree that for meeting his Machiavellian needs and desires, he leaves no stone unturned even murdering and perpetrating sexual assault.

To put it differently, killing his sons and having sex with Beatrice are only and only for keeping them under his control and authority. Shelley again wants to demonstrate the fact that uncontrolled power, in this case monarchy's, and church are not for the betterment of mankind, but they solely exacerbate the state of affairs everywhere.

In line 24, Shelley makes an analogy between Cenci and God. He believes that as much heartless and vicious Cenci is to his daughter, so is the Divine Being to humans. Both are equally ruinous because they wipe out what they themselves have made and given life to. Therefore, by "the great Father of all", Cenci metaphorically parallels himself with God who has the legitimate right and power over his creature(s). Time and again, Shelley passes sentence on patriarchal religion and society immensely advocated by the ruling system. Besides, he believes in a society apart from gender or sex discrimination and power or status superiority. With this in mind, I should also point out that Shelley's works have mostly been concerned with a drive and call for upheaval and metamorphosis which is borne out of a rich imagination as in the lines below:

"O, fear not

What may be done, but what is left undone:

The act seals all." (5-7 - Act 4)

Beatrice here is portrayed as a gallant girl who says that taking an action is a lot better than doing nothing because doing something even if inaccurate can lead to an alteration or making headway. From this, it can be drawn that Shelley picks up on transformation and thinks highly of it be it individual, social or political. According to him, cowards are losers; plus demanding freedom and change without audacity would be of no use. In the following, Shelley exhibits the consequences of being left alone and staying passive and helpless:

"Dare no one look on me?

None answer? Can one tyrant overbear?

The sense of many best and wisest men?

Or is it that I sue not in some form

Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit? (133-137 –Act I)

In this scene, Beatrice badly seeks help, but there is no one around to assist her. Again Shelley puts accent on the power of taking action and caring for each other's rights even at the expense of applying weapons. At the same time, he calls people for justice. Beatrice typifies a gloomy and agonized nation who are under the yoke of an oppressive government in which any voice of freedom and justice is dreadfully nipped in the bud and there is no hope for enforcing law. Thus, insofar as people don't rise up and are not united as well as the society lacks public solidarity, people will be living under the same conditions as Beatrice is. Another key point regarding the above is the extreme savagery and murderousness of Cenci on his sons. It is so horrible even to imagine that a parent enjoys greatly seeing his children dead and putting them under the ground whereas children most likely feel really mournful and dejected upon facing their father's corpse. Elsewhere Shelley refers to the brutality of politicians and religious dogma as in:

*"And with considering all the wretched life
Which I have lived, and it is now wretched end,
And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth
To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,
And what slaves these; and what a world we make,
The oppressor and the oppressed."* (70-75 Act 5)

In this scene, he wants to say that Beatrice represents a silent majority whose fear holds them back from rising up and taking action against the despotism. Shelley stresses that such a life would begin and end in a despicable and pitiful manner. He furthers that as Beatrice is subjected to cruelty and injustice, a suffering society similarly cannot expect fairness and equality as promised in religion as long as they have willingly admitted to surrender to autocracy and empty promise of church. Then Shelley asserts that it is the slaves who make the tyrants. In other words, acrimoniously he points to the creation of "the oppressor and the oppressed" by the people themselves.

White (2006, p.182) declares that "Early Romanticism arose during an era in which literary innovations and political identities were shaped by diverse currents of belief and practice, by waves of religious opinion". As a matter of fact, Shelley seems to

be provoking his people to lend a hand to each other and if necessary, forcibly overthrow the rotten and fraudulent rulers as well as discard the superstitious religious orders to sense the real liberty and prosperity. Actually, Beatrice is a multi-faceted character. On the one hand, she is a symbol of suppressed nation by whom Shelley keeps reminding his addressees of the irreparable repercussions of being underdog and passive; on the other hand, she appears as a truly brave and highly determined person and by extension nation who, despite being sexually abused by Cenci and later murdering her father, doesn't get ruined and still keeps her identity.

The latter role of Beatrice is what Shelley intends every nation to be. That is, no matter how much you suffered, like phoenix rise up, blow a different spirit into your veins the way Beatrice did, and say no to the totalitarian rulers. Last but not least, Shelley is struggling with a weird public sense of hopelessness of the current circumstances; he deliberately characterizes a female character, Beatrice, that is traditionally regarded as a symbol of deficiency and frailty but at the same time is a voice of justice, integrity and law as opposed to Cenci who epitomizes strict masculinity, religious hypocrisy and political power. Additionally, Shelley meticulously reverses the conventional gender roles by indicating that a courageous nation must not succumb to destiny set by others as Beatrice was subjected to; rather just like her, they must stay determined, remorseless and progressive. Indeed, Shelley demonstrates an ironic setting according to which sometimes tough conditions, brutality, exploitation and misconduct may result in success, praise and justice. Likewise, he asks his people to be insubordinate, like Beatrice, towards the religious and political authorities, refuse to obey them and never feel penitent as Beatrice did. Having done that, change will occur to people's advantage and their soul, dignity and willpower will remain perpetual, so to speak.

Another outstanding work of Shelley as for his liberalism is *Prometheus Unbound* cited in Abrams et al. (1987, pp. 1754-1781) which is regarded as Shelley's masterpiece. By applying the word, "unbound" Shelley implies that the desire for unrestrained knowledge and power is perilous. Initially, this poem venerates the human's desire to revolt and be disobedient against the repressive and despotic prevailing tenets on the way to attain liberty and lift up the inner self. Furthermore, this poem pictures Shelley's truth-seeking and spiritual knowledge. In other words, the poet's life and political principles have been manifested in *Prometheus Unbound*.

Characterizing himself as one of the most influential Romantic poets, Shelley, just like some of his Romantic predecessors and contemporaries, emphasized on the significance of human freedom as well as the priority of imagination as the key element to gain truth and knowledge. In particular, Shelley has a sneaking suspicion that political establishments, societal organizations and religiously inveterate ideas are not operational and all need to be essentially recuperated.

In *Prometheus Unbound*, Jupiter has tied Prometheus to a big stone since Prometheus rejects to reveal the time of the dictator's, Jupiter's, downfall. Evidently Prometheus appears to be a symbol of resistance who says no to the oppressors and doesn't assist them. Lastly, the tyrant Jupiter was toppled by Demogorgon, who represents the nation, and kingdom was removed. Here, Shelley expertly demonstrates that even if God or a divine being takes the throne, he will probably be a despot. Having stated that, the poet wants to pronounce that a King or Queen, under any name, can by no means become a just ruler and must be removed from power. After being freed by Hercules, Prometheus out of love is determined to aid his men to break away from unhappiness and misfortune. Afterward, Prometheus wraps up his talking about firstly Asia who represents indefinite love and widespread intimacy, then about Earth who symbolizes the Mother Nature, and finally speaks of the most important origin of all human beings' sorrow which is epitomized in loss of life or mortality. Moreover, in *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley again brings forth his exclusive conception of death which is commonly misunderstood by people. To clarify, according to him, the true death is our daily routine and physical life for the reason that our spirit has already been yoked by our material and decaying physique as in:

"ASIA:

Oh, mother! Wherefore speak the name of death?

Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,

Who die?

THE EARTH:

It would avail not to reply:

Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known

But to the uncommunicating dead.

Death is the veil which those who live call life:

They sleep, and it is lifted" (108-114 – Act 3- scene 3)

Here, Asia (Prometheus's true beloved) seems to be relatively bewildered as to the concept of death. She addresses the Earth (Prometheus's mother) by posing two questions about death: firstly, she asks, why on earth should they talk about death? Secondly, she questions, is death the inability to "*love, and move, and breathe, and speak*"? Then she implies that this is physical death and her love, Prometheus, would never die as he is eternal. On the other hand, the Earth doesn't respond to Asia's questions supposing that her son, Prometheus, would be everlasting. She stresses that this matter can be understood by not the living people, but the dead since from her perspective, death is close to the ultimate truth; besides, in death or sleep, curtains and covers get removed and taken away so that human will be able to see the reality. Hence she believes that Prometheus will reach the reality after death. Once again by using femininity, The Earth, Shelley expresses truth from the mouth of a female character. Actually, this sonnet is a reflection of dejection. Shelley implies that death and alteration are inevitable from which no one can get away. With respect to the context behind this sonnet, it should be noted that Prometheus here has been tied to a big stone by Jupiter since he didn't say the time of Jupiter's downfall. As a result of this tough event, Prometheus realized that love and commitment not animosity and grudge are the key things in life. Ultimately, Prometheus's prediction comes true and Jupiter gets dethroned; therefore, despotism comes to end.

This supernatural revolution indicates a bloodless rebellion and that delight and prosperity can be borne out of chaos which can benefit all humanity. Of course after this event, Prometheus gets freed and thinks of saving humans from discomfort and sorrow. Later on, once Prometheus closes speaking about Asia (his true love) and Earth (the mother of all), he goes on discussing death from which all human grief and gloom originate. As can be observed, Shelley again refers to his philosophical definition of life and death through the character of Earth by saying that the life people are living is already a kind of death indeed since human's transcendent spirit has been enchained by the physical existence. More to the point, Prometheus acts like a savior or Christ whose duty is to emancipate mankind from being slave to any ideology while having no power and right of choice. To carry out this mission, Asia, Prometheus' love, comes to his help who symbolizes love, reality and attractiveness

for him. Being a sort of a tragedy-comedy, at the end, Shelley depicts the perishing of the evil, Jupiter, and emergence of a delightful fresh life that would bring men back to autonomy and freewill. Therefore, mulling over the fact that Prometheus is one of the benevolent and indispensable gods in Greek mythology, we can realize that Shelley does repudiate any punisher god and believes in only and only a helpful Almighty Being who is of a considerable talent to lend a hand to human beings. This notion has been shown in Prometheus' action when he goes and steals fire to get it to humans.

Elsewhere he would deceive Jupiter in order to get fur, body fat, internal organs, skeleton, etc. from the slaughtered living creatures to provide human beings clothes and food; that is why, Prometheus was locked up to a big stone while a hawk biting and chewing his internal organs during the day, but by the night that organ started repairing and reproducing itself. Caucasus is the name of the mountain to whose cliff Prometheus had been fastened which can be interpreted as a symbol of nature's durability and perpetuation. Shelley's use of hunting bird, cliff or the mountain that are all elements of nature here is similar to his emphasis on *Mont Blanc* which is specifically a paramount characteristic of Romantic poets. At the same time, this stability and eternity of the mountain is analogously compared to those of Prometheus who strongly avoids surrendering to the autocracy. Just exactly the way mountain can withstand the freezing winters and ruinous storms, Prometheus as well puts up with the life-threatening tortures such as hawk's eating of his body, polar cold, the idea of interminable throbbing and anguish, his anger and the wrath of nature. Ironically, unlike the mountain which undergoes physical alterations including color change and erosion as the time goes on, Prometheus seems to be stronger and more stable than even the mountain so seriously that from the beginning to the end of the play, he has an unwavering will power and practices what he preaches.

As a matter of fact, Prometheus is a symbol of true love who even forgives Jove (another Mythological god or Titan). Having suffered so long from Jove's torments, Prometheus realizes that love and good sense must take the place of loathing and animosity. This matter is unveiled in the poem when the scenery changes and spring is substituted by winter. Also Asia, his love, undergoes a transformation by becoming a lively traveler who goes through the woods and climes up the mountains,

etc. whereas she used to be an indolent and drowsy woman. All these ups and downs in characters signify Shelley's interest in constant amendment, internal and external revolutions in humans which can be implemented by means of love. It can also be inferred from Shelley that a state of decline and decadence is prerequisite for the upcoming achievements, encouraging transformations and grand successes.

In the following lines from *Prometheus Unbound*:

"Sink with me then,

We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,

Even as a vulture and a snake outspent

Drop, twisted in extricable fight,

Into a shoreless sea" (70-74 – Act 3- scene 1)

Shelley illustrates the defeat of Jupiter via utilizing the words "vulture" and "snake". Implicitly the poet declares that inevitable fate of a dictator or oppressor would be nothing but downfall. Jupiter represents any despot who finally has to pay a heavy price for his extravagance and injustice. What is more, fear and cowardly behavior are attributed to Jupiter by the poet who calls him a vulture which can only chomp and devour the dead creatures and is not brave enough to attack them while they are alive. By this image, Shelley alludes to all the tyrants. At the same time, the word "vulture" hints at a state of revitalization, change and purification, which in this poem refer to Prometheus. Moreover, vulture gives an inkling of endurance, persistence and reason that again belong to Prometheus. On the other hand, there is another symbol in this poem that is snake. According to Greek mythology, this symbol along with vulture jointly refer to eternity, change and cure. I suppose these images suggest Shelley's philosophical attitude which regards life as a place of alteration and that there is nothing immortal here; the genuine remedy lies in a world where one can feel eternal. Other than that, snake shows the evil and harm that Jupiter brought upon Prometheus which is now all over. In the last two lines, we observe the extreme desperation in Jupiter, which is a familiar tone for all tyrants, once he finds himself as a loser in the battle field twisted in extricable fight, who must now join the infinity, "shoreless sea", with an indefinite destiny and no way out.

"Yet am I king over myself, and rule

The torturing and conflicting throngs within,

As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous" (492-494–Act 1)

Here, Prometheus compares his kingdom with that of Jove. His way of reigning is to have power over the mass of agonizing, tormenting and contradictory feelings and thoughts residing in his brain and heart. This is in contrast with how Jove runs his kingdom which is replete with devil, hellish atmosphere and rebellion. In these verses, Prometheus hesitates temporarily as for the rage and wrath, however, he expresses a tinge of comfort when he says, "...*rule the torturing and conflicting throngs within*". As a matter of fact, here Prometheus appears as a Christ-like figure who abides by the torments and pains imposed on him in the hope of a more prosperous and calm life for all human beings.

"Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace

[Which] When they struggle to increase,

Are to us as soft winds be." (796-798–Act 1)

As can be seen in these lines, Shelley calls attention to concepts such as wisdom which is a prerequisite for every human and more importantly a necessity for a decent ruling system. Then comes justice without which expectation of a lively and cheerful society and a democratic system would be pointless. Additionally, love which is represented in Prometheus' wife, Asia, functions as a driving force and stimulus to move the matters forward as well as it is the source of assistance for other humans. Last but not least, it is peace that comes into play which is one of the characteristics of a wise, just and kind society and government. From Shelley's viewpoint, nature provides humans with peace and quiet. According to him, once wisdom, justice, love and peace level up, they will be blowing like a gentle breeze, spreading all over the world and permeating through everywhere like a pleasant aroma. Therefore, in Shelley's philosophy, these four concepts play an underlying role. On the other hand, in the following excerpt from *Ode to the West Wind*:

"Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth

Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,

If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" (66-70 – Canto V)

Shelley's language becomes rather prophetic. Essentially it is felt that his heart still thrives hope for the betterment of human beings. He wishes his message, the "ashes" and "sparks" of his heart, mind and spirit to be spread out all over the world "among mankind". In effect, Shelley seems as if he is sick and tired of the people around him who look like uncaring and apathetic individuals for whom nothing matters. Shelley as a poet, knows that the only means by which he can leave an impact on the humans and get them up is his poetic language as in: *"Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth"*. In the last few lines, Shelley adopts an optimistic and farsighted attitude addressing again nature elements, "wind", "winter" and "spring" and simultaneously posing a rhetorical question that no difficulty in life lasts forever; everything, be it good or bad, is transient. Therefore, behind every grief and distress (winter), there must be delight and bliss (spring).

"No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure

I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?

I ask you Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,

Has it not seen? The sea, in storm or calm,

Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,

Have its deaf Waves not heard my agony?

Ah me! Alas, pain, pain ever, forever!" (24-30 – Act 10)

As for this part of the poem, I should remark that Shelley portrays under what appalling circumstances Prometheus is. Indeed, this much cruelty of Jupiter inflicted on Prometheus is simply because Prometheus wanted to help humanity by getting fire and giving it to people. Nonetheless, he was tied to a precipice to be tortured as a chastisement for disobedience. In spite of that, Prometheus carries on putting up with this throbbing that hurts him intrepidly. He mocks the autocracy of Jupiter by saying that this physical "pain and scorn" are by far easier for him to bear than that to lay down his arms to Jupiter. Thus, we think of Prometheus as a conqueror both due to his audacity and risking his life for humanity by fire as well as his tolerating the

dreadful repercussions of his act. In a nutshell, Prometheus is lion-hearted, defiant, long-suffering and self-controlled.

To illustrate, the above verses, which are one of the rare lines of Shelley, confirm his despair concerning the state of affairs as if the current conditions are not supposed to get better; everything is painstakingly immovable and stuck; nevertheless, the poet even then prefers to bear this situation and flourish hope. Having addressed the nature elements such as “Earth”, “Heaven”, “mountains”, “sun” and “storm”, Shelley cries out that mountain could sense his feelings and problems, but people couldn’t. Sun could watch his upsetting situation, however, people failed to. Sea both in severe violent storms and in its serenity did see and touch the poet’s agitating mood; he also shouts that even in “heaven”, his torturing voice was heard, but human was deaf and heard nothing of the poet’s suffering. Finally, Shelley distraughtly feels pity for himself declaring that there has always been “pain” and so will it be “forever”.

Stylistically speaking, Shelley’s use of rhetorical questions here is so smart and remarkable which all accentuate the robustness of the circumstances under which Prometheus has been situated, to be exact. In a point of fact, taking the above into account, one can realize that Prometheus is the ideal and full-scale character Shelley expects his interlocutors to be. We should bear in mind that other than Prometheus, fire also functions as a sign of inventiveness, originality and purification which all can be attained by strong imagination, an indispensable factor in Shelley’s argument on man. The purpose of giving fire to humans by Prometheus is to teach them how to make and produce something. In a word, it is no exaggerating claim if it is said Prometheus wants to recreate humans so benevolently not the way Jupiter did. Characterizing Prometheus, Shelley, I assume, expresses his egalitarian tendencies by poking fun at any Supreme Being or God who positions himself higher than any other being. In fact, Shelley’s ideal man is the one who, despite his seemingly superior status, selflessly serves for the humans, be it God or any other high ranking being.

Briefly, Shelley has faith in a God or creator who makes a great deal of contribution to his created ones even at the detriment of losing his life and being tortured. Last but not least, this mind-set comprises the pillars of Shelley’s iconoclastic philosophy which was truly one of a kind at his time, so to speak. As for Shelley’s perception of love, it can be understood in his “*Love’s philosophy*”. Upon hearing the word

philosophy, one can realize it might have had a bunch of connotations for the poet and reader. I think this title is a bit enigmatic and baffling as the word *philosophy* is profoundly interwoven with rational considerations and principles which make the title's words seem rather contradictory since love doesn't ordinarily follow sensible rules. Having said that, I suppose Shelley implies that there could exist love through rationality and wisdom the way our life is perceived via reasoning. To elucidate the above, let's take the following stanza from *Love's Philosophy* into account:

"The fountains mingle with the river

And the rivers with the ocean

The winds of heaven mix forever

With a sweet emotion;

Nothing in the world is single;

All things by a law divine

In one spirit meet and mingle

Why not I with thine?"(1-8)

Initially, the poet embarks on what the philosophy of love is via explaining nature elements. He speaks of how "the fountains" come together to join and "mingle with the river". Followed by that, the speaker explicates the Way Rivers get together and go in with ocean. As a matter of fact, these natural images stand for all human beings who should stick together and be united; in other words, they are like different bodies in a single soul. Furthermore, when the poet states that "*the winds of heaven mix forever with a sweet emotion*", he establishes an association between the concrete and the abstract. It follows that this universe is the place where the pairs only exist and no single entity can continue living. Besides, for Shelley there is one great and unique soul of which every living and non-living creature is a part. The speaker names this configuration "a divine law". According to Shelley, existence begins from one but has to be muddled up with a bigger soul: "*in one spirit meet and mingle*". Having come to the last line, "*why not I with thine?*", we find out that the poet's yearning for love has not hitherto been gratified.

What is more, by putting forward this question, the poet concludes that he enthusiastically longs for being united with his love both physically, mentally and

spiritually. In fact, this mystical union is similar to the material mixture of the nature elements such as river with ocean because eventually they will be one. Additionally the way the question is asked connotes that his love to the beloved is somewhat unreciprocated. Consequently, based on the aforementioned, we can get to know a principal aspect of Shelley's concept of love. He also maintains and furthers his philosophy in the next stanza saying:

"See the mountains kiss high heaven

And the waves clasp one another;

No sister-flower would be forgiven

If it disdained its brother;

And the sunlight clasps the earth

And the moonbeams kiss the sea:

What is all this sweet work worth

If thou kiss not me? (9-16)

Actually in these verses, the poet refers to harmonious reciprocal dealings as well as interconnections amongst the building blocks of nature. By "*the mountains kiss high heaven*" and "*the waves clasp one another*", Shelley craves for bodily and sensual relationship with his dearly loved one which looks quite normal to him. Moreover, he exchanges these words with her to say that it goes against nature when lovers be away from one another. In essence, Shelley reveals this fact by using the metaphor of "sister flower" justifying that as siblings blood relationship cannot be denied and also trying to reject it is an inexcusable act, his sexual relationship with his beloved, metaphorically referred to as "flower", is just as inevitable as that. To put it more clearly, we can easily figure out that the poet's love and his romantic feelings towards his darling remains unreturned. Plus, by "disdained", it can be inferred that there is a sense of deliberate act of staying away from him by his adored one which the poet finds abnormal since he physically and wholeheartedly hungers for her.

In addition, the speaker's true intention is brought to light in: "*the sunlight clasps the earth*". Here he carries on underscoring the bodily touch between him and his darling through referring to the elements of nature which at the same time indicates the profound sensual feelings of the poet. Furthermore, the speaker desires to embrace

his darling the way “*waves clasp one another*”. This looks very normal to him the way daylight shines through the world. This sensual desire takes up again once he says: “*the moonbeams kiss the sea*”, which openly pictures the degree of his covet to have her beside him. This representation of nature components that epitomizes human features such as “kiss”, “clasp” and sister unquestionably explains the material aspect of the poet’s love. Nevertheless, with regard to the words like “sweet emotion” as well as “in one spirit”, the metaphysical and mystical dimension of his passionate longing can be concluded as well.

One more point that should also be noticed is how the poet draws both stanzas to a close interrogatively. As for the second one, he goes like: “*What is all this sweet work worth if thou kiss not me?*”. Once again, Shelley expresses that except for holding his love in his arms and touching her lips which is an utterly delightful experience, there would not be anything in the world worthy of doing. Simply put, a union with her can quench his thirst for her. The closing verse piles on the strength of the poem since the poet gets restless both for his insatiable yearning for his darling and for falling apart from her. Besides, a sense of contradiction is felt here because unlike his overflowing romantic sentiments to her, she looks down on him. Therefore, it is a sort of sarcastic simile and contention to be united with her which is in contrast with how river joins ocean for the reason that in the former, one begs for love and the other rejects; nonetheless, that is not the case for the latter as nature elements harmoniously and willingly stick together to become one. On the other hand, it seems to me as though the poet has no idea about his love as he doesn’t provide sufficient information about her except when she disdains him.

Presumably, he mustn’t have known adequately concerning his beloved’s emotions or perhaps he didn’t care about them. As a result, it can be inferred that the poet’s love, in spite of its greatness, is too unripe to be reciprocated by her. To put it differently, it is very shallow, disrespectful and lacks admiration of her. All in all, this poem depicts, on the one hand, the poet’s incapability to put her out of his mind and insisting on winning her, on the other, her negligence of him that makes an unanswered adoration. Yet again in the lines below from *Queen Mab*, Canto I, Shelley’s political standpoint one more time comes into view:

“Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;

The subject, not the citizen; for kings

*And subjects, mutual foes, forever play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and of the human frame
A mechanized automaton" (170-180)*

As indicated by the first line, not only the poet, but even nature itself does turn down the Monarchy. Nevertheless, it has always been human's companion, but not an advocate of masses of people because "kings and subjects" have sometimes been enemies of each other that looks more like a sport they keep on playing; however, both opponents will be beaten. This reciprocal animosity can bring about hazards such as immorality, discomfort and pain. Shelley stresses that an honorable human with a decent and righteous spirit would never lay down the rules and regulations for others to do as they are told; nor would he abide by any egotistical orders or decrees issued by others. Moreover, from Shelley's viewpoint, "power" is like an uprooting epidemic disease which contaminates anything it makes contact with. The poet also stipulates that one is not made subservient unless s/he follows orders submissively which is the root cause of dilapidating the whole intellectual faculty, honor, kindness, power of choice and reality. In addition, submissiveness ruins the moral and genuine scaffolding of man by turning him into a yes-man or a machine who simply performs a task.

In his "*poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things*", Shelley demonstrates his wrath on the subjects of political state of affairs running in his country, forthcoming battle, deprivation and destitution in England. The following excerpt would be evidence for this:

*"Does real greatness in false splendor live?
When narrow views the futile mind deceive,*

*When thirst of wealth, or frantic rage for fame,
Lights for a while self-interest's little flame,
When legal murders swell the lists of pride;
When glory's views the titled idiot guide,
Then will oppression's iron influence show
The great man's comfort as the poor man's woe" (19-26)*

At the outset, the poet puts forth a rhetorical question as to whether factual majesty lies in fictitious grandness; his answer is obviously not. He scoffs at the ruling class who are extremely bigoted, play ineffectual role and make vain decisions for the society aiming at accumulating fortune for themselves and deluding the public. Besides, the poet tragically furthers that as long as heads of state have appetite for mounting up affluence and possessions or out-of-control anger to be reputable and highly regarded, the current situation would never get better. Additionally, he remarks that although the monarchy inconsiderately thinks of only and only their own benefits via heaping on their assets, this won't last longer for them as this period is like a dim blaze on the verge of being extinguished.

Once more in the final verses, the poet feels pity for England's exacerbating social and political conditions referring to the fact that rulers egocentrically massacre large groups of people in the name of law and try to legitimize their acts. Besides, when a brainless foolish person takes the lead of the country with its marvelous history, then and only then the tyrant will get stronger and more influential than ever with his megalomania on the ever-suffering and miserable subjects who will have nothing to do but to grin and bear it. Taking the above into account, it can be said that the subject matter of Shelley's poetry is still brand new and applicable even in our day and age though they back to roughly two centuries earlier. As a matter of fact, Shelley's naked and audacious language stands out when he determinedly demands fundamental transformations not only in political arena, but also essential reforms in officials' extravagance, lavishness, unchecked corruption, injustice and discrimination which if all carried out, can constitute a healthful social order and civilized population.

Shelley blatantly reproaches violence, war and subjugation. He accuses the dominant ruling system of not being operational and putting a ceiling on the printed works. He expresses that,

*“Yet shall the vices of the great pass on,
Vices as glaring as the noon-day sun,
Shall rank corruption pass unheeded by,
Shall flattery’s voice ascend the wearied sky;
And shall no patriot tear the veil away
Which hides these vices from the face of day?
Is public virtue dead? – is courage gone?
Bows its fair form at fell oppression’s throne?
Yes! It’s torn away – the crimes appear”* (51-59)

Regarding these verses, Shelley speaks of the extensive corruption of the political officials which is still on the rise and it is so obvious that looks like a day-light robbery or “the noon-day sun”. The poet is terribly agitated by the statesmen’s uncontrolled exploitations that go unnoticed and they get away with it without being penalized. He is sickened by the escalating rate of sweet talk and sycophancy among the country’s high-ranking officials which goes sky-high. Then in the next line, he cannot help calling the public specifically the nationalists, for whom country and nationality matter, to take the lead of a social movement and crush these evils fearlessly. The speaker strives for motivating his people to step forward to wipe out the root of fraud and bribery of the monarchy because for him sitting at home and being unconcerned is just like covering up the vices of the ruling class, thus he wants them to take action against the dictatorship. Once again he raises his voice to be heard when he says, “*is public virtue dead? – is courage gone?* ”. I suppose this line implies two things: first, Shelley seems rather hopeless about human genuine values such as integrity, righteousness and heroism. Second, people’s overwhelming fear of the government that keeps them silent and passive.

In the end, Shelley concludes that the pillars of the despotic regime are very close to collapse and he expects his people to be disobedient and not to bend over to the fake

authority of the monarchy. He truly believes that the ruling system has been worn down which needs a flick to crumble and disintegrate; otherwise misdemeanor and law-breaking will emerge again. Elsewhere again Shelley picks on the monarchy as in:

*“Man must assert his native rights, must say
We take from Monarchs’ hand the granted sway;
Oppressive law no more shall power retain,
Peace, love, and concord, once shall rule again,
And heal the anguish of a suffering world;
Then, then shall things, which now confusedly hurled,
Seem Chaos, be resolved to order’s sway,
And errors night be turned to virtue’s day.”* (165 – 172)

According to the first line, Shelley discusses a very modern concept namely human rights. He holds that “right” is not given to people easily, but it has to be grabbed from the rulers to strip them off their power. The poet also implies that human right is not a social or political gift, rather it is an innate characteristic of him which is born with mankind. In case that any Monarch or regime wants to deprive human of this intrinsic right, s/he must rise up to get their right back. The speaker also states that once individuals figure out their true right, then human society can be managed not by inhumane and overbearing rules and dictates, but by respect, passion, reconciliation and unanimity.

To sum up, Shelley expresses his disgust with clergymen, institutionalized religion, the high-ranking political corrupt officials, the royal family and his country’s constitution when he says *“Thou art God, and Law, and king”* (60) because the current exacerbating circumstances are the outcomes of their dullness of mind and injudiciousness. He despises the current gross extravagant characteristics of his society such as deception, duplicity, beastlike manners, and soon. Additionally, he’s such a democratic poet who states that power must not be held simply in the hand of the ruling class, rather it is the people who must share much of the political power. Then and only then, he asserts, the reign of terror will be ended. In Shelleyan ideal society, social power takes precedence over the political authority which functions as

a panacea remedying all the agonies and afflictions of this universe. Under such conditions, this tumultuous situation, bewilderment and pandemonium will be ironed out; social order and public discipline will turn up and finally the wrongdoings which are as dismal as darkness will be changed into high-mindedness and goodness that is just as sparkling as light. Shelley upholds libertarian political system along with nation's permanent social thoughtfulness which is the underpinning of democracy.



5. CONCLUSION

Romanticism is a profoundly thought-provoking school. Moreover, Shelley is unquestionably one of the greatest figures of Romantic literature. He is of a touching, perceptive and artistic prodigy which springs from his superabundant imagination. Nevertheless, he appears to have turned a new chapter in Romanticism by going way beyond the Romantic principles and theorizing like a philosopher. His tenets were not restricted to the world of rationale, but they explored through the unknown and ever-expanding territories of imagination. This characteristic of his poetic philosophy ties him thoroughly and instinctively to Platonism with which the second chapter of my study dealt. Shelley paid a great deal of attention to imagination which serves as the primary unit of contemplation or reason, genuine beauty, comprehensive change and knowledge. Characteristically, imagination is an abstract and eternal phenomenon and since transcendental and immortal concepts and entities are in the center of Platonism, Shelley was devoted to this philosophical school and became a Neo-Platonist which later influenced a wide variety of his poetic and prose works. Moreover, Shelley was not on the same wavelength with Christianity as for the concept of God. To illustrate, in contrast with Christianity, he absolutely rebuffed God as the ultimate truth. As a Neo-Platonist, he held that speculation and soul-searching can lead to truth. Of course despite this slight opposition, Neo-Platonism and Christianity were similar in some other aspects including body and soul. However, since Christianity was the official and practiced religion of the State unlike Neo-Platonism that was solely considered as a philosophical doctrine, the former was more prioritized and influential than the latter even to the point that Neo-Platonists were hampered and curbed by the Christians.

Having been moved by Plato, Shelley assumed a hierarchical order to achieve truth, that is to say, from natural tangible elements to the higher truth. This stratified postulation of truth was what Plato had already called *Ideal Forms*. Additionally, Shelley states that during this step-by-step process of searching for truth, human mind and spirit would undergo novel changes. As a matter of fact, from Neo-Platonic

viewpoint, nature is an underlying constituent of creation which bears an ever-living spirit that has been manifested in both animate and inanimate beings. On the subject of knowledge, Neo-Platonists assert that it stems from contemplation which itself comes from imagination as the main component. What is more, unlike Platonists, Neo-Platonists such as Shelley attach a second-rate status to reason because they believe it is deficient and cannot by itself lead human to knowledge. Therefore, it can be realized that when it comes to theoretical grounds, Neo-Platonism stands slightly different from both Platonism and Christianity. As though for them, imagination predominantly has the unmatched capacity to broaden the scope of human soul. To put it differently, in line with Platonism and Neo-Platonism, knowledge originates from both material and spiritual entities; however, Neo-Platonists emphasize more on imagination and mental faculties as the principal medium for acquiring knowledge. By extension, Shelley's poetry, as he alleges, is the sheer reflection of his imagination. Furthermore, Plato left an extensive impact on Shelley's opinion of bureaucratic and constitutional reforms and exemplary society. I should also point out that for Shelley, poetry functions as a remedy for any human and social as well as political evils.

Even one of the main reasons he is keen on Plato is that Shelley considers him principally a poet. Notwithstanding Shelley's infatuation for Plato, he didn't have the same opinion as Plato's when it comes to reason and infinite spirit. Besides, for Shelley the true art has been sincerely exhibited in poetry, nonetheless, Plato held philosophy in high regard and even against poetry in spite of the fact that he had built quite a reputation for his poems and flowery language. By the passage of time, Neo-Platonism moved relatively away from Platonism and came within reach of Christianity though at times they encountered conflicts so that Neo-Platonists got virtually ostracized by their religious counterparts due to the Christians' higher political and social status.

Needless to say that both were affected by each other. Above all, since Neo-Platonism was of a go-ahead nature, it even challenged religion and got away from Christianity to a degree that Neo-Platonists and on top of all, Shelley, questioned God and His infinity in a kind of sarcastic way that how come God singles out a particular group of people nearby Him while keeps others away. This sort of questions and investigative spirit caused Neo-Platonism to appear as more an

intellectual school of thought that turned against the previous philosophical schools and religious doctrines. Unlike their seemingly Gnostic tendencies and practices, Neo-Platonists had somehow been the driving force for the burgeoning and spreading of Christian thoughts and values because both of them had a lot in common in the case of spiritual matters though concerning man's prosperous life, Neo-Platonism adopted a more worldly attitude in contrast with Christianity's heavenly good life. On the other hand, apart from their opposing ideas about human prosperity, both Neo-Platonism and Christianity unanimously are of the same mind regarding the metaphysical source of the soul and its union with the One from which it has originated.

In this thesis, I also elaborated on the Neo-Platonic interpretation of truth based upon which truth is two-fold or a top-down phenomenon with the decency at the summit and baseness at the nadir. Thus, it can be concluded that even the iniquity comes from goodness, but not the opposite way. In other words, truth which is equated with the One, itself includes affirmative and adverse aspects that are affected by one another. In a word, the peak of this top-down structure is where human soul, which is very close to the One and truth, is situated; however, at the bottom of it, human body lies. Simply put, for Neo-Platonists, soul and body are integral and individual.

Another significant point to remember is Neo-Platonists keep their eye on intellect or wisdom as a crucial ingredient of human which accumulates knowledge. They declare that human intellect is always progressive and not regressive. In fact, this intellect also belongs to the peak of that top-down structure. Moreover, they state that reincarnation happens to man's spirit right after death which in turn refers to the immortality of the soul which is what Shelley on countless occasions touched upon. Neo-Platonic eternity fascinated Shelley incredibly so that almost in every single work of his, this concept can be observed and sensed. Personally speaking, Neo-Platonists like Shelley were deep and comprehensive thinkers who noticed meticulously the creation of human being via scrutinizing his physical and spiritual attributes and the interconnection between them; nevertheless, they make a distinction between bodily and metaphysical traits on the one hand, and man's intellect, on the other, saying that the former has the innate capacity to advance; however, the latter is imperfect and needs to be united with the soul to achieve the truth. In a nutshell, in Neo-Platonic hierarchy, not all living creatures, but those with

intellectual faculties, i.e., human can be ranked superior to those who lack wisdom that is animals and plants.

As a matter of fact, Shelley's Neo-Platonism was somewhat different; that is to say, imagination to Shelley is like intellect to Plato. From this point on, Shelley gradually diverges from Plato and redefines the ultimate truth taking its source from poetry which is totally incompatible with Plato's definition of truth. For Shelley, unlike Plato, divinity is not in intellect, but in poetry which itself is "the expression of imagination." He assigns an operational function to poetry that is widening the horizon of imagination. Shelleyan poetry never pointed at pedantic and edifying goals. He assumed that the moment an individual sets his imagination into motion, some sort of firm and unyielding feelings and transcendental inspiration take shape in him which direct him at the One or ultimate truth. In consonance with Shelley, poetry is the mother of all sciences and it can be found everywhere in nature. Indeed, Shelley acts as a messenger who ushers in ever-lasting life and love in his poetry. To me, at times he seems to be a kind of mystical poet who believes that worldly ephemeral things are prerequisite for otherworldly permanent phenomena. As reported by Shelley, only poets and those with a greater level of imagination have the ability to sense unearthliness and approach the truth or the One.

In Shelley's philosophy, one must do his best passionately to materialize the truth, if he couldn't reach it, s/he shouldn't let go of it; suffice it not to give it up. It is also important to realize that Shelleyan truth is an ever-changing concept which in this respect is contrary to Platonic truth. He also remarks that poets are closer to the One than the ordinary people that is why their language and message can mirror an aspect of the eternal truth. Briefly, it can be said that Shelley expanded the scope of Platonic truth not necessarily opposing it. As for inspiration, it takes place momentarily which is neither controllable nor planned. He adds that the stronger the imagination, the more the inspiration; hence the more unity with truth which is what Shelley names knowledge. Then again, Shelley stipulates that truth is inside the mind and it is dialectic. Evidently, come to think of truth, Shelley walks on eggs between Platonic realization of it and that of his own. This in turn reveals his ambivalence. Given these points, for Shelley, nature and its mutual interaction with mind are highly significant to discover the truth. For this reason, his poetry entails numerous symbols of nature and imagery.

On the whole, Shelleyan knowledge begins from sensory perception which is contrary to Platonic interpretation of knowledge that refutes physical sense experience. For Shelley, there is no divine creator, but there is divine Nature which arouses imagination, inspiration, knowledge and truth. As shown above, Shelley's materialist tendencies and to some extent atheistic propensities can be understood here. He presumes that deity and divinity lie in the Nature and physical entities, and not in a holy land, which need to be unearthed. His poetry unfolds all these notions. On the other hand, Shelley defamiliarizes the ordinary things he sees around or thinks about by depicting and rediscovering them. What is more, in his poems, the readers are called for internal revolutions since he firmly expresses that every man possesses a great potential for change. He also puts his poetry alongside a magic liquid that can convert a trashy substance into something invaluable and immortal. It shouldn't be forgotten that although Shelley's ambivalence was reprimanded by his readers every so often, I think this irresoluteness of his was indicative of a sort of progressive sophistication rather than a psychical alteration.

In the last part of chapter two, I turned to Shelley's atheism. He postulated that serenity and equanimity cannot be found in God, but in imagination and human wisdom which once more suggests his being affected by Plato. It is also necessary to mention that for Christians, Neo-Platonists were regarded as infidels. On balance, Shelley thunderingly declared that facts need to be established as for the existence of God, otherwise, it is only an assumption to believe in a Supreme Being. Shelley challenged theology by calling it a shallow doctrine which simply dictates its teachings and practices on its followers without being able to logically and sufficiently justify its existence. He draws the picture of a world and life in which religion and God are put aside and people focus their time and capabilities on the palpable and perceptible issues that play a practical and beneficial role in their lives. He claims that only then true knowledge is acquired and life would make sense. Furthermore, he warns individuals of not blowing their time and misemploying their abilities for the sake of substantiating an illusory and misleading entity namely God. By the same token, he didn't proclaim the decency or supremacy of atheism whatsoever; rather for him the only proper alternative was freethinking or godlessness. He concludes that truth can be attained if one makes use of such a knowledge-centered and questioning brain.

As well as, with regard to God, Shelley must have read Milton's *Paradise Lost* as he explicitly refers to Milton, who I suppose was an inspiration for Shelley as both are of roughly similar ideas on Deity. Literally, it is a mindless claim to say that Shelley was essentially and totally opposed to Christianity, but it is wise to assert that Platonism and Christianity were a step-by-step evolutionary ladder on which he climbed deliberately and they both paved the way for enlightening him so that even after reaching to the point of Neo-Platonism, he surpassed it and became an atheist who didn't harshly attack religion but believed in judging and criticizing it. Last but not least, according to Shelley, Knowledge and divinity lie under the skin of material things, and in human cognizance or mindfulness, so to speak. In chapter three, I discussed sublime. Taking Shelley's poetry into account, I need to point out that Shelleyan sublime primarily addresses the nature.

To demystify, a sense of majesty and greatness that nature puts across right before the beholders' eyes is associated with a feeling of fear and unimportance or worthlessness as though natural environment gets the upper hand over human and brings him down. As I argued in this chapter, Shelley's discussion of sublime takes its root in Kantian and Burkean sublime with a larger and supernatural extension. He sets up a linkage between tangible things and a particular broadened feeling of oneself over and above the human upon encountering the nature elements which varies from one person to another.

In addition, Shelley highlights that poetry is the only medium by which sublime can be made known. Some argue that sublime and beauty are alike in many respects; however, it is not the case as the former is an amorphous model and has nebulous sense with no certain configuration, but the latter refers to a harmony of the components with the totality. Other than the abstract sense of sublime which went above, majority of Shelley's literary works, if not all, include sublimity in terms of erudition, eloquent elements, rhetoric, musicality, linguistic quality and wording. What is more, just like imagination, sublime strikes in an instant at a particular time and place. Nothing in the world intrinsically holds grandeur in itself, but it is the observers who assign sublimity to it. Returning back to the thesis main argument, again imagination comes into play as it is the hidden motive behind sublime feeling. With this in mind, imagination can determine the kind of sublime be it unfavorable sentiments such as dread and scare or benign emotions for example enjoyment an

enthusiasm. Besides, the proper interaction between imagination and intellect results in sublime. Nevertheless, beautiful is the output of an equitable reciprocity between imagination and comprehension. Equally important, unlike sublime which is closely intermingled with negative and positive sentiments, beautiful refers to anything that can engender contentment or felicity in human.

Despite Shelley, Emanuel Kant theorized that sublime is divided into two categories: numerical sublime which prioritizes reason over imagination regarding the limitlessness, and productive sublime which is well-compatible with Edmond Burke's sublime based upon which reason has the sufficient power to prevail any sort of terror and distress. Consequently, for both of these philosophers, sublime sensations determine the supremacy of reason rather than imagination which Shelley picked up on. Moreover, it has to be noted that Kantian beauty is quite restrained, but his sublime refers to something incessant and inestimable. Indeed, sublimity has been knitted with eternity and infinity; so since nature is also never-ending and perpetual, it is an overt manifestation of sublime. Plus, Kant asserts that a real artistic work should be universal, lively and progressive in order to survive which is more or less analogous to the sublime expression of art. Then as well, when it comes to Burke, his description of sublime is similar to that of Shelley when he says sublime sentiment or scene has the ability to awaken a sense of fear, dread, nothingness and even comfort as the most vigorous sentiment of human beings.

In truth, the sublime power of nature or art, as presented above, does not irresistibly stand against the Supreme Being's or God's might, but it tends to teach us how to apply our infinite imagination to ponder upon and make inquiries about phenomena around us including nature elements such as stones, animals, rivers, fire, mountains, etc. or abstract concepts for instance, God, transformation, betterment of human life and so on. Burke added that sublime also bears a sort of spiritual and psychological merits such as making human humble before a power superior than him with no jeopardy or menace. Thus, according to Burke, sublime doesn't necessarily spark pessimistic or abrogating sensations. He also stressed that sublime is somewhat tied with a little bit of uncertainty or ambiguity rather than clarity. In other words, human mind is more affected by vagueness than transparency, he says. Burke furthers that this capability of sublime to create delight or agony arises from a very strong foundation, i.e., imagination which is the common point between him and Shelley.

Generally speaking, the difference between Shelleyan sublime and that of some other Romantic counterparts as well as few philosophers prior to him, is that Shelley outspread the ordinary denotation of sublime by calling it an innate strength for human and not against him that can augment his knowledge of creation and the mind through divulging the secrets of the natural world and recognizing man's true position in the universe.

Furthermore, Shelley states that there are two major prerequisites for imagination: consciousness and overflowing emotions without which sublime cannot be perceived. In line with Wordsworth, Shelley remarks that it is poetry, not prose, which has this potential to mirror sublime. As discussed in Chapter three, although Shelley was one way or another inspired by Wordsworth, his demonstration of nature was evidently more different and tougher than Wordsworth's. To elucidate, Wordsworthian nature is replete with tranquility, care and charm, however, Shelley depicts it as both awe-inspiring and cataclysmic. On the other hand, Wordsworth refers to the union of man with nature whereas Shelley emphasizes on the greater power of nature over man. Besides, having had rich imagination, both poets have been immensely influenced by nature as the main source of inspiration. For Shelley, imagination in mind should be like blood running in body and it has to be exercised by contemplation and raising awareness; otherwise individuals would fail to understand the beauty and splendor of nature and its sublimity. Expressly, Wordsworthian sublime connotes love, intimacy and comfort; on the contrary, the impression of Shelleyan sublime stands for littleness, scare and dismay which has a lot in common with sublime in Coleridge.

In essence, when Shelley talks about sublime, he doesn't solely appreciate or portray nature's greatness, but he wants to inspire his readers and posterities to undergo a metamorphosis both spiritually and intellectually which is the necessity for triggering imagination and eventually acquiring knowledge. These points are illustrated thoroughly in his poems. In the light of the above discussion, it makes sense to say that Wordsworth's poetry addressed human along with his mutual role and duty towards nature; nevertheless, Shelley calls nature under whose authority man lives. Shelley holds that nature is physically everlasting; nevertheless, human is not. Since eternity is a major concept in Shelley's poetry, he prefers nature to man. Metaphorically, Shelley draws a parallel between nature's perpetuity and the

immortality of human knowledge. Although he openly expresses his gratitude to Wordsworth as a brilliant poet, he is not of the same opinion with him on the mission of poetry. For Wordsworth, poetry should be written in the colloquial language of the ordinary people and it should drive people to get in close contact with nature.

However, for Shelley, poetry should denote imagination and imagination would lead individuals to truth. On the basis of the evidence currently available, it seems fair to suggest that Shelley equates imagination with catharsis that can purge baseness and immorality in human. On these grounds, we can argue that Shelley's revolutionary poetic philosophy crosses the borders of literature and galvanized the forthcoming scientists and philosophers such as Darwin and Marx as they confessed so. Regarding Shelley's *Mutability*, the notion of change might have been a herald to Darwin's theory of evolution as alteration plays the most central role in this theory. As well as, Shelley's passion about physical nature and experimental science may be another compelling evidence for inspiring Darwin. As went above, majority of Shelley's poems in one way or another deal with conversion and evolution. Indeed, prior to Shelley, no poet had ever struggled to draw a close connection between poetry and material knowledge. I assume that an intellectual such as Darwin is unlikely not to have heard about or read Shelley as he had a poet friend, Henry Mathew, who first introduced Shelley's works and his revolutionary, evolutionary, freethinking and pagan inclinations to Darwin. It is also said that they had a great deal of controversy and deliberation on Shelley and his infamy. Shelley's permanent emphasis on nature, change and visible phenomena truly make him stand out as an evolutionist. Consequently, having been influenced by Shelley's worldly ideology, Darwin could have gestated nature and its diverse species to ultimately develop his world – shattering theory.

To sum up, thanks to Shelley, sublime today has been spread out all over the place from literature, architecture, engineering and painting to human's inner world and society. In chapter four the debate revolved around Shelley's political leanings and his measureless dissatisfaction with the ruling system as well as vast social and economic gap in England. Having witnessed these predicaments, injustice and unlawfulness, he had no weapon, but poetry in his hand to make his people rise and shine. He attaches weight to the power of poetry in cultivating and indoctrinating the masses, gaining knowledge, calling for revolution against the tyrant rulers and

establishing law and order in society. This suggests Shelley's democratic propensities which are well-compatible with the concerns of today's thinkers. As a way of explanation, Shelley wants to teach a historical lesson to and remind the Monocrats that kingdom or ruling never lasts forever; even slave drivers like Ozymandias ultimately were overturned. A closer look at Shelley indicates that primarily he is in favor of public disobedience in a peaceful manner, but if it does not work, he finds it unavoidable to resort to violence. Additionally, he points his finger at the passage of time and its transience in the sense that things of the past would no longer hold true for the future. Along similar lines, Shelley argues that as long as people are indifferent towards the social and political events in their country, hunger, disease, brutality and ignorance will be on the rise.

What is more, the foregoing discussion implies that Shelley plays a Christ-like role by being the voice of the underprivileged class. He expresses hatred to the monarchy which abuses theology and law in its own advantage in order to invigorate the pillars of its empire. Time and again he upholds the fair share of national wealth and political power among different social classes rather than giving them over to particular privileged group. Indeed, Shelley goes over again that right is not given, but it is taken. For him, it is an indisputable right of every nation to be in control of its destiny, or else they will pay a heavy price for it. His political poems plainly exhibit these points. The difficulties and ups and downs of this objective are displayed in his poem once he repeatedly becomes disappointed and then again gets his hope back when starts believing in the power of individuals. Owing to the fact that he is a Romantic poet and nature plays a fundamental role in this school of thought, Shelley gets help from natural elements in his poetry such as mist, light, mountain, river, etc. so as to encourage people to get up and take action. He asserts that Mother Nature is like a school that has a lot to teach folks; after all, we all come from and return to nature.

Thus, one must scrutinize the cycle of birth and death and compare it with that of his own to get to know his role and mission in the universe. Moreover, Shelley stresses that if corruption, murder, abuse, impartiality, etc., are to get amended, it has to begin from top to down, i.e., the authority first need to get amended and then the subjects rather than the other way round. He states that it is the poor and cowards who engender the rich and the oppressors; hence, his poetry employs the theme of public

awareness and knowledge to indoctrinate them with values and characteristics of an ideal society. In all his political poems, he desperately struggles to make his voice heard. From his point of view, every country's decision makers must be elected by its own nation to be called legitimate; otherwise despotism will emerge. Shelley sends a universal message to his readers by stimulating them to do something once and for all in case autocratic regimes are ruling them. He believes that by extending the scope of individuals' horizon and also imagining an ideal society in which people's various needs can be met, this dream can come true. Shelley's prophetic language displays evidently the evils of institutionalized religion once it serves for the political purposes.

He keeps persuading people to attain knowledge and warns them of not falling in the trap of such kind of governments which never care about their own subject except for their survival and staying in power by hook or by crook. Furthermore, according to Shelley, dying bravely is a lot worthier and more dignified than living under calamitous circumstances which is already a sort of gradual death. He maintained that oppression and impoverishment will not be uprooted unless people take possession of liberty. From this, it can be implied that Shelley was not simply a poet, but a spiritual and political leader as well who knew the common language of human soul and saw the impending prospect of his country. Interestingly, in his poetry Shelley mostly addresses the people as the backbone of social alteration and at the same time the root cause of oligarchy. As a matter of fact, one of the most influential poets who could tellingly shape Shelley's philosophical, political and religious ideology was undoubtedly John Milton. One reason of this efficacy might be that both poets had been living under more or less identical political and social circumstances. Evidently, compared to his other Romantic contemporaries, Shelley's poetic language brings out into open a large amount of maturation, worldly-spiritual knowledge, widening imagination and penetrating recognition.

Shelley believed that human being is not a creature of his surroundings to surrender to his fate, but every person is living to evolve on the path of life in which sky is the limit. On the other hand, what Shelley means by knowledge is not something gained by formal education; rather it is the product of a pervasive imagination. Plus, it is poetry that generates all-encompassing imagination. Personally speaking, Shelley's skepticism is not considered as a drawback, but it is a way of achieving truth which

begins from materialistic things and passes through transcendental issues. Besides, for him, poet is not necessarily someone who is familiar with literary, stylistic or metrical devices along with rhetoric and eloquence; instead, anyone who is equipped with abundant emotions, contemplation and overflowing imagination is already a poet who is able to revolutionize the world even though s/he hasn't written or composed any poem so far. On the other hand, Shelley gives notice of possible threatening occurrences which are likely to happen and fall over the miserable subjects. If so, revolution will fail to attain goal. He says people deserve apathy and illegality if they procrastinate to revolt in opposition to autocracy.

Shelley's poetry is replete with life and imperishable messages. He asserts that the ultimate goal of the poet is to give birth to knowledge and joy as well as move humans forward. Having inquired into his poems, the reader can realize a discerning eye and an investigative soul behind the verses who keeps digging for truth and his symbolic language goes over and above this palpable world by means of imagination. In addition, Shelley's poetry reveals both physical and metaphysical facets of life. He remarks that poets are even stronger than the lawmakers and politicians. Nonetheless, he expresses pity for poets being unappreciated and undervalued throughout their lifetime. In other words, he was preoccupied with not natural death of the poet, but the passing away of his or her creative and imaginative values and art. Shelley's depiction of nature in chapter four was like a coin on the one side of which lies fierce features and on the other, there are pleasant and tender things just the way human life entails both aspects; however, he reiterates that good always triumphs over the evil. Therefore, he wants people to rise up and bring down the pillars of despotism and religious hypocrisy as they are doomed to collapse. Briefly, he tends to say that it is never too late to amend.

In relation to liberty, Shelley calls it a very significant component of imagination. The word liberty connotes both politically as discussed above and individually. As for the latter, he states that imagination occurs to those who are of a high degree of mental and intellectual freedom. To put it differently, freedom of thought is a prerequisite for having imagination. It should also be remembered that under no circumstances does Shelley lose his sanguineness and confidence in people and their collective power with the help of his poetry. In essence, his approach to poetry and truth is sort of defamiliarizing them via redefining and reinterpreting the two

concepts; particularly in the case of truth, its ultimate meaning can never be unanimously achieved due to its dialectic nature. Moreover, Shelley points to the gravity of delight as precondition in his poetic philosophy. To clarify, once again he maintains that loving nature and anything crystallized in natural form gives rise to profound imagination that is inherent in delight. In Shelley's view, unlike human who from time to time suffers from discomfort and misery, nature has nothing to do with despair and wretchedness since it knows and is interwoven with only and only delight or pleasure. Shelley's poetry oftentimes demonstrates the inferiority of human before the glory of nature. However, he believes that man can also be as ever-delightful as nature provided that s/he is immersed in it.

To sum up, based on the aforementioned study, it can be concluded that Shelley's eminent characteristics are broad-mindedness, close observation and poetic genius. He was broad-minded since he took delight in political issues. Furthermore, he was so keen on not only the tenets of philosophers and great writers prior to him, but also he rejoiced in the literature, art, religion, culture and history of nations. His close observation can be seen in the analysis of his subject matter, say, when he is speaking about nature's grandeur or sublime feeling that human undergoes upon facing it. Also, he describes how imagination strikes and how poetry yields knowledge and public responsibility against corrupt monarchy. Briefly, his poetic genius comes back to his comprehensive and dominant knowledge over literary devices such as symbolism, imagery, simile, etc., as well as the universal values such as democracy, bravery, love, delight, equality and so on which are expertly scrutinized and illustrated in his poetry for the purpose of acquiring pure knowledge and then reaching truth. Actually, his poetic message travelled way beyond his time and place so that even today these values are acknowledged and are among the major concerns of many people and governments. Thus, it is no exaggerating claim to call him a genius.

I personally think that Shelly could successfully fulfill his poetic aim which was setting up consensus among poetry, philosophical principles and way of life. Having been primarily a Romantic poet, Shelley has a lot in common with his other romantic counterparts. They all were seeking poetic rebirth, holding humanistic approach toward poetry and being captivated by newness. On the other hand, Shelley at some points holds a cynical attitude about the rampant injustice, superstition, religious

hypocrisy, repulsive society, and greedy affluent ruling class with their excessive authority. I suppose these kinds of gloomy realities ironically were the underpinning and impetus to strengthen Shelley's imagination and his optimistic or Utopian speculation. Needless to say that these qualities are truly exclusive and rare at least compared to other Romantic poets which justify calling Shelley a highly-talented poet.

The fact that his poetic philosophy is extremely interblended with that of Plato is because Shelley finds the abstract world more palpable than the material one. For this reason, he was fascinated by the *Ideal Forms* of Plato which exist somewhere beyond the physical universe. It should also be taken into consideration that Shelley's inspiration comes not simply from profound feeling and introspection, but from experience and investigation. However, he was mostly focused on conceptual prototypes such as elegance and truth. Last but not least, Plato's views on the subject of poetry were slightly vague. For instance, he thought that poets are social pariahs who merely have to do with illusory aspects of life though they could have gained some knowledge as well; hence, Shelley and Plato are not perfectly like-minded on their theoretical assumptions. In addition to that, Shelley's Romanticism holds human's imagination, sentiments, grace and enlightenment in a high regard as they are much closer to truth than intellect or reason claims to be. In other words, Shelley doesn't revoke the constructive role of reason or wisdom, but what he means is by poetry there is a peculiar route to catch up to truth. It can be clearly drawn from Shelley's works that his approach to truth was somewhat combinational, i.e., he sometimes merged them with each other. Furthermore, his prose works deal mostly with reason; however, in his poetry, imagination is more prevalent as a way of arriving at truth. Having noted this, Shelley casts off the Enlightenment's claim that imagination functions as a hindrance to intellect or reason. For Shelley, that is not the case because they are capable of helping one another.

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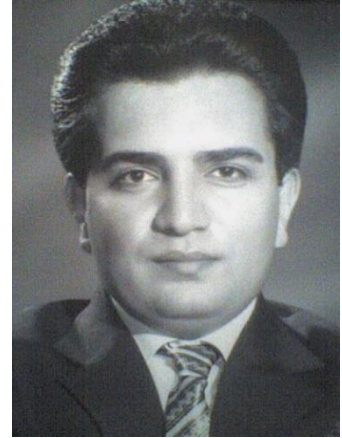
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- I am quite passionate about being a highly sophisticated lecturer as well as holding English language and literature related seminars to share my novel experience with other enthusiastic teachers and learn from them.
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- To further my specialized knowledge in the field of English literature, I am truly good at creating persuasive, cooperative and competitive spirit among learners.

Education:

2015-2019 Istanbul Aydin University, PhD in English Language and Literature

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ferma Leksizalin

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2009-2011 University of Tehran (P.N), M.A in Linguistics

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Teaching Experience:

- 2014-present, Instructor at Istanbul Mediterranean University.
- 2014-present, Teaching academic levels including: IELTS (Academic & General modules), TOEFL (IBT), SAT, GMAT, OET and TOEIC in Istanbul Just English Language Center
- 2015-2018, Teachers’ Coach at Just English Language School in Istanbul
- 2011-2013 Taught academic subjects in Iranian universities including: Literary Criticism, Study of Language, Syntax, Morphology, Grammar (Modern English 1, 2), Practical English usage, Communicate What You Mean and ESS
- 2000-2013, Taught advanced English levels: Passages (1, 2), Summit (1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B), F.C.E, T.T.C, TOEFL (IBT, PBT), IELTS (General & Academic modules), American Headway, etc. in Iranian Language schools in Zanjan.
- 2002-2005, Monitored learning through a range of assessment techniques via partner teaching and English workshops
- Professional at students’ needs analysis
- Developed strategies to deal with students’ classroom performance

- Education counselor
- Gained valuable experience teaching over the last 17 years
- Managed Shokouh Language Institute in Zanjan, Iran for 8 years
- Used a range of interactive teaching methods particularly NLP to enhance learning among students. Moreover, my ability to build a rapport and engage with all students confirmed that my decision to pursue a career in teaching was the right choice.
- IELTS degree holder with overall band 7
- Holder of TOEFL certificate with total score of 88

Skills:

- I.T:**
- Moderate Knowledge of office software, Photoshop and SPSS.

Languages:

- Persian (mother tongue),
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- French (moderate)
- Arabic (reading, listening and writing proficiency and moderate speaking)

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Interests:

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• I also enjoy doing research and delivering lectures on psycholinguistics.

Publications:

1. Mohammadi, Ali., “The Critical Analysis of The Poem “Ode To a Nightingale” by John Keats Through Iser’s Theory of The Act of Reading. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR). December, 2016, Vol. 5, Issue 12, p.1066
2. Mohammadi, Ali, “The Acquisition of Second Language Grammar: A Contrastive Study of Persian and English Articles”: Researchers World: Journal of Arts, Science and Commerce. July, 2016, Vol. VII, Issue 3, p.81
3. Hamidi, M., Kalantar kousheh, M. and Mohammadi A., “A Comparison of the Burden among Iranian Families of Children with mental, physical and hard-of-hearing disabilities”: International Journal of current life Science. Oct. 2013, Vol.3, Issue 10, PP.126-131
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