THE EARLY CRITICISMS OF SHELLEY
IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

THESIS

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BY

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PREFACE

It is the principal purpose of this study of the early criticisms of Shelley to contrast the opinions of him in England and America and to find reasons for the widely divergent attitudes of the reviewers in the two countries. I have endeavored to analyze rather than to collect the reviews printed by the more important periodicals of the early nineteenth century, and I have attempted to discover the forces which molded the critical opinions.

Because I did not have access to many of the original reviews, this study would have been impossible were it not for the work of three authors. With five exceptions which will be noted as they appear, all the notices which are cited in Chapter II may be found in The Unextinguished Hearth, by Newman Ivey White. Whenever possible, I have cited the original articles rather than where they appear in White's collection. For the material in Chapter III, I have drawn heavily from White's book and George L. Marsh's "The Early Reviews of Shelley," which was printed in Modern Philology in August, 1929. Marsh's article is a list of the reviews of Shelley in England from 1811 to 1826, and he has quoted from the reviews which are not widely known.

There is no collection of the early American reviews of Shelley, but a doctoral dissertation by Julia Power,
Shelley in America in the Nineteenth Century, proved to be an invaluable sourcebook for these early reviews. Most of the reviews which are used in Chapter IV have been cited or quoted in part by Miss Power. Although I have been able to obtain most of the early American magazines and have usually quoted the reviews at greater length than Miss Power, her dissertation was of great help and I was able to find mention of many reviews which I might otherwise have overlooked.

I have been able to make a comprehensive study of these reviews only because these three sources were available.

Aside from the original purpose of this thesis, I believe that I have made one other contribution to the study of the early criticism of Shelley. I feel that the material which I have presented on Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine may help to throw new light on that famous magazine's early contributions to the growth of his reputation in England. In the past it has been very often the practice of Shelley scholars to overlook or even to condemn Blackwood's rather than to acknowledge its efforts in his behalf.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: SHELLEY AND HIS AGE

A study of Shelley in relation to his age might well be entitled "À rebours," for few poets have gone so completely against the moral, social, and political grains of their ages as Shelley did against his. Few of the conventions of a bigoted, early nineteenth-century England escaped the virulent attacks of Shelley's pen, and in turn his critics are notorious for the amount of abuse which they heaped upon him. Shelley was considered by the England of his day as the nemesis of all that was good and worthy.

In America, on the other hand, Shelley was almost unknown during his life. The only knowledge most Americans had of the poet was gained through the reading of reviews which were reprinted from British periodicals. Most of the Americans familiar with Shelley, however, were inclined to deal with him sympathetically. America, with its entirely different outlook, seemed to be much more receptive to Shelley than his own native land.

Shelley in England

England in the early nineteenth century was probably the worst of all lands in which a reformer might live. The
nation was absorbed in the Napoleonic Wars—wars which were regarded by most Englishmen as a calamity directly brought about by the insane enthusiasm of the French reformers.\(^1\) The country gentlemen who followed Pitt were firmly convinced that if the King of France had refused to listen to any mad talk about liberty, equality, and fraternity, if he had ordered his troops to do their duty, the French Revolution would never have been born, and there would have been no war between England and France. Therefore the country gentlemen believed sincerely that every concession made to the English reformers would carry their nation just one step closer to bloody revolution and more wars.\(^2\)

It has been said that during the seven-year period from 1817 to 1824 there was less real liberty in England than at any time since 1688.\(^3\) The English people had nothing to do with the laws but obey them. In no way could Parliament be called representative of the people. Parliament represented the aristocracy and, to a certain extent, the wealthiest of the trading and manufacturing classes. No Roman Catholic, Dissenter, or Jew could be elected to Parliament. In order to keep out others, there was a property requirement designed

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\(^1\) Justin McCarthy, _England in the Nineteenth Century_, p. 8.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Howard Robinson, _A History of Great Britain_, p. 719.
to prevent any poor man from obtaining a seat in Commons. 4

After Napoleon's fall at Waterloo, England was in probably as bad an economic condition as France. Industry had virtually collapsed, and the provinces were filled with unemployed workmen desperately seeking work of any sort. The promised prosperity had not come with peace; on the contrary, depression became increasingly heavier on the people. Employment had almost collapsed, and the prices of food and other necessities had become enormously high. In many regions actual starvation threatened. Even the weather seemed to be against England, for both storms and drouths had decreased harvests. 5

Conditions grew steadily worse, and riots increased in number. Hunger-maddened rioters attacked the homes of the wealthy, who did not seem to be greatly harmed by the depression. Illiterate artisans, believing that the development of industrial machinery was the cause of their unemployment, attacked the factories. Many of the rioters were tried under the harsh English laws, and some of them were actually executed. 6

The miserable conditions might have been in part

5Ibid., p. 33.
6Ibid., p. 33 ff.
alleviated had the royal family lived in such a manner that it might challenge the loyalty of the people. Unfortunately this was hardly possible. George III had never been a very worthy king; he had combined very moderate abilities with a very great deal of stubbornness. He had been convinced by those about him that he must rule with a firm hand, and his misrule had almost brought England to her knees. He had been subject to frequent nervous attacks during his adult life, and in 1810 he became finally and completely mad. His eldest son, who was to become George IV, was made Prince Regent.  

The Prince Regent was no better than his father, and in 1819 Shelley was moved to write these caustic lines about the royal family and the Tory "rulers" of England:

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling.

George IV was not the man to improve the lot of the lower classes. He was recklessly extravagant, selfish, and hypocritical. He involved his queen, Caroline, in scandal when he mounted the throne in 1820. He was hardly the man to command the respect of his subjects. He lived in almost Oriental luxury while his people starved. Byron, too, leaves

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7 Robinson, op. cit., p. 721.
8 Sonnet: "England in 1819."
us a record of George's life, describing him with biting irony.9

In August, 1819, the unrest which had disturbed England for many years culminated in the infamous "Peterloo Massacre," when a meeting of Radicals in Manchester was broken up by the troops. The meeting had been called as a sort of rally for democratic reforms, and it was to have been headed by "Orator" Hunt. Just as the meeting was getting under way, troops and special constables attempted to arrest Hunt, and a riot broke out. When the confusion that followed finally cleared away, twelve persons were dead and several hundred were wounded or injured. The Peterloo Massacre was in its own way as decisive as Waterloo; it was the "moral death-blow of the old Toryism."10

Such were the conditions in England for the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The Tories felt only horror at the thought of reform, believing as they did that reform was the first step toward revolution. The Church of England felt that its fate lay with the Tories, because the reformers of the French Revolution had attempted to do away with religion.

The young poets of England, firmly grounded in eighteenth century rationalism and holding an unshakable belief in the perfectibility of man, naturally rebelled against

9 Don Juan, Canto VIII, stanza cxxvi, ll. 1007-1008.
10 Robinson, op. cit., p. 720.
such a completely repressive government as that of England. They were firmly convinced that conditions could and must be improved.

Chief among the young Romantic poets who rebelled against the conventions of early nineteenth-century England were Shelley, Byron, and Leigh Hunt; and these three, and Keats, were probably the most abused men in the history of English literary criticism. With the exception of Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, almost every periodical in England seems to have been devoted to the destruction of Shelley's position as a great British poet. Some of the more liberal magazines, especially *Blackwood's*, gave Shelley credit as a brilliant poet, but they almost unanimously condemned his moral and political philosophy.\(^{11}\)

Shelley had the misfortune to spend his entire productive life under the most violent of anti-reform governments. Within a short time after his death, however, Toryism had run its course; reform had come to England, and Shelley was to be considered as one of the greatest of English poets in the reaction which followed.

Shelley was never ignored by his contemporaries. On the contrary, he received more notice by the critics than any of his contemporaries except Byron and possibly Moore

\(^{11}\) For an excellent study of *Blackwood's* recognition of Shelley and for its service to him, see Alan Lang Strout, "Naga, Champion of Shelley," *Studies in Philology*, XXIX, 95-119.
and Scott.  

It is equally true that with the possible exception of Byron, Shelley was the most universally condemned of English poets. Of a total of about two hundred and forty items concerned with Shelley which appeared in seventy-three periodicals and eleven books and pamphlets, only fourteen can be said to be definitely friendly.  

The publication of *The Revolt of Islam* in 1818 and his association with Leigh Hunt was sufficient to brand Shelley as a notorious radical and bring the entire force of conservative opinion against him. Hunt's championship of Shelley probably harmed more than helped, because his openly expressed radicalism made any recommendation a veritable kiss of death. Shelley's unconventional and unhappy domestic life contributed fuel for the furnace of hostile criticism and did him great damage in the eyes of religious authorities.

The principal characteristic of conservative criticism was threefold: fear of the change to a new form of poetic expression, fear of political radicalism, and fear of moral and theological radicalism. Shelley was not the only poet to run against the grain of critical opinion, but

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the intensity of his feelings made his "offenses" greater in the eyes of the conservative Tory reviewers.

That Shelley's genius was recognized and that his influence was strong is attested by the very great number of reviews of his works. The strongest proof that the Tory reviewers recognized his power is the great number and violence of their reviews. He surely would not have attracted so much attention if his poetry had been insignificant.

The most remarkable feature of British criticism of Shelley in the first quarter of the nineteenth century is that there could have been any favorable criticism in the light of the attitudes of the age. The articles in Blackwood's were usually devoted to the task of trying to offer constructive suggestions. To support Shelley at that time was a dangerous undertaking. To acknowledge his genius during his lifetime was to invite abuse from both civil and moral authorities. Recognition of Shelley's genius and governmental and social reform came to England almost simultaneously.

Shelley in America

Although America was to Shelley the most democratic nation in the world, and consequently the most advanced, the poet had little to say of the struggling young nation in his works. His chief praise of America is to be found in The Revolt of Islam.\(^{16}\) America was closely associated

\(^{16}\)Canto XI, stanzas xxii, xxiv.
with his political ideas, and its system of government "was
the first practical illustration of the new philosophy."\textsuperscript{17}

Although in its early days America was dominated by
the Federalists, who feared an "excess of democracy," demo-
cracy was to triumph in the second quarter of the nineteenth
century. From the beginning of the nineteenth century the
democratic system had grown as a rolling snowball. Under
the administration of Andrew Jackson (1828-1836) democracy
was to be finally and completely victorious.

In its philosophy of life Puritanism and democracy
seemed to be basic and equal tenets of America. New England
saw the development of Unitarianism, a faith which could be
fully developed only within a nation in which freedom of
religion was assured.

America was not torn by strife between liberals and
Tories. The Federalists, who were the nearest American
equivalent of the Tories, were defeated in 1800 and were
never able to exert any real influence in American politics
again.\textsuperscript{18} The two major parties after 1800 were the Repub-
licans (later Democrats) and the Whigs, and neither was
especially conservative. The chief disagreement between
the two parties was rather an argument over the means by
which the best democratic government could be achieved.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{A Philosophical View of Reform}, Rolleston edition, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{18}Homer Carey Hockett and Arthur Meier Schlesinger, \textit{Land
of the Free}, p. 130.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 231 ff.
Democratic ideals were in a constant state of growth. The states were steadily liberalizing voting restrictions so that more Americans could participate in their government, and the aristocratic tradition which had been inherited from England had entered into a period of gradual decline.\textsuperscript{20}

In this period America was at the threshold of an era of almost unbelievably great expansion. Although the rising American industry was at times arrested in its growth by financial panics, recovery always returned with greater force. There was never the widespread unemployment and insecurity which was so prevalent in England. Although working conditions were far from ideal at this time, American workers did not suffer to any great extent. The tremendous size of America enabled dissatisfied workers to move to more promising areas when conditions became intolerable. By 1830 trade unions had entered into the lives of workers. The idea of free public education grew proportionately with the growth of social and democratic ideals.\textsuperscript{21}

The decade beginning in 1830 brought the first full harvest of American letters. Longfellow, Whittier, and Holmes glorified the commonplace things of life in poems of simple and genuine feeling. Emerson began to preach the doctrine of individualism and the nobility of man. Poe


\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 242 ff.
demonstrated the versatility of American literature by clothing somber and supernatural subjects with all the beauties of the English language.

Almost without exception American men of letters were protagonists of the democratic ideal. Most were bitterly opposed to slavery, and most had their favorite humanitarian activities. Such an atmosphere would naturally be much more conducive to a favorable acceptance of Shelley than that existing in England. At the same time, however, it could hardly be expected that those who played so great a part in the formation of the democratic tradition in America would be interested in Shelley's political philosophy. Likewise it could not be expected that Shelley's seemingly atheistic beliefs would find any great support in America.

Perhaps the first mention of Shelley in a work published in America was in 1816, in the American edition of Leigh Hunt's Foliage, which was dedicated to Shelley and contained two sonnets on the poet.22 The first notice of any of Shelley's works is to be found in the Belles-Lettres Repository and Monthly Magazine, published in New York, for March 20, 1820.23 Occasional excerpts from British periodicals reviewing Shelley's poems appeared in American

22 Julia Power, Shelley in America in the Nineteenth Century, p. 4.

23 Ibid.
magazines after this date. After 1820 Shelley's name appeared with increasing regularity in American literary magazines, although during his lifetime American readers were forced to rely almost entirely on the British journals and extracts reprinted from them for information about Shelley. It is fortunate that the editors of the American magazines which reprinted the notices of Shelley usually selected the reviews in such a manner that the young poet was shown in the most favorable light.

Shelley did not appear in the most influential of all American literary magazines, the North American Review, until October, 1825, in an article on "Lord Byron's Character and Writings." In a few years, however, Shelley was to receive considerable notice from this magazine.

Shelley's chief American support was to be found in New England and in the South. Hawthorne's essays of general criticisms of the poets reveal a real appreciation of Shelley. Other New England writers also came under the spell of Shelley. Among them were the historian George Lothrop Motley and George William Curtis.

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24 Ibid.  
27 Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Lothrop Motley: Two Memoirs, p. 337.  
The Transcendentalists also gave Shelley a great deal of support. Probably the most ardent Shelleyan of this group was Margaret Fuller, who wrote with a spirit of true devotion to the poet. Of all the New England poets only Whittier seems to have been unfavorable to Shelley.

Philadelphia was another American literary center which early welcomed radicalism. The *Philadelphia Monthly Magazine*, in an article published in July, 1826, was probably the first journal of the Middle Atlantic region to make a study of Shelley.29 Philadelphia was also the city in which the first complete edition of Shelley's poems was published in America in 1845. An earlier, incomplete edition of Shelley’s works had been published in Philadelphia in 1840.30

It is probable that a New York periodical published the first American criticism devoted entirely to Shelley. The *New York Literary Gazette and Phi Beta Kappa Repository*, in its first volume, 1825-1826, made a generally favorable study of Shelley.31

The South was the most favorable of all areas for Romanticism. This region of America seems to have had an almost spiritual sort of Romanticism, revealed by a deep love for the beautiful and unusual. Byron, Scott, and Moore were the first to appeal to the Southern writers. Shelley and Keats were accepted somewhat later.32

Shelley's influence on Southern writers was considerable. The most important poet influenced by Shelley was, of course, Edgar Allan Poe. The similarity between the poetry of Poe and Shelley had been mentioned in the nineteenth century by Edmund Clarence Stedman\textsuperscript{33} and a few other writers, but the main task of tracing Poe's debt to Shelley was left to Killis Campbell in *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, published in 1917.\textsuperscript{34}

It is doubtful that any American poet was more under the influence of Shelley than Albert Pike. His poetry gives evidence of a thorough study of Shelley, and his general style seems to have been consciously or unconsciously taken from Shelley.\textsuperscript{35} Thomas Holley Chivers, now almost unknown, was another prominent Shelleyan, and he wrote rather extensively on Shelley. It is doubtful that Chivers had any poetical debt to Shelley, although he seems to have regarded the British poet highly.\textsuperscript{36}

Shelley became more widely known in the South during the second quarter of the nineteenth century when *The Southern*


\textsuperscript{34}"Introduction," pp. xliiv-liii.

\textsuperscript{35}Susan B. Reilly, *The Life and Works of Albert Pike to 1860*, p. 8; cf. also Power, *op. cit.*, pp. 89 ff.

Literary Messenger published many articles about Shelley and quoted a number of his poems. There does not seem to have been any really adverse criticism of Shelley in the South.

Even the Middle West, which was in the early nineteenth century a predominantly frontier region, was partially acquainted with Shelley at least as early as 1837. It was a midwestern periodical which summed up the tolerant feeling which most Americans had for Shelley. The Western Messenger, a Unitarian journal published alternately at Cincinnati and Louisville, published a notice of Shelley which said in regard to his religious opinions, "Even what is called his atheism is better than the theism of his bigoted condemners." 37

Although Shelley was relatively unknown in America during his lifetime, his appearance on the American scene was greeted with far more favor than it had been in England. It may very well be said after a study of English and American criticisms that America was the first to recognize and approve Shelley's genius.

CHAPTER II

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH CRITICISM
OF SHELLEY

It is not the purpose of this study of the early criticisms of Shelley to present either a collection or a summary of these reviews. Such a collection was made by George L. Marsh in 1929 and by Newman Ivey White in The Unextinguished Hearth in 1938. White's work contains, with four exceptions, all the criticisms of Shelley to appear in British magazines from 1810 to 1822.

The purpose of this study is rather to investigate the nature of the criticisms of Shelley in the light of his age, both in England and America. Therefore, the criticisms will not be arranged according to the works of Shelley, but as they appeared in the magazines which will be discussed, in an effort to study the trends in the criticism of Shelley.


2 For these reviews see Francis J. Glasheen, "An Early Quotation from Shelley," Modern Language Notes, LIX (May, 1944), 335; Maurice Kessel, "An Early Review of the Shelleys' 'Six Weeks' Tour,'" Modern Language Notes, LVIII (December, 1943), 623; William S. Ward, "Shelley and the Reviewers Once More," Modern Language Notes, LIX (December, 1944), 539-542. The review discovered by Glasheen appeared in The Republican, XLV (April 7, 1820), 189-190; that by Kessel in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, III (July, 1818), 412-416; and that by Ward in The Man of Kent, I (November, 1818).
With the exception of those who wrote for the major British periodicals, the authors of most of the early reviews of Shelley are not known. John Wilson and William Maginn were responsible for the Blackwood's reviews. Although most of the Quarterly reviews of Shelley and the Cockneys were by John Taylor Coleridge, Southey was responsible, at least in part, for reviews of Shelley's works. Hazlitt wrote occasional notices during the poet's lifetime, the most famous of which was in his essay "Paradox and Common-Place," in 1821. Leigh Hunt, of course, wrote all the Examiner reviews. The patterns of the less important magazines seem to have been determined by the policies of the editors rather than by the style and critical abilities of the authors.

Unbiased judgment of Shelley's works during his lifetime seems to have been almost nonexistent. Even those critics who could see his poetic powers were usually so shocked by his religious and political views, or by what they had heard about his domestic life, that their comments were often more personal than literary. Leigh Hunt's favorable criticism was overshadowed by his intense personal interest in Shelley's political opinions. The best that most of his

appears in John Wilson, "The Duce of Venice," Blackwood's, IX (April, 1821), 93. The only reference to this article is in Strout, op. cit., p. 106.

3White, The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 125.
critics had to say was that he possessed great talents which were lamentably wasted.

Shelley's youthful works, Original Poetry by Victor and Casire, Zastrozzi, and St. Irvyne, are unimportant, and they do not indicate the brilliance of his later poems. With one exception, the criticisms of these early volumes were very unfavorable. The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle had surprisingly favorable comment on his immature Gothic romance, Zastrozzi; the reviewer found that the novel was "not from any ordinary pen." The Anti-Jacobin Review and Protestant Advocate and The British Critic agreed in damning Shelley's second attempt in the Gothic genre, St. Irvyne, as corrupt and immoral. Other early reviews gave the three juvenile works equally severe treatment.

These early criticisms have little bearing on the later reviews of Shelley's more mature poems. The volumes themselves in no way reflect the thought or style of the more mature works which were to follow. The novels, however, do seem to contain at least the germ of his later views on religion.

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine

A careful study of the criticisms of Shelley's poems

\footnote{Vol. LXXX (September, 1810), 258.}

seems to indicate that of all the magazines *Blackwood's*, at least until 1820, was the most intelligently analytical. In spite of the criticism of Shelley's morals and his philosophy of religion and politics, the famous magazine seems to have attempted sincerely to study the poetry and to make a fair estimate of Shelley's genius. *Blackwood's* has often been condemned by those who favored Shelley, and many have become as bitter in their condemnations of the journal as *Blackwood's* was of Shelley. Those who criticize *Blackwood's* for denouncing the poet's lack of respect for the conventions of the day seem to be unaware of the attitudes of the nineteenth century. They seem to forget that we are all the products of our age. *Blackwood's* has even been accused rather naively of having published "usually the most scathing" articles on Shelley.  

The two chief reviewers for *Blackwood's* were Wilson and Maginn. Wilson was always sympathetic in his treatment of Shelley, but Maginn seems to have disliked everything about the Cockney School. Wilson, while unable to overlook Shelley's unconventional beliefs, was nevertheless always willing to praise his genius and his powers.

We may accept Wilson's account of *Blackwood's* policy toward the poet. Although this review was written six years after Shelley's death, we may believe Wilson when he said

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that during his lifetime Blackwood's

... took a deep interest in Mr. Shelley. Full of admiration for his genius, and pity for his misconduct and misfortunes, we spoke of him at all times with an earnestness of feeling which we know he felt, and for which we received written expressions of gratitude from some by whom he was, in spite of all his unhappy errors, most tenderly beloved. Mr. Hunt must know this; but he is one of those "lovers of truth," who will not, if he can help it, suffer any one single spark of it to spunk out, unless it shine in his own face... he hates this Magazine, not altogether, perhaps, without some little reason of a personal kind... Hazlitt... accused us of praising Shelley, because he was a gentleman... The accusation... is far from untrue, and affords an easy explanation to much of our censure of himself... Hunt, as mean as Hazlitt is audacious, tries to keep the fact of our kindness to Mr. Shelley, and his kindly feelings, and those of his friends, towards us, under his thumb, bitterly feeling that we alone were the friends of Shelley, when he was encompassed by foes; and that we, and none but we, won the world to look upon him with pity and forgiveness—on his genius with admiration.7

Wilson continues this article at some length to show that Hunt was not the most important of Shelley's supporters.

Why was Blackwood's so friendly toward Shelley and Byron and yet so bitter in its treatment of Keats, Hunt, and other Cockneys? The obvious answer would be that Byron and Shelley were gentlemen while the others were not. This answer is at least in part correct, but there are certain qualifying factors which lead one to believe that this is not the complete answer for the reasons for Blackwood's friendly treatment of Shelley. Certainly Wilson was very much interested in putting Shelley, the son of an English

7"Lord Byron and His Contemporaries," Blackwood's, Vol. XXIII (March, 1828), 402.
nobleman, back on the right track in his political and religious opinions. This was a natural attitude for a conservative to take. In order to understand this, one must go back to the age and understand the class consciousness of early eighteenth-century England.

Before the founding of Blackwood's in 1817, Edinburgh periodical literature was almost a Whig monopoly. The magazine which William Blackwood founded was fundamentally Tory, but it was not reactionary. As early as 1818 John Gibson Lockhart wrote that he loathed the "blundering and bigoted pedantry of The Quarterly Review, especially that of Croker and Southey."9

Wilson, who has been described as a "liberal Tory,"10 gradually came to control the magazine, and after 1825 he became the judge of Blackwood's policy. The magazine was soon devoted entirely to literature.11 After Wilson assumed control over the magazine, Lockhart departed for London to become editor of The Quarterly Review; and with him went much of the magazine's caustic sarcasm.12 Maginn eventually left the magazine to become one of the editors of Fraser's. The attack on the Cockneys was laid aside, and it was said

9 Ibid., p. 276.
11 Ibid., pp. 279-280.
that every man of genius who chose to write for Blackwood's could do so.\textsuperscript{13} Wilson himself once wrote that there was "no reason why a man should be condemned because a Cockney or Whig."\textsuperscript{14}

Wilson evidently had his pet aversions, and among them were Keats, Hazlitt, and Hunt. But in the light of his actions, it is difficult to believe that he supported Shelley only because of Shelley's background. He was very liberal in his policies, and it is evident that he was prepared to give credit to any man who deserved it. His policy as editor of Blackwood's clearly shows that he was above attacking a man whose background he did not approve.

The first notice of Shelley in Blackwood's was in January, 1818, when he was mentioned with Keats and Webbe as one of Leigh Hunt's "younger and less important auxiliaries," which the magazine proposed to attack as members of the Cockney School.\textsuperscript{15} This may have been the magazine's original intention, but obviously it did not carry out this policy of condemnation of Shelley.

Six months later the Shelleys' anonymous History of a Six Weeks' Tour was favorably reviewed by the journal. The identity of the authors seems never to have been known to

\textsuperscript{13}Graham, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 280.

\textsuperscript{14}Mary (Wilson) Gordon, 'Christopher North,' A Memoir of John Wilson, edited by R. Shelton Mackenzie, pp. 159-160.

\textsuperscript{15}"Letter from Z. to Mr. Leigh Hunt," Blackwood's, Vol. II, 415.
Blackwood's, for the review of the volume remained unnoticed by both the magazine and almost all Shelley scholars. The reviewer found the little volume original and interesting. Thirty-four lines of "Mont Blanc" are quoted; and while the reviewer finds "some darkness and confusion" in the poem, he finds also "grandeur both of thought and expression—indubitable indications of a poetic mind."

This is perhaps the first real acknowledgement of his poetic capabilities. It seems that had Shelley published his most controversial poems anonymously, signing his name only to the wholly lyrical poems, he would have been proclaimed by the critics one of the greatest poets of his age.

DeQuincy was responsible at least in part for the review of The Revolt of Islam, although Wilson is believed to have been the principal author. This is the first review of a work of Shelley under his own name, and it is a blend of harsh censure of his ideas and praise of his poetic powers. While Shelley's ideas are condemned as "a pernicious system of opinions concerning man and his moral government," the review has considerable praise for the young radical:

16See footnote to p. 16.
17Vol. III (July, 1816), 416.
18Strout, op. cit., p. 97.
19Vol. IV (January, 1819), 475.
It will easily be seen, indeed, that neither the main interest nor the main merit of the poet at all consists in the conception of his plot or in the arrangement of his incidents. His praise is... that of having poured over his narrative a very rare strength and abundance of poetic imagery and feeling—of having steeped every word in the essence of his inspiration.... Mr. Shelly [sic] has displayed his possession of a mind intensely poetical.... In spite of a certain perversion in his modes of thinking.... he has displayed many glimpses of right understanding and generous feeling, which must save him from the unmingled condemnation of even the most rigorous judges. His destiny is entirely in his own hands; if he acts wisely, it cannot fail to be a glorious one.... Mr. Shelly, whatever his errors may have been, is a gentleman, and a poet; and he must therefore despise from his soul the only eulogies to which he has hitherto been accustomed—paragraphs from the Examiner and sonnets from Johnny Reats.20

Could this be the magazine which Leigh Hunt and others have condemned as a hostile journal? It is not strange that Shelley's political and moral opinions drew fire from the conservative Blackwood's. It is strange, however, to find such praise from a supposedly hostile journal.

Blackwood's sternly reprimanded Shelley in the review of Rosalind and Helen.21 The magazine calls Shelley a "true poet," but it strongly condemns the manner in which he misuses his talents. The criticism cannot be called hostile, but it can be called a very questioning study of Shelley's ideas. The poem is quoted at length, and then Wilson proceeds to point out many puerile ideas which the poet presents. Shelley is taken to task for going out of his way

20 Ibid., p. 436.

21 Vol. V (June, 1819), 268-274.
in order to attack religion. The reviewer points out the absurdity of condemning all priests simply because a few are false. Merely because one is disgusted with certain phases of religion, Wilson points out, one cannot say that the whole of religion is false.\textsuperscript{22}

Shelley's rather naive political ideals are shown in their true light as the magazine points out that while governments are not always perfect, they are surely necessary as a practical means for the achievement of security. What, Wilson asks, is Shelley trying to prove by tearing down every convention, every institution, of society? What is his moral?\textsuperscript{23}

Wilson seems wholeheartedly sincere when he pleads with Shelley to put away his childishly rebellious ideas and write as a true poet should write. Wilson asks only of Shelley that he apply his talents properly. The critic promises that if Shelley does not waste his talents with radicalism, he will occupy a place with the greatest of English poets.\textsuperscript{24}

An additional proof that Blackwood's was a friend of Shelley is the review of \textit{Alastor}.\textsuperscript{25} In this somewhat belated review the magazine came to Shelley's aid against the harsh, cruel attacks of the \textit{Quarterly Review}. The

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 273. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{23}Ibid., p. 274.
\textsuperscript{24}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{25}Vol. VI (November, 1819), 148-154.
reviewer seems to think that this is Shelley's first pub-
lished work, and the review clearly shows a belief in
Shelley's poetic powers and points out the progress he has
made.

The most interesting feature is, however, the counter-
attack against the Quarterly Review and other hostile peri-
odicals:

By our periodical critics he [Shelley] has
either been entirely ignored, or slightingly noticed,
or grossly abused. There is not so much to find fault
with in the mere silence of critics; but we do not hesi-
tate to say, with all due respect for that journal, that
Mr. Shelley has been infamously and stupidly treated in
the Quarterly Review. His reviewer there . . . does not
show himself a man of such lofty principles as to en-
title him to ride the high horse in company with the
author of the Revolt of Islam . . . . He exults to
calumniate Mr. Shelley's moral character, but he fears
to acknowledge genius.26

The review concludes with an urgent plea to Shelley to
leave his rebellious mood and join the true poets of Eng-
land.

Almost a year had passed after the Alastor review be-
fore Blackwood's again noticed a work by Shelley. This work
was Prometheus Unbound, and the magazine did not find much
merit in this poem.27 This review is especially interesting
because it becomes evident here that the magazine did not
find its support of the poet an easy path to follow, and in
this review Blackwood's defends its policy of giving him
sympathetic treatment.

26 Ibid., p. 153. 27 Vol. VII (September, 1820), 673-687.
Wilson has a great deal of condemnation for Hunt, and he insists that Shelley would be much better off if he did not have supporters like Hunt. This review indicates that the magazine believed Hunt responsible for much of Shelley’s radicalism, and Wilson calls upon him to abandon the Cockney School. Wilson here seems like an indulgent father trying to lead his son away from his bad companions. He mourns the bad influence of the men who have misled his son, but he is always ready to forget the past if the son will only come back home. Wilson seems to be firmly convinced that it is Shelley’s duty to be a conservative and to support the interests of his class. The reviewer finds that Prometheus, probably because of Hunt’s bad influence, is much more pernicious than The Revolt of Islam. Evidently Wilson is losing patience with Shelley, for few critics would be able to find that Prometheus was more radical than The Revolt of Islam. Perhaps Wilson was beginning to despair of Shelley’s ever returning to the alignments of his class.

Brief mention of another poem, "The Sensitive Plant," reveals that Blackwood’s still felt only the kindest of feelings towards Shelley as a poet. Only when he preached his radical doctrines did the magazine condemn him. Ten stanzas of the poem are quoted with an introductory remark, "Earnestly would we rejoice were all the writings of Shelley as exquisite and innocent as the following lines." 28

Blackwood's did not devote a special review to The Cenci, although Maginn referred to the tragedy as "Cockney madness" in an unfavorable review of Adonais, and Wilson gave it a brief notice in a review of Byron's Doge of Venice.

Maginn's notice has often been cited to demonstrate Blackwood's alleged hostility to Shelley, but Wilson's reference to The Cenci has remained almost unknown. His comment on the drama is rather favorable, but it indicates a growing disappointment at Shelley's continued radicalism.

In this brief comment Wilson gives an explanation of Blackwood's refusal to review the tragedy.

Lord Byron in his preface says well, that the City of the Plague, the Fall of Jerusalem, and Miss Baillie's DeMontfort, are sufficient proof of the present existence of dramatic power somewhere; he might with great propriety have added to this list the name of "The Cenci," a very powerfully conceived and executed tragedy which was published last year 1820 by Mr. P. B. Shelly [sic]. But perhaps his Lordship was withheld from mentioning that work, as we ourselves were from reviewing it at the time when it appeared by the very disgusting nature of its subject—those vile extravagances, namely, of incest and parricide, by perpetual repetitions of which, or of something of the same kind, we begin to fear it is Mr. Shelly's made resolution to destroy the effect of all his genius, and blast all the harvest of his fame.

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29Vol. X (December, 1821), 698.

30Vol. IX (April, 1821), 93.


32The only reference to this comment which I have been able to discover is in Strout, op. cit., p. 106. The notice is quoted in part.

33Vol. IX (April, 1821), 93.
The review of *Adonais* by Maginn was the only wholly unfriendly review to appear in *Blackwood's*, and the criticism cannot be called in any way typical of the magazine's treatment of Shelley. Maginn was noted for his conservatism and his hatred of the Cockneys. Wilson's cessation of hostilities with the Cockneys after he assumed control of *Blackwood's* gives strong evidence that most of the attacks against the Cockneys were the products of Maginn's pen. This review seems to be aimed more at injuring the reputation of the dead Keats than at a real study of the poem.

Maginn's criticism runs counter to all previous reviews of Shelley, and it would appear that the critic is more angry at Shelley for having considered Keats worthy of an elegy than he is because of any faults which are to be found in the poem. *Blackwood's* patience was exhausted, at least so far as Maginn was concerned. He seemed thoroughly disgusted at a man who would leave his own social group in order to join a band of radicals he considered little better than criminals.

The last mention of Shelley by *Blackwood's* during the poet's lifetime, except for a very brief mention in a review of Hazlitt's *Table Talk, or Original Essays,* was the notice of *Epipsychidion,* which was a part of a

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34 Vol. X (December, 1821), 696-700.

35 Vol. XII (January, 1822), 159. This notice, which is of no importance other than its indirect reference to Shelley's friendship for Keats, has not been previously reported, so far as I have been able to discover.
general discussion of Shelley, Byron, Hunt, and others. This was in the form of a letter from "John Johnes" to "C. North, Esq."\(^{36}\) The criticism here might be called more indifferent rather than favorable or unfavorable, and it contributes nothing to a study of the Blackwood's criticisms of Shelley.

The most annoying feature of the Blackwood's criticisms would seem to be that at times they become tiresomely moral in their admonitions to Shelley, but such faults are not to be considered important in the magazine's contributions to the poet's reputation. Blackwood's was one of the most influential magazines which reviewed Shelley, and its reviews were almost always based upon what it believed to be the best path for the young poet to follow.

Wilson, by far the most acute critic, and not Maginn, was responsible for the favorable reviews of Shelley;\(^{37}\) and his reviews overshadowed the unfavorable attitude of Maginn in the Adonais review. Wilson's criticisms reveal a sincere interest in Shelley's development, and the objections he made to Shelley's political and religious opinions were the products of an honest belief that if the poet were to do away with some of his more objectionable ideas, he would develop into one of England's greatest poets. Wilson

\(^{36}\)“Letter from London,” Vol. XII (February, 1822), 236-239.

\(^{37}\)Cf. Strout, op. cit.
seemed to be a warm friend in his reviews, but his conserva-
tism could not allow him to accept Shelley's radicalism, and
he was shocked by the poet's moral philosophy.

Blackwood's may be considered much more important in
the establishment of Shelley's poetic reputation than Leigh
Hunt's Examiner, because Hunt's notorious radicalism made
him suspect in the eyes of most Englishmen. Blackwood's,
on the other hand, was respected by its contemporaries,
and even its most cautious recommendations were sure to
make a greater impression than The Examiner's most ardent
comments. There is another great difference between The
Examiner and Blackwood's. While Blackwood's was interested
in Shelley as a poet, and also in converting him to the
conservative side, The Examiner was mainly interested in
Shelley as the oracle of radicalism.

Leigh Hunt's Examiner

While Blackwood's contributions to Shelley's reputa-
tion have often been greatly underrated, Leigh Hunt's con-
tributions have often been greatly overrated. Hunt, so
openly radical, could not have expected his recommendations
to help Shelley. His friend's ideas seem to have appealed
to Hunt more than the poetical qualities of his works, and
one might legitimately ask if he was really as interested
in Shelley's poetical genius as he was in the manner in which
he expressed the political and moral philosophy to which Hunt
was so devoted.
His actual criticism of Shelley's poems is rather scant, and the critical writings which appeared so often in The Examiner were devoted more to attempts to explain the poems and apologize for Shelley's conduct than they were to a real criticism of the poems. Hunt seems to have been unaware of the poet's faults, although he did at times admit that Shelley erred in being too obscure. He seems to have been unable to distinguish between Shelley's poetical genius and his immature political theories. Hunt could never admit that while few poets exceeded him in the brilliant weaving of language, Shelley's moral and political philosophy was at best childish and misguided and at worst corrupt. Much has been written of Hunt's championing of Shelley, but it is rather doubtful that The Examiner was as influential in acquainting the British public with Shelley as the more important Blackwood's.

Whatever Hunt's motives in his crusade for Shelley, one thing is certain: no other critic in England worked so hard or so long to bring about a general, favorable recognition of his genius. Often misguided, very often blind to the poet's faults, Leigh Hunt nevertheless worked tirelessly and unceasingly in Shelley's behalf, and his sincerity cannot be questioned.

In this study Hunt's defenses of Shelley's conduct will be omitted, for they have little bearing on the criticism
of the poems; and, as a consequence, they have little literary value. The chief importance of these apologies of his conduct lies in the fact that they reveal Hunt's loyalty and his interest in setting forth Shelley's ideas in the most favorable light.

The first notice Hunt gave Shelley occurred in an article on the "Young Poets" in 1816.\(^\text{38}\) This notice refers to Alastor and calls Shelley a "striking and original thinker."

The Examiner published more material on Shelley than any other journal of the age, and possibly more than any journal since that time. Almost all of his major poems received more than one notice. The Revolt of Islam was quoted at length without comment November 30, 1817, and another passage was quoted in the issue of January 25, 1818.\(^\text{39}\) Hunt's reviews of this poem were continued through three issues of The Examiner.\(^\text{40}\) In these reviews Hunt first explains the story of the poem, and then he proceeds to point out Shelley's objective in writing it. He demonstrates Shelley's warmth of feeling and his love for all men. Finally Hunt makes a general criticism of the poem.

\(^{38}\) No. 466, pp. 761-762; reprinted in R. Brinley Johnson, Shelley--Leigh Hunt, pp. 5-8.


\(^{40}\) No. 527 (February 1, 1818), 75-76; No. 530 (February 22, 1818), 121-122; and No. 531 (March 1, 1818), 139-141; reprinted in Johnson, op. cit., pp. 12-28.
This criticism, however, is not so much an effort to investigate the poetic powers of Shelley as it is an attempt to show the logic and worthiness of the political and ethical ideas presented in the poem. Hunt does overcome his ecstasy long enough to state that Shelley's poetical defects are chiefly to be found in his obscurity and in the sameness of image and metaphor. He found that the poem was too abstract and too subtle ever to become very popular. It was, he felt, a "poet's poem," the chief importance of which would be in the influence it exerted over poets of the future.

Hunt returned to The Revolt of Islam more than a year later in order to defend Shelley against the attack of John Taylor Coleridge in The Quarterly Review.⁴¹ Hunt's defense was lengthy and extended, and in it he urged that Shelley be granted the right to have whatever opinions he might choose. In three articles Hunt rebukes Coleridge for denouncing Shelley's opinions as corrupt and pernicious, and he makes an eloquent plea for tolerance toward the young Romantic.⁴² In the last of these articles Hunt very logically attacks the Quarterly's attitude that Shelley's private life makes favorable criticism of his poems impossible.

⁴¹Vol. XXI (April, 1819), 460-471.

⁴²No. 613 (September 26, 1819), 620-621; No. 614 (October 3, 1819), 635-636; and No. 615 (October 10, 1819), 652-653; reprinted in Johnson, op. cit., pp. 29-40. These reviews may be found also in The Unextinguished Hearth.
What right, Hunt asks, does the Quarterly have to consider Shelley's private life when it considers his poems?

Hunt found Rosalind and Helen greater than The Revolt of Islam.\(^4^3\) His conclusion to the review constitutes one of his best evaluations of Shelley:

\[\ldots\] Mr. Shelley seems to look at Nature with such an earnest and intense love, that at last if she does not break her ancient silence, she returns him look for look. She seems to say to him, "You know me, if others do not." For him, if for any poet that ever lived, the beauty of the external world has an answering heart, and the very whispers of the wind a meaning. Things, with mankind in general, are mere words; they have only a few paltry commonplace about them, and see only the surface of those. To Mr. Shelley, all that exists, exists indeed,—colour, sound, motion, thought, sentiment, the lofty and the humble, great and small, detail and generality,—from the beauties of a blade of grass, or the most evanescent tint of a cloud, to the heart of a man which he would elevate, and the mysterious spirit of the universe which he would seat above worship itself.

The Cenci received a lengthy and enthusiastic review in Hunt's Indicator.\(^4^4\) This review finds Hunt praising the greatness of Shelley's tragedy and explaining away the presence of the idea of atheism. It is unfortunately true that most of Hunt's reviews were more devoted to explanations of Shelley's works than to real criticism. His reviews spend much time trying to present Shelley's ideas in the most favorable light but very little time in attempting to make a real evaluation of the poet.

\(^4^3\)No. 593 (May 9, 1819), 302-303; reprinted in Johnson, op. cit., pp. 40-44.

\(^4^4\)No. 42 (July 26, 1820), 329-337; reprinted in Johnson, op. cit., pp. 48-56.
Hunt came to Shelley's defense against the Quarterly's brutal attack on Prometheus Unbound in June, 1822, shortly before the poet's death. In three consecutive issues Hunt rebuked the Quarterly for its stupid and unfair attacks on Shelley and the other radicals. Hazlitt receives a small amount of praise when Hunt contrasts him with the bigoted, supercilious Quarterly reviewers. These articles, written in the form of letters to the readers, constitute a general defense of Shelley's poetry rather than a review of Prometheus.

Hunt defended Prometheus against the arch-Tory periodical, and pointed out that while Shelley's beliefs might very well be unconventional and even irreligious, he at least deserved a fair hearing. He accused Coleridge, Southey, and Croker of being prepared to condemn Shelley before they even read his poems. He condemned the Quarterly reviewers for completely overlooking the beautiful passages of the work. He does admit that the Quarterly is not without grounds in attacking Shelley's work because it is often too metaphysical and abstract, but this, he declares, is a minor fault.

Hunt joined with Shelley in accusing the Quarterly Review of the responsibility for Keats' death. Here Hunt rightly accuses the hostile magazines for their cruel
treatment of the Romantics, especially Keats and Shelley. The review of *Adonais* is more of a defense of Keats' life than a review of Shelley's elegy to the brilliant young poet who seems never to have wanted to harm or be harsh to anyone.

No one so ardently defended Shelley as Leigh Hunt. The poet's ideas on religion and government were very closely akin to Hunt's own ideas; and Shelley, with his remarkably keen powers of expression, was able to say all that Hunt wanted so desperately to say. Hunt undoubtedly had an almost worshipful attitude for Shelley's ability and a great admiration for Shelley's fearlessness in going against the grain of the conventions of the age.

But Hunt's almost blind devotion to Shelley was a contribution of questionable value to the poet's reputation. Hunt, so completely taken with Shelley's political philosophy, never seemed to be aware that while Shelley's poetry was magnificent in its radiant beauty, its thought was not always mature. Had Hunt been more acute in his criticism, Shelley might well have profited by it. Unfortunately, both Shelley and Hunt seem to have been obsessed with a desire to become martyrs for the cause of human freedom and enlightenment. Both men, in their hopes of a world in which

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46. No. 754 (July 7, 1822), 419-421; reprinted in Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-91.

all men might be free and happy, lived too much in a dream world in which hard economic and political facts were confused with a heavenly philosophy.\textsuperscript{48}

Hunt's sincerity and devotion to Shelley must not be overlooked, but one must always remember that his contributions to a really critical evaluation of the poet is not so great as the penetrating, and usually sympathetic, criticism of \textit{Blackwood's}. 

\textbf{The Quarterly Review and The Literary Gazette}

Probably the two most pretentious defenders of law and order and the public morals were \textit{The Quarterly Review} and \textit{The Literary Gazette}. It is doubtful if any other magazines in periodical history were quite so hypocritical and smug as this Tory duet. Leigh Hunt accurately described them as "civil and religious State-hirelings."\textsuperscript{49} In their reviews of Shelley and all the young radicals these journals had one goal--utter destruction. As a consequence, their reviews contribute nothing to an estimate of Shelley, but they do forcibly demonstrate the complete callousness of the attacks which some journals made against him.

\textsuperscript{48}See Benjamin P. Kurtz, \textit{The Pursuit of Death}, pp. xvi-xvii.

\textsuperscript{49}The \textit{ Examiner}, No. 751 (June 16, 1822), 370; reprinted in Johnson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 64.
The Quarterly Review excelled particularly in searching out and hunting down all shades of radicalism. The magazine thought that Shelley, Keats, and Hunt were low fellows, bent on the destruction of all that the Quarterly stood for; and the periodical did not hesitate to express its opposition in the most brutal and violent language of which its reviewers were capable.  

These two magazines were undoubtedly the most vicious and unprincipled of the major journals which noticed Shelley. They were not content to abuse Shelley's poetry; The Literary Gazette slandered Shelley's personal reputation with remarks about his private life which approached the obscene. The number of reviews of Shelley in these two journals is small, there having been only three reviews in the Quarterly devoted to Shelley and four in The Literary Gazette. They should be noticed, however, because the magazines might be called almost official mouthpieces for the Tory government.

The Quarterly Review seemed rather hesitant about mentioning Shelley's name, for there first appeared two thinly veiled attacks on Shelley which did not quite get to the point of mentioning his name. The first of these attacks was made by Southey in an article about the "young literary adventurers" who, he believed, should find more suitable

50 George L. Nesbitt, Benthamite Reviewing, pp. 10-11.

trades than poetry.\textsuperscript{52} Southey seems to have referred to Shelley in this article when he referred to one young adventurer who had allowed his enthusiasm for poetry and radicalism to destroy his morals.\textsuperscript{53} The second attack which did not mention Shelley by name occurred in a footnote to a review of Leigh Hunt's \textit{Foliage}, which was dedicated to Shelley.\textsuperscript{54}

The first \textit{quarterly} review of a work by Shelley was the intensely hostile review of \textit{The Revolt of Islam}.\textsuperscript{55} The review is attributed to John Taylor Coleridge, who seems to have devoted all his talents to the writing of as cruel and untempered a review as he was capable.\textsuperscript{56} Shelley is accused of a complete lack of morality and decency, and worse, of a vicious enmity to all standards of morality of the age. Coleridge is not at all aware that while Shelley protested against the inhumanity and injustice of the age, he was never an opponent of the basic codes of morality.\textsuperscript{57} Shelley's ideal of a world ruled by love was beyond the reactionary

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\textsuperscript{52}Vol. XVI (January, 1817), 538-539. \\
\textsuperscript{53}Kenneth N. Cameron, "Shelley versus Southey," \textit{Publications of the Modern Languages Association}, LVII (June, 1942), 495. \\
\textsuperscript{54}Vol. XVIII (January, 1818), 327. \\
\textsuperscript{55}Vol. XXI (April, 1819), 460-471. \\
\textsuperscript{56}Newman Ivey White, \textit{Portrait of Shelley}, p. 363. \\
\textsuperscript{57}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 76-77.
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critic's understanding, and since he could not understand Shelley, he attempted to destroy him. He concludes this vicious review with a low comment on Shelley's private life, hinting vulgarly of unmentionable things:

... if we might withdraw the veil of private life, and tell what we now know about him, it would be indeed a disgusting picture that we should exhibit, but it would be an unanswerable comment on our text; it is not easy for those who read only, to conceive how much low pride, how much cold selfishness, how much unmanly cruelty are consistent with the laws of this "universal" and "lawless love." But we must only use our knowledge to check the groundless hopes which we were once prone to entertain of him. 58

Yellow journalism is obviously not confined to the twentieth century!

The first of The Literary Gazette reviews of Shelley appeared in 1820. 59 The writer of this article denounced The Cenci as the "most abominable of all the abominations which intellectual perversion, and poetical atheism, have produced in our times." 60

The reviewer makes very little attempt to evaluate the tragedy as a literary work, but devotes almost the entire review to a denunciation of the theories underlying the drama. He finds Shelley not only immoral but also a plagiarist, and he accuses the poet of deliberately taking material from Lear and other works. 61 One is reminded of

59 No. 167 (April 1, 1820), 209-210.
60 Ibid., p. 209.
the comment in Blackwood's, which found literary merit even though it could not accept the moral philosophy and content of the drama.

Five months later the Gazette boiled with indignation in a review of Prometheus Unbound. In this review Shelley is condemned for his advanced poetic style and his extensive use of imagery. The reviewer denounces as insanity Shelley's attempt to visualize the earth in a single image.

The pirated edition of Queen Mab was the next edition of his works to draw the fire of the Gazette. This is the only review in which the reviewer makes even the most grudging admission of Shelley's powers. The reviewer, however, finds that he can feel only loathing and indignation over Queen Mab, and that he is horrified to see talents so hideously abused. Since Shelley's motives are so "wicked," the critic finds himself unable to recommend the work on any grounds. Shelley's obviously innocent association with Claire Clairmont was distorted by the critic into the worst possible interpretation, and he pointed out the thoroughly evil influence such a poet would have.

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62 No. 190 (September 9, 1820), 580-582.
63 See Prometheus, Act IV, 11. 238-261.
64 No. 226 (May 19, 1821), 306-307.
65 Smith, op. cit., p. 785.
The Quarterly Review printed its last criticism of Shelley during his lifetime in a review of Prometheus. This review, published more than a year after the Gazette's review, was in the same tone. The poem is attacked on charges of intelligibility, the critic declaring that in Shelley's poetry, "all is brilliance, vacuity, and confusion." The reviewer is unable to understand why anyone could find anything interesting in the poem because of its obscurity. He refuses to admit that Shelley is poetically powerful, because, he say, "poetical power can be shown only by writing good poetry."

The last review of the two journals was perhaps the most unkind of all. This was the infamous review of Adonais which appeared in The Literary Gazette. This cruel and bitter review attacked not only Shelley and his poetry, but also the dead Keats, for whom the elegy was written. Keats was bitingly described as

... a very foolish young man, who after writing some volumes of very weak, and, in the greater part, of very indecent poetry, died some time since of a consumption: the breaking down of an infirm constitution having, in all probability, been accelerated by discarding his neck cloth, a practice of the cockney poets, who look upon it as essential to genius ... 68

66 Vol. XXVI (October, 1821), 168-180.
67 No. 255 (December 8, 1821), 772-773.
68 Ibid., p. 772.
The reviewer had no greater regard for the poem than he had for its subject. In regard to the literary merit of the poem, the Gazette declared:

The poetry of the work is contemptible—a mere collection of bloated words heaped on each other without order, harmony, or meaning; the refuse of a schoolboy’s commonplace book, full of the vulgarisms of pastoral poetry, yellow gems and blue stars, bright Phoebus and rosy-fingered Aurora; and of this stuff is Keats’ wretched elegy compiled. 69

The review concludes

If Criticism killed the disciples of that [the Cockney] school, Shelley would not have been alive to write an Elegy on another:—but the whole is most farcical from a pen which, on other occasions, has treated of the soul, the body, life and death agreeably to the opinions, the principles, and the practice of Percy Bysshe Shelley. 70

So much, then, for the reviews of The Quarterly Review and The Literary Gazette. These briefly quoted passages from the reviews of the two journals quickly show the complete absence of any real literary taste or discrimination. Leigh Hunt, blind though he was to most of Shelley’s faults, could at least find a few errors which he thought the poet should remove. Blackwood’s, although it could not subscribe to the young radical’s opinions, held him to be a poetic genius. The Quarterly Review and The Literary Gazette were so reactionary and so prejudiced that they could not see Shelley’s powers. Consequently, these two journals contributed nothing to an evaluation of Shelley.

69 Ibid., p. 773. 70 Ibid.
The London Magazine

Next to Blackwood's, The London Magazine was probably the best of British journals in the early nineteenth century. While this magazine held no brief for Shelley's ideas, it could, like Blackwood's find strength and beauty in Shelley's poetry; and the magazine seems to have had a genuine interest in Shelley's development.

However, one of the most bitter of all criticisms of the poet appeared in this magazine. This was the review of The Cenci. The tone of the review is much like those of other journals: admiration of Shelley's genius and contempt of his principles. The magazine cannot find any high moral purposes which the poet hoped to present in the drama, and concludes that the "tragedy is the production of a man of great genius, and of a most unhappy moral constitution."

The London Magazine was very well pleased with Prometheus in its next review. This short review has considerable praise for Shelley, and it is remarkable in that it is one of the few reviews which attempted to see Shelley in relation to his age. While most magazines criticized Shelley mercilessly for his opinions, they were never able to see

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71White, The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 188.

72Vol. I (May, 1820), 546-555; reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, pp. 188-197.

73Vol. I (June, 1820), 706; reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 217.
any relationship between the poet and the times in which he lived. The London Magazine, however, reported with very clear insight that Prometheus

... is more completely the child of the Time than almost any other modern production; it seems immediately sprung from the throes of the great intellectual, political, and moral labour of nations. Like the Time, its parent, too, it is unsettled, irregular, but magnificent.

After this review The London Magazine had only passing comment on Shelley, except for Hazlitt's essay, "On Paradox and Common-Place," in which another criticism of Prometheus was to be found.\footnote{Vol. III (April, 1821), 370. This article is reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, pp. 171-176, and also in Hazlitt's Table Talk, or Original Essays, pp. 146-150.} Hazlitt commented that there was too much empty imagination in the poem and that Shelley's ideas were too far removed from the world. Hazlitt was an excellent critic, and he was able to point out intelligently and without rancour many of Shelley's faults. In his essay he writes:

... He [Shelley] is clogged by no dull system of realities, no earth-bound feelings, no rooted prejudices, by nothing that belongs to the mighty trunk and hard husk of nature and habit, but is drawn up by irresistible levity to the regions of mere speculation ... where his delighted spirit floats in 'seas of pearl and clouds of amber' ... this levity is so great, that I do not believe he is sensible of its consequences. He strives to overturn all established creeds and systems ... He tampers with all sorts of obnoxious subjects, but it is less because he is gratified with the rankness of the taint, than captivated with the intellectual phosphoric light they emit. It would seem that he wished not so much to convince or inform as to shock the public by the tenor
of his productions, but I suspect he is more intent
upon startling himself with his electrical experiments
in morals and philosophy; and though they may scorch
other people, they are to him harmless amusements ....

Still I wish that he would put a stop to the in-
cessant, alarming whirl of his Voltaic battery. With
his zeal, his talent, and his fancy, he would do more
good and less harm, if he were to give up his wilder
theories, and if he took less pleasure in feeling his
heart flutter in unison with the panic-struck apprehen-
sions of his readers. Persons of this class, instead
of consolidating useful and acknowledged truths, and
thus advancing the cause of science and virtue, are
never easy but in raising doubtful and disagreeable
questions, which bring the former into disgrace and
discredit ... They think it nothing to hang up a
beacon to guide or warn, if they do not at the same
time frighten the community like a comet.75

Hazlitt and The London Magazine clearly recognized the
brilliance of Shelley, but they were alarmed by the manner
in which he had allowed his poetry to gain such control over
his spirit that he was no longer in touch with the earth.
The chief criticism of The London Magazine was lack of con-
trol.

Gold's London Magazine

Another magazine which should be recognized for its
reviews of Shelley was the London Magazine and Monthly Cri-
tical and Dramatic Review, which should not be confused with
the more important London Magazine. Gold's London Magazine
is the name by which this journal is most frequently called,
not only to distinguish it from the other magazine, but also
because it had many names during its career.76

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75Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 148 ff.
76Marsh, op. cit., p. 79.
Like the other London Magazine, this journal began its study of Shelley with a review of The Cenci. In this review the magazine made itself, with some reservations, a friend of Shelley. With its successors this magazine became, next to The Examiner, the friendliest journal to Shelley. In the first review the critic was at times scornful of Shelley, but he professed to see possibilities in the young poet he described as the "most conspicuous" of the Cockneys. Shelley is praised for his beautiful language, but his "lamentable deficiency of morals and religion" is deplored.

In concluding, the reviewer points out some of Shelley's defects in reasoning, and he asks that Shelley, if he must have such ideas, refrain from weakening his poetry with them.

Gold's London Magazine devoted two reviews to Prometheus, both of which were very enthusiastic. The second of these reviews equals, and perhaps exceeds, Leigh Hunt's enthusiasm for Shelley. The review begins:

This is one of the most stupendous of those works which the daring and vigorous spirit of modern poetry and thought has created. We despair of conveying to our readers... any idea of its gigantic outlines, or of its innumerable sweetnesses. It is a vast wilderness of beauty which at first seems stretching out on all sides into infinitude... It presents us with the oldest forms of Greek mythology, informed with the spirit of freshest enthusiasm and youngest hope...
The reviewer also finds that "there is nothing pernicious in the belief that . . . man is destined to attain a high degree of happiness and virtue." In every way the volume is considered one of remarkable brilliance and beauty.

Again, in early 1821, the magazine found greatness both in Shelley's poetry and in his philosophy. There is an interesting similarity between the reviews of this magazine and those of Leigh Hunt in *The Examiner*, although there was a basic difference: Gold's *London Magazine* tended more to study Shelley's poetry than his ideas. By this time the magazine had come to be considered a Cockney journal.

This magazine was the only one, with the exception of *The Examiner*, to praise the pirated edition of *Queen Mab*. The reviewer found the work to be brilliant, but he earnestly exhorted Shelley "to undertake something truly worthy of his great powers . . . something divested of those peculiar associations which render him at present so unpopular."

This magazine later had comment on *Queen Mab* in the form of a burlesque on Shelley's vegetarian note in the poem.

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81 *Vol. III (February, 1821), 122-127; reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, pp. 258-262.*

82 *The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 232.*

83 *Vol. III (March, 1821), 276-281; reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, pp. 53-54.*

84 *The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 54.*
This comment is believed to have been written either by Hogg or Peacock, and it was published at the time most of the reviews of Queen Mab were being written, in July, 1821.

The Less Important Journals

There were at least forty less important journals which reviewed Shelley's works during his life. On the whole these magazines can be divided into two classes: those which gave limited praise to Shelley and those which denounced him violently. The reviews of these journals seem to follow a rather set standard, one which had been established by the more important journals. The general theme of almost all the reviews is that of praise for Shelley's genius and scorn for his principles. It is impossible to determine any set policy for these journals, because most of them presented only one or two of Shelley's poems for review, and most of these reviews were rather short. The reviews which appeared in these magazines do not contribute very much toward the criticism of Shelley.

The Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review printed December 1, 1821, an almost complete text of Adonais—the poem's first appearance in England. The magazine's review of Queen Mab lamented wasted genius.

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85 Ibid., p. 263. 86 Marsh, op. cit., p. 86.

87 The Literary Chronicle (June 2, 1821), 344; reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 61.
Another journal, The Theological Enquirer, or Polemical Magazine, was probably the first of all contemporary magazines to give Shelley any real encouragement. 88

The Monthly Review was probably the most important of these magazines, and it seems never to have been able to make up its mind on a policy toward Shelley. It recognized Shelley's genius and poetic powers, but it could never quite overlook what it considered to be pernicious influences in the poet's writings. The four reviews which this magazine published 89 were less favorable in general than the reviews of Blackwood's, but in style, form, and in the general manner of the criticism, they seem remarkably similar to those of the more important journal.

With the exception of The Examiner and Gold's London Magazine, Shelley's critics were never able to find him wholly acceptable. The Blackwood's articles represent a sincere attempt to bring Shelley around to a more conservative viewpoint in the belief that his poetry could be greatly improved. The famous magazine admired his genius, and it

88 This short-lived magazine published four reviews of Shelley. They are to be found on pp. 34-39 (March, 1815); pp. 105-110 (April, 1815); pp. 205-209 (May, 1815); and pp. 353-362 (July, 1815). They are reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, pp. 45-52.

helped him at times when no other magazine but those of the radicals would come to his aid. As a literary journal, Blackwood's had a responsibility to its readers to point out what it considered inconsistencies in Shelley's thought. By emphasizing his poetic genius, the magazine paved the way for the criticism which was to follow Shelley's death. It will be seen that Shelley's political ideas gradually lost their importance as his reputation as a poet increased.

In July, 1822, Shelley drowned. His death, however, did not end his poetical career, for several posthumous works were to be published. The reaction to his death was almost immediate, and the storm of hostile criticism soon abated. The adverse study of the philosophy of his poems was to fade away; the beauty of his work was to gain immortality in the years following his death.
CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH REACTION TO SHELLEY'S DEATH

Shelley's death was greeted with much of the same factionalism which had greeted his works during his lifetime. The Tory periodicals were still unrelenting for the most part while the radical journals were full of praise of his life. But those critics which had formerly affected to despise everything that had come from his pen soon began to find merit in his poems. Many were inclined to be generous in death where they had been malicious in life.

The changing critical attitudes were not immediately noticeable. Three of the most important journals which had printed reviews of Shelley during his life—Blackwood's, Gold's London Magazine, and The Quarterly Review—failed to notice his death. These three magazines also avoided any mention of him for some time after his death.

But after the first notices of his death appeared, a change in the attitudes of the periodicals was noticeable. Gradually Shelley came to be recognized as a brilliant poet, however misguided he may have been. The change occurred within four years after his death, and by 1830 he was generally accepted as one of the greatest poets of England. There are several possible reasons for the changing attitudes.
of the British reviewers. England itself was changing. The nation had passed through its period of reaction and was moving into the light of liberalism. Shelley's death occurred almost simultaneously with the decline of the extremely conservative government. In 1822 Lord Castlereagh committed suicide, and his death opened the way for a decade of remarkable changes in British internal affairs. Canning, decidedly more liberal in his policies, became the leading statesman of England until his untimely death in 1827.¹

The Tories continued to control the government, but the new party leaders were much more liberal than their predecessors. The revamped Tory cabinet of Lord Liverpool had excluded many of the extreme Tories of the stamp of Wellington and Eldon, and these new leaders were evidently anxious to reach some sort of an accord with the Whigs.²

These changes made themselves felt in the periodicals, and the conservative magazines followed the lead of their government in becoming more liberal. In such a period, Shelley would seem less radical, and his ideas would be less difficult to accept than during the period before 1822.

It is probably true that the new poetic forms of the Romantic poets were gradually gaining critical acceptance. If this is true, then the objection to Shelley's poetic style, which had formerly dominated much of the criticism of his work, would have been greatly reduced.

¹Robinson, op. cit., p. 734. ²Ibid.
His ideas on government and religion would not be so objectionable in the light of a gradual development of tolerance in England. It may be said that 1822 marks the beginning of a new period of tolerance and reform in criticism as well as politics.

But whatever the reasons for the changes which resulted in a sympathetic treatment of Shelley by the reviewers, one thing is certain: by the time of the publication of the Posthumous Poems the critics were almost unanimously agreed that he was a great poet.

Obituaries and First Notices

This changing attitude was not immediately evident; at least three of the magazines which published obituaries greeted Shelley's death in a devilishly cheerful mood. The death notice of The John Bull would seem to announce the death of a notorious criminal rather than the passing of a poet. The Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review and The Gentlemen's Magazine also printed harsh notices.

Most of the obituaries combined the news of his death with reviews of Arthur Brooke's elegy, "To the Author of The Revolt of Islam,"\(^3\) and Bernard Barton's poem, "Verses on the Death of Percy Bysshe Shelley."\(^4\) As a result, these "obituaries" were not so much death notices as reviews.

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\(^3\)This poem, and others written on the occasion of Shelley's death, may be found in White, The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 351 ff.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 353.
In its comment on Shelley's death The John Bull surpassed even the most scurrilous reviews of The Literary Gazette. The article quotes Queen Mab to prove that he was an atheist, and it concluded there was nothing of value either in his poems or in his life.

The Literary Chronicle's unfriendly article lamented his wasted talents, but it did admit that he was possessed of some powers. The reviewer found that Brooke had fallen victim to his pernicious influence. Barton's poem, however, was praised as a defense of Christianity against Shelley's assaults.

Brooke's elegy was also used as the basis of an attack against Shelley by The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle. In viciousness the review nearly equalled that of The John Bull. The writer of that article, obviously a very bigoted man, concludes that

... Percy Bysshe Shelley is a fitter subject for a penitentiary dying speech, than a lauding elegy; for the muse of the rope, rather than that of the cypress; the muse that advises us "warning to take by others harm, and we shall do full well."

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6 *The Literary Chronicle*, No. 178 (October 12, 1822), 643-644; reprinted in *The Unextinguished Hearth*, pp. 336-337.

However, he was not without defenders against this trilogy of viciousness. There were many more magazines which were willing to take his part than there were those to oppose him. The British Luminary, shocked at The John Bull’s article, published a parody of that journal’s notice of Shelley’s death.\(^8\) The parody was introduced with the following comment:

We have no observations to make on Mr. Shelley’s opinions; but be they what they may, [The John Bull review] is so pure a specimen of the cant which it affects to despise, we cannot help submitting the parody which follows. . . .

The Paris Monthly Review published a lengthy obituary defense.\(^9\) The reviewer grieves over his death; and although the writer professes to have no sympathy for Shelley’s beliefs, he nevertheless holds that the poet was a truly great poet whose love for humanity cannot be questioned.

The entire article is one of warm sympathy for him, and it is an eloquent defense of his life and opinions.

... never was there a name with more poisonous, and bitter calumny than his. To explain this apparent solecism, it will suffice to state that he had the misfortune to entertain from his very earliest youth, opinions, both in religion and politics, diametrically opposed to established systems; and conceiving he happiness of mankind unattainable under the present forms of society, he set about the promulgation of his own theories with all the zeal of an apostle and all the generous indiscretion

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\(^8\) The British Luminary and Weekly Intelligence, No. 203 (August 18, 1822), 685; reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, pp. 325-326.

of a boy. . . . A certain portion of the English periodical press systematically drags forth the individual from his domestic privacy, when they disapprove his doctrine. The assassins, spies, and informers, who act as purveyors to this literary conspiracy, were subtle and busy in the same proportion that the object of their wiles had been incautious and undisguised. . . .

Perhaps there never existed a greater enthusiast for the happiness of mankind than Mr. Shelley:—feeling that they were capable of higher destinies, his thoughts were unceasingly employed in the consummation of a moral and political Millennium: and though his romantic visions, and the means which he considered necessary for their accomplishment, may occasionally impugn the solidity of his judgement, they may surely be allowed to testify to the benevolence of his heart. . . .

In fact, Mr. Shelley has never had fair play. The outrageous and fierce persecution by which he was assailed, and the malignant libels. . . . had affected their purpose:—his works were scarcely known, except by those objectionable passages which his opponents sedulously obtruded upon the public. . . .

His pen, even when it was directed against his revilers, seemed to be guided by the hand of Love. . . .

Another very sympathetic obituary notice is to be found in The Drama. 10 This notice lauds his independent spirit and says that most of Shelley's faults were enlarged out of all proportion by the hostile critics. The article, which has been attributed to John Watson Dalby, 11 is much like that of The Paris Monthly Review. Mary Shelley's accomplishments are also praised. There are several quotations from The Cenci in order to demonstrate the beauty and loftiness of Shelley's verse.

10The Drama; or Theatrical Pocket Magazine, Vol. III (December, 1822), 387-393; reprinted in The Unextinguished Hearth, pp. 331-335.

11White, The Unextinguished Hearth, p. 331.
Leigh Hunt defended him as loyally after his death as he had before. Hunt's chief defense was in an article on the suicide of Lord Castlereagh. The conservative press had urged that personal criticism of Castlereagh be ended out of respect to the dead, although it did not seem inclined to act accordingly with Keats and Shelley. Hunt struck out bitterly at this attitude and demanded that Shelley be given the same treatment that the conservatives had asked for Castlereagh.

The Edinburgh Review

The Edinburgh Review, one of the most famous and influential Whig journals of the nineteenth century, made no mention of Shelley until two years after his death. It was not the sort of magazine to fear the radicalism of the Romantic poets; so it is surprising that the magazine did not review him during his life. It was a thoroughly liberal journal for its age; and, fearing Tory power more than revolution, it was generally favorable to the radicals in its reviews.

The review of Shelley's Posthumous Poems was the first mention of Shelley in any way, but it is probably the most famous review of him ever published. The review was

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13 Nesbitt, op. cit., p. 11.

written by the author of "On Paradox and Common-Place," William Hazlitt. This review represents Hazlitt at his critical best, and his penetrating study is both accurate and sympathetic.

Hazlitt's chief criticism was that Shelley had lost control over his imagination and that his poetry drifted too far away from the world of men. The review studies all the Posthumous Poems, but Hazlitt's introductory paragraphs give an adequate view of the approach he makes to the evaluation of Shelley.

Mr. Shelley ... mistook the nature of the poet's calling, which should be guided by involuntary, not by voluntary impulses. He shook off ... the trammels of sense, custom, and sympathy, and became the creature of his own will ... Yet Mr. Shelley, with all his faults, was a man of genius; and we lament that uncontrollable violence of temperament which gave it a forced and false direction. He has single thoughts of great depth and force, single images of rare beauty, detached passages of extreme tenderness; and, in his smaller pieces, where he attempted little, he has done most ... .

Shelley ... was an honest man. His unbelief and his presumption were parts of a disease, which was not combined in him either with indifference to human happiness or contempt for human infirmities. There was neither selfishness nor malice at the bottom of his illusions. He was sincere in all his professions; and he practiced what he preached--to his own sufficient cost ... . He thought and acted logically, and was ... a sincere lover of truth, of nature, and of human kind .... We wish to speak of the errors of a man of genius with tenderness. His nature was kind, and his sentiments noble; but in him the rage of free enquiry and private judgment amounted to a species of madness ... .

Spurning the world of realities, he rushed into the world of nonentities and contingencies, like air into a vacuum ... . He makes no account of the opinions of others, or the consequences of any of his own; but proceeds, tasking his reason to the utmost to account
for everything, and discarding everything as mystery and error for which he cannot account by an effort of mere intelligence—measuring man, Providence, nature, and even his own heart, by the limits of understanding...

Following this summary of Shelley's poetic and philosophic life is a study of the posthumous poems. Hazlitt finds certain faults, but he also discovers much that is beautiful in them. He approaches each poem with a dual purpose; he studies the poetic qualities and the philosophic content. It is in his philosophy where most of Shelley's errors lie, Hazlitt concludes. His enthusiasm, his imagery, and his abstractions take away much power.

Hazlitt's review follows the general course of the earlier Blackwood's reviews. The famous critic discovered many faults in Shelley's ideas, but he praised the genius and power exhibited in the poems.

**Blackwood's**

Blackwood's condemned The Edinburgh Review for having neglected Shelley during his lifetime, but it was guilty of the same offense after his death. Blackwood's printed neither an obituary nor a review of the Posthumous Poems. However, in spite of this lack of posthumous study of Shelley, the magazine did publish contributions which made favorable mention of him from time to time. The first mention of him

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after his death was in the Vicompte de Soligny’s *Letters on England*, some of which were reprinted in *Blackwood’s*. The letter states that Shelley’s imagination is capable of reaching heights to which no other living poet has yet soared. His power over poetical language is still more unrivalled: I have seen nothing like it in modern versification.

In the "Letters of Timothy Tickler, Esq.", there is some discussion of *Blackwood’s* attitude toward Shelley. In this article appears the condemnation of *The Edinburgh Review* for having entirely neglected him. The writer of this letter describes him as "a gentleman, a scholar, and a poet."

With the exception of the favorable article by Wilson on "Lord Byron and His Contemporaries," in March, 1828, which has already been cited, the last notice by *Blackwood’s* during this period was Wilson’s Preface to 1826. This paragraph is typical of *Blackwood’s* policy.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [sic] was a man of far superior powers to Keats. He had many of the faculties of a great poet. He was, however, we verily believe it now, scarcely in his right mind. His errors in private life had been great, but not prodigious, as the *Quarterly Review* represented them; and they brought evils along with them which Shelly bore with fortitude and patience. He had many noble qualities; and thus gifted, thus erring, and thus an outcast, we spoke of him with kindness and praise. He felt, and gratefully acknowledged both . . . .

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18*Vol. XIX, xxvii.*
Thus Blackwood's signed finis to its study of Shelley. Always encouraging, always kind, the great journal tried to review him in the most favorable light. Wilson believed that he was in error, and he did his utmost to lead Shelley back into the proper social class. But regardless of his motives Wilson believed Shelley a great poet. Of all the critical notices, those which were printed in Blackwood's are probably most worthy of the poet's gratitude.

The Quarterly Review and
The Literary Gazette

The most remarkable example of the changing attitude towards Shelley is to be found in the reviews of The Quarterly Review and The Literary Gazette. These hostile magazines which hated him during his lifetime did not make peace immediately after his death, but there was some sign of a less antagonistic attitude in The Literary Gazette in its reviews of the poems of Barton and Brooke. There were two reviews of these poems, the first being an extremely harsh review of Brooke's elegy.19 This poem was said to be "a wretched composition on the lamentable and appalling death of Shelley, a kindred spirit, a believer in the doctrine of Necessity without Providence." The reviewer mocks Brooke's tribute to Shelley.

The second of these reviews deals with Barton's poem

19The Literary Gazette, No. 296 (September 21, 1822), 591.
as a sort of reply to Brooke.\textsuperscript{20} In this review Shelley is said to have been a member of

\textit{\ldots the reprobate and abandoned Junto of Pisa, who degrade man into a mere transitory machine, and take away from him all that exalts him above the lowest brute in creation, by denying the immortality of the soul.}

In \textit{The Literary Gazette}'s comment on \textit{The Liberal}\textsuperscript{21} there are no traces of a sympathetic attitude.\textsuperscript{22} The writer is incensed at Shelley's efforts upon the translation of \textit{Faust}, which is said to be

\textit{\ldots anything but a translation \ldots . It turns Goethe (quite grotesque enough in the original) into complete burlesque \ldots . With these before us, as sample of his epic grandeur, we can hardly refrain from laughing at the odd fancy which could have induced the Germans to pronounce that there were but four Epic Poets, viz. Homer, Tasso, Milton, and Goethe.}

Two years later, however, a reader might have felt that he was reading another magazine when he read \textit{The Gazette}'s review of the \textit{Posthumous Poems}.\textsuperscript{23} At times the writer is almost friendly. Evidently the violent hatred the magazine once held for him has been spent. This article is not wholly friendly, but it represents an

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\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., No. 298 (October 5, 1822), 626-627.
\textsuperscript{21}The \textit{Liberal} was a journal founded by Shelley, Hunt, and Byron in Italy in the spring of 1822. It was for this magazine that Shelley made his translations of \textit{Faust}. Fearing that his unpopularity might injure the journal, he took no active part in the operation of \textit{The Liberal} and renounced in Hunt's favor any share in the profits. See White, Portrait of Shelley, pp. 460-461, 471-472.
\textsuperscript{22}The \textit{Literary Gazette}, No. 301 (October 26, 1822), 678-681.
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., No. 391 (July 17, 1824), 451-452.
\end{flushleft}
amazingly different attitude. It begins:

There is peace, there is pardon, there is tenderness, in the grave. That which in life is denounced as crime, is in death almost softened into error and Pity goes hand in hand with Reprobation. It is with these feelings we take up this last record of Shelley. Like his other productions, in it are blended beauty and blasphemy, trash by the side of some fine poetry . . . . The Witch of Atlas is a good specimen of the author's style: wild, imaginative, revelling in dreams of unreal beauty.

"Ginevra" was printed in its entirety as the best of the poems in the volume. Mary Shelley's Preface to the poems was called "too hyperbolical to be the effusion of genuine sorrow." This is the first review in which The Gazette made any sort of an acknowledgment of the beauty and power of his poetry.

The only Quarterly Review criticism of Shelley after his death was a belated review of his translation of Faust and the Posthumous Poems.\(^{24}\) By this time The Quarterly had also given up its harsh treatment of him. The comment on Faust is part of a discussion on Lord Gower's translation. The reviewer finds many good qualities in Shelley's translation of Goethe, although he sometimes "misses the meaning."

There are many complimentary remarks about Shelley in this article, which is altogether different from the early reviews which found him to be the enemy of established society. He is even regarded as an excellent poet by the

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\(^{24}\)The Quarterly Review, Vol. XXXIV (June, 1826), 148-153.
... Mr. Shelley had a fine ear for harmony, and a great command of poetical language, although he was often seduced by bad example into licenses, both of expression and action at once mean and extravagant. He had, moreover, a fine liveliness both of feeling and of imagination, and in short, wanted little to be a distinguished original poet, but distinctness of conception and regulation of taste... Our literature can show few translations from the Greek more elegant than his of the Hymn to Mercury and Cyclops of Euripides...

The Homeric hymn to Mercury is translated in stanzas of eight lines—which difficult measure Mr. Shelley has managed with considerable skill...

One department of our literature has, without doubt, sustained a heavy loss in the early death of this unfortunate and misguided gentleman.

The trend which had affected other journals of the period had spread finally to the arch-Tory journals. Shelley had become by this time almost unanimously accepted as an outstanding poet.

The Literary Magnet of the Belles-Lettres

Shelley received considerable praise in a review of the *Posthumous Poems* by *The Literary Magnet of the Belles-Lettres*. This review was the first mention of him by that journal.\(^{25}\) The reviewer noticed that all of Shelley's poems had the "appearance of being unfinished," and that the shorter poems have a queer mixture of "the sublime and the finicking." In spite of this, the reviewer concludes that

there is fine poetry in the volume. Most of Shelley's faults are attributed to the depth and "subtleness of his philosophical reveries."

The second review was more favorable than the first. Shelley received a great deal of praise in an essay on "The Literature of the Nineteenth Century." 26

The name of Shelley and genius have become synonymous . . . . Endowed with powerful imagination, a quick and most extraordinary sensibility; Mr. Shelley, early in life, possessed all the endowments of a poet: his first productions were, however, crude and raw; gifted with taste, he weighed them in the balance of his mind, and saw their deficiency. For some years he applied himself with all the energy of his wonderful mind to the study of the ancients, from whose ever-flowing fountains he enriched the springs of his own thoughts. The improvement was manifest: his style became full to overflowing of classical associations, and rich allegorical fancies, and as celebrated for its grasp and depth of thought, as for the luxuriance of its ornament.

The reviewer feels that only Shelley's subtle philosophical tendencies prevent him from becoming second only to Byron in contemporary popularity.

The final article published in the early reviews of Shelley by this journal was short but very appreciative study of Epipsychidion. The review quotes extensively from the poem and pleads for a more general recognition of the poet.

Is poetry like this to be lost, because its author was disinherited? . . . . Our neglect of the writer entails a heavy debt on our posterity: but we may venture to predict, that they will discharge it with cheerfulness, and with interest.

26 Vol. III (1825), 163; reprinted in Marsh, op. cit., p. 95.
The Scots Magazine

Constable's famous magazine published four articles pertaining to Shelley after his death, although only the last was a direct review of one of his works. This magazine's first mention of him was in a long and unfavorable essay on The Liberal.\(^{27}\) The Scots Magazine is interesting as a typical example of the evolution of the British magazine from a hostile to a favorable point of view in the treatment of Shelley.

The first notice found very little poetic brilliance in him, and the writer, who signed himself "Jonathan Oldmixon," cannot praise Shelley because of his recent death.

As to the Atheist Shelley, he has gone with all his imperfections on his head, to his account .... [He] has written himself an atheist with his own hand; and dead though he be, we must take the liberty to treat him as such. His share in ... The Liberal ... is but small ... It is with the account given of him in the preface that we shall at present concern ourselves .... He is described as "one of the noblest of human beings, who had more religion in his very difference with religion, than thousands of your church and state men!" .... We will do [Byron] the justice to say that we believe him incapable of such Jesuitical nonsense ....

We admit that he [Shelley] has proved to be the most unfortunate of men, as we have reason to think he was among the most unhappy .... On what grounds was this "nobleness of character" attributed to him? Was it because he denied the God that made him, and ridiculed the institution of marriage ....?

In another article on The Liberal, the writer for The

\(^{27}\) The Scots Magazine, new series Vol. IX (November, 1822), 563; reprinted in part in Marsh, op. cit., p. 90.
Scots Magazine reveals a belief that Byron's Heaven and Earth is "an imitation of Percy Shelley's 'Queen Mab,' though far inferior to that ill-starred performance in the higher qualities of poetry." A third article on The Liberal suggests that perhaps Shelley was not in his right mind when he wrote his radical poems.

Then, in its review of the Posthumous Poems, the journal seems to have made an abrupt about-face. It was the first direct review of Shelley, and, in the light of former mention, extremely favorable. The review begins:

This is the last memorial of a mind singularly gifted with poetical talent, however it may have been obscured, and to many, we doubt not, absolutely eclipsed by its unhappy unions with much that is revolting in principle and morality. Mr. Shelley was one of those unfortunate beings in whom the imagination had been developed at the expense of the reasoning faculty; and he was perpetually obtruding upon that public, whose applause he still courted, the startling principles of his religious and political creed.

After this comment on his religious and political ideas, the reviewer praises him as a poet:

... Shelley shows the same perfections of poetical expression... it is this quality which will always give to Shelley an original and peculiar character among the poets of the age... We consider him decidedly superior to them all. Every word he uses... is intensely poetical.


29New series Vol. XII (May, 1823), 614; reprinted in Marsh, op. cit., p. 92.

30New series Vol. XV (July, 1824), 11; reprinted in part in Marsh, op. cit., p. 93.
There are lengthy quotations from the poems throughout the article, and most of the comments are of an appreciative nature.

Other Journals

A study of the available sources on the reviews of Shelley during this period shows that there were at least twenty other journals which made some notice of him after his death. In almost all of them there is a definite trend toward a sympathetic treatment. Leigh Hunt's Examiner continued to strive for a general recognition of Shelley, although the contributions of this journal in the struggle are questionable. Hunt was still suspect in the eyes of the more conservative magazines, and his efforts were not widely accepted.

Hunt was among the first to review the Posthumous Poems.\textsuperscript{31} Although the review is favorable, it is unusual in that it is one of the few reviews of Shelley by Hunt which did not continue through at least two issues.

The first notice of him in the famous Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country was not printed until 1831.\textsuperscript{32} This was an announcement of The Wandering Jew, which was to be published the following month. The article was

\textsuperscript{31}The Examiner, No. 852 (June 13, 1824), 370; cited in Marsh, op. cit., p. 93.

\textsuperscript{32}Fraser's, Vol. III (June, 1831), 536.
chiefly an essay on Shelley as a poet; and the writer, who was probably either William Maginn or John Abraham Heraud, found in his work much power and beauty. The editors of the magazine were evidently unaware that the poem had been published in *The Edinburgh Literary Journal* two years earlier. When *The Literary Journal* protested that *Fraser's* had published the poem without authorization, *Fraser's* made an announcement of the previous publication of *The Wandering Jew*, referring to the other magazine as "an obscure contemporary." This touched off a controversy which lasted several months.

*Fraser's* attitude toward Shelley can be explained only on the grounds that its reviewers found him to be a truly great poet, for its treatment of rebels from the church and constitution was usually drastic. In spite of his professed atheism and his belief in a sort of anarchy, *Fraser's* was always kind to him. All the *Fraser's* criticisms, except the one in the issue of June, 1831, came much later, at a time when, for all practical purposes, Shelley's reputation was secure.

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34 *The Edinburgh Literary Journal*, No. 32 (June 20, 1829), p. 41.

The less important journals followed the new standard set by the larger, more influential magazines. The European Magazine did not publish any notice of Shelley until 1825, when it made a late, but very favorable review of "Adonais" and "Hellas." The London Magazine printed only one brief note after his death, a notice of the poems of Barton and Brooke.

Nine periodicals reviewed the Posthumous Poems; none reviewed them unfavorably. The journals printing reviews which have not been cited specifically in this chapter were The News of Literature and Fashion, The Monthly Magazine, and Knight's Quarterly. These three reviews were short, and, for the most part, followed the trends of the other magazines.

A notable feature of these reviews is that the magazines seem to have made every attempt to separate Shelley's philosophy from his poetry. In 1824, instead of condemning his

36 The European Magazine, Vol. LXXXVII (April, 1825), 520.
39 The Monthly Magazine, Vol. LVIII (January 1, 1825), 520; cited in Marsh, op. cit., p. 94. The review was based on that of The Edinburgh Review.
40 Knight's Quarterly, Vol. III (August, 1829), 182; cited in Marsh, op. cit., p. 94.
ideas, the reviewers seemed inclined to apologize for them. The general theme of the reviews seemed to be that while he had many radical beliefs, he was also a true and great poet. His genius as a poet had finally managed to overcome the revulsion which the conservative press had felt for his beliefs.

As England became more tolerant under succeeding reform governments, as the English people came more and more to look forward toward a world in which all men would "be wise and just and free," as they began to look forward to the world of which Shelley and the radicals dreamed, his position in English literature was established. So long as men continue to believe in beauty, in truth, and in justice, the reputation of Shelley will continue to be secure.
CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY AMERICAN CRITICISMS
OF SHELLEY

Shelley's entrance upon the American literary scene was much like a return home. His spirit was probably as much American as British; his political philosophy was far more akin to that of America than that of his native land. His religious opinions would be more likely to find tolerance in the United States than in England.

His reading of Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man and Robertson's America¹ undoubtedly influenced him when he wrote The Revolt of Islam and A Philosophical View of Reform.²

There were other links with America. The influence of Charles Brockden Brown, one of the first American writers to become well known in England, has been demonstrated by many scholars. However, Brown's influence is chiefly to be found in Shelley's early Gothic romances, Zastrozzi, and St. Irvyne.

Shelley had even closer ties with America. His great grandfather, Timothy Shelley, migrated to America in the

²See p. 8.
early eighteenth century, and the poet's grandfather, Sir Bysshe Shelley, was born in Newark. Timothy and his son returned to England in 1739 upon coming into the family estate.\textsuperscript{3}

Shelley's acceptance by the great majority of American critics was rapid. His poetry was almost as acceptable to America as the young nation's political ideals were admired by him. However, he was scarcely known until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

So far as it can be determined, the earliest mention of Shelley was in the American edition of Leigh Hunt's \textit{Foliage}, which was published in Philadelphia in 1818. The book was dedicated to Shelley and contains two sonnets on him. \textsuperscript{4}

Shelley's works entered the United States at a time when the periodicals were campaigning for a national literature. Many of the magazine writers were insisting that there must be an end to America's literary dependence upon England. The magazines which devoted most of their space to reprints of articles from British journals were rapidly losing popularity; for the first time American journalists and critics were developing a reputation, and they were beginning to feel themselves as capable as the British critics. \textsuperscript{5} This new


\textsuperscript{4}Power, op. cit., p. 4.

spirit of independence may be in part responsible for the acceptance of Shelley. The American reviewers preferred to make their own estimates of Shelley rather than depend upon the hostile reviews found in most of the British journals.

The first notice of him in an American periodical was in *The Belles-Lettres Repository and Monthly Magazine* of New York, for March 1, 1820. This was an advance notice of *Prometheus Unbound*. Another New York periodical, *The Literary and Scientific Repository*, also published an advance notice of the poem in July, 1820. In the same issue of this magazine were several excerpts reprinted from British periodicals. These were so arranged and selected as to present Shelley in the most favorable light.

The *Atheneum* of Boston printed in 1821 the first critical comment on Shelley. The notice was an unfavorable paragraph on the pirated edition of *Queen Mab*.

The publisher of Shelley's *Queen Mab* has been indicted by the Society for the Suppression of Vice. It is dreadful to think that for the chance for a miserable pecuniary profit, any man would become the active agent to disseminate principles so subversive of the happiness of society.

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6 Power, op. cit., p. 4.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 *The Atheneum*, Vol. VIII (September 1, 1821), 477.
Other reviews published throughout 1821 by The Literary Gazette, or Journal of Criticism, a Philadelphia magazine, helped keep Shelley's name alive during this early period. With the exception of The Atheneum's paragraph, the only unfavorable comments on Shelley during this period were printed in The Saturday Magazine, a New York periodical which reprinted several hostile reviews of British journals.  

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century American readers were forced to depend almost entirely on the British journals for information about Shelley, but after 1825 his reputation increased so rapidly that Mary Shelley was encouraged to issue an American edition of his prose works in 1840, and his complete poems were published in 1845. Both volumes were published in Philadelphia. The reviews became more enthusiastic as the critics became more familiar with his work.

The real history of American periodical criticism of Shelley does not begin until 1825, and it was not until 1845 that the American reviewers were thoroughly familiar with him. Thus the early period of criticism may be said to have lasted from 1825 until two or three years after the publication of his poems in 1845.

His work entered America by way of New York and Philadelphia; from these two centers knowledge of him spread to

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10 Power, op. cit., p. 4.  
New England and the South. By 1845 he was known and admired throughout the nation.

New York Magazines

Until 1825 Philadelphia was the undisputed literary capital of America. John Neal wrote in Blackwood's that the city was "the Athens of America." But it became more apparent year by year that New York was running Philadelphia a close race, and after 1825 New York was the nation's leading book publishing center. The thriving city boasted the same prowess in the periodical field.

It was in a New York magazine that the first real attempt at a review of Shelley appeared. This magazine was The New York Literary Gazette and Phi Beta Kappa Repository, which made a rather friendly study of Shelley. The writer feels that his faults should be forgotten and only the beauties of his work should remain. The reviewer was evidently influenced by the British critics when he wrote that Shelley's chief poetic faults were extreme vagueness and obscurity. But in spite of these poetic defects, Shelley is in many ways superior to all other poets of the age:

12 Blackwood's, Vol. XVI (October, 1824), 422.
. . . When abandoning these darker themes, he yields himself to the description of the softer emotions of the heart, and the more smiling scenes of nature, we know no poet who has felt more intensely, or described with more glowing colors the enthusiasm of love and liberty, or the varied aspects of Nature. His descriptions have a force and clearness of painting which are quite admirable; and his imagery, which he accumulates and pours forth with the prodigality of genius, is, in general, equally appropriate and original.

The famous Knickerbacker Magazine\textsuperscript{15} was the next of the New York journals to review Shelley. This magazine, which was edited by Lewis Gaylord Clark, is one of the most famous periodicals in American history. "No American periodical was regarded with more affection by its readers than was 'Old Knick.'"\textsuperscript{16}

The first review was in 1833, in an article on the recent translations of Faust.\textsuperscript{17} Shelley's translation of the scene on the Blocksberg is said to be much superior to that of Lord Gower.

Knickerbacker's only real criticism of Shelley appeared the following month in "A Peek at the Pow-wow,"\textsuperscript{18} an article in the form of a dramatic dialogue so popular among the British periodicals of that period. The discussion studies the major English poets and takes place in an English club. The

\textsuperscript{15}The name of this magazine was changed several times. In the first volume it was spelled Knickerbacker rather than the more widely known Knickerbocker.

\textsuperscript{16}Mott, op. cit., p. 606.

\textsuperscript{17}"Horae Germanicae," The Knickerbacker Magazine, Vol. I (February, 1833), 84.

\textsuperscript{18}The Knickerbacker Magazine, Vol. I (March, 1833), 179-184.
part which concerns Shelley follows:

Dashington. Poetry is a voice half lost in the clouds that bound the horizon of human knowledge. It is an adventurous discoverer, journeying with the meteors of fancy beyond the lights of reason; and its language and accents partake of the indistinctness of its perceptions; yet they come home to us with a consciousness of truth. They speak darkly and are darkly understood, like the night declaring knowledge to the night; yet they fill us with a longing desire of the better inspiration of the day—

Fitz-Williams. Uttering speech unto the day.

Dashington. Even so: and toward this goal our fantasy is straining, and though it may long remain beyond our reach, yet in the effort to attain it, some gifted minds have affected glorious things; and Shelley is among them. His fulness and depth and sublimity and beauty are at times poured forth with an excess that makes one gasp for epithets to praise its worth, and yet there is but one—the word poetry.

Riflemenore. But fulness and depth and sublimity and beauty will not of themselves make poetry; it cannot be compounded mechanically even of such high elements. It is in itself an element, and the essential characters of the others are its essential attributes. Shelley has shown in his translations that all these characters might be perceived and the poetry nearly lost.

Dashington. Shelley as a translator, is an eagle with clipt wings, dancing in a pas-de-deux,—to the music of the spheres it may be—but will that make the profana-
tion graceful?19

Two brief comments were printed in The New York Mirror, the first being an anecdote on Shelley's lifelong interest in floating paper boats.20 The second was a letter from Italy by a correspondent.21 The writer of the letter tells of a visit with Maurice, an elderly boatman who was once employed by Byron and who knew Shelley. Maurice tells the correspondent

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19 Ibid., pp. 181-182.
21 Ibid., Vol. XVII (August 31, 1839), 75.
that Shelley was the kindest and most gentle man he had ever known.

The American Monthly Magazine was a short-lived periodical of the 'Thirties. It was devoted to literature and literary criticism during its five-year residence in New York. In 1838 the magazine became a New England periodical when it was absorbed by The New-England Magazine.²² Shelley was mentioned once by this magazine in a review of the poems of Mrs. L. H. Sigourney.²³ He and Byron are called members of "the Satanical or demoniacal school," to which belong poets of great genius, but also of great eccentricity. The reviewer believes that Shelley has great genius, but he is also guilty of many extravagances.

Albert Pike's poem "Shelley" was published in The Ladies' Companion in 1841.²⁴ Pike, a Southern poet, was one of the most ardent Shelleysans in America. His poem constitutes his criticism of Shelley, who, he believes, deserves more pity than blame. The poet was generous, moral, and pure of heart. His poems are "wild and fancy," his words "strange, beautiful, and vivid."

Perhaps the best of the early American criticisms of Shelley was that of Parke Godwin in The United States Magazine

²²Mott, op. cit., p. 602.


²⁴The Ladies' Companion, Vol. XII (February, 1841), 114.
and Democratic Review. This magazine was one of the best of the early periodicals; it sought to present nothing but the most excellent material to its readers, and its pages were filled with contributions from Whittier, Whitman, Poe, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Tuckerman, and other great writers.

Godwin's criticism was somewhat inaccurate in biographical details, but the review is both penetrating and friendly. Godwin feels a strong attraction for Shelley's free spirit, and he lauds his revolt against the fagging system at Eton. He praises Shelley for his generosity and kindness to all people. It is to Godwin's credit that he dismissed the poet's marital affairs in a brief paragraph. He also departs from the conventional lines of criticism by praising Queen Mab:

It has one broad, deep pervading object—a shout of defiance sent by an unaided stripling against the powers and principalities of a world of wrong. . . . The blasphemy and atheism of it are tempestuous writings of a pure and noble spirit torn and tossed between the contending winds and waves of a heart full of Love and a head full of Doubt.

His goal, Godwin finds, was to teach that every struggle for the rights of man is always worth whatever effort it

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25The Democratic Review, Vol. III (December, 1843), 603-623. The United States Magazine and Democratic Review was generally known as The Democratic Review; see Mott, op. cit., pp. 677-678.


27The Democratic Review, ibid., p. 607.
costs. After praising his principles, Godwin attempts an appraisal of Shelley's poetic powers. His worst weakness is frequent obscurity, and his minor faults are vagueness of phraseology, peculiar language and diction, and a slight haziness of description. On the other side of the ledger, Godwin finds that his excellences are a singular command of language and rhythm, a great skill in the use of verb forms, a wonderful imaginative power, a glowing spirit of love and freedom, and an elevated concept of the true function of the poet. Shelley's good points greatly outweigh his weaknesses, and Godwin concludes that Shelley is the greatest of modern poets.

An anonymous writer on "The Modern English Poets" in this magazine made a brief, unfavorable comment on Shelley in a discussion of Margaret Fuller's *Literature and Art*.28

Although Edgar Allan Poe is most often considered a Southern writer, his contribution to Shelley criticism occurred during his editorship of *The Broadway Journal* in 1845. Poe's criticism is to be found in his review of Elizabeth Barrett's *A Drama of Exile and other Poems*.29 He compares her with Shelley, but he feels that she is too stiff, too formal, and too reserved ever to give herself up to her poetry as Shelley had given himself.

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Poe's admiration for Shelley is evident by his remarks on the poet. His remarks are also an accurate appraisal.

If ever mortal "wreaked his thoughts upon expression" it was Shelley. If ever poet sang (as a bird sings) impulsively, earnestly, and with utter abandonment, to himself solely, that poet was the author of "The Sensitive Plant." Of art—beyond that which is the inalienable instinct of genius—he either had little or disdained all. He really disdained that Rule which is the emanation from Law, because his own soul was law in itself. His rhapsodies are but the rough notes, the stenographic memoranda of poems... In his whole life he wrought not thoroughly out a single conception... He wearyes in having done too little, rather than too much... With such a man, to imitate was out of the question; it would have answered no purpose—for he spoke to his own spirit alone, which would have comprehended no alien tongue;—he was, therefore, profoundly original... Whether obscure, original, or quaint, he was at all times sincere. He had no affectations.

The Whig Review was primarily devoted to politics, and its chief fame lies in its biographies of American statesmen. However, two notices of the magazine did mention Shelley. The first of these was a hostile review of G.G. Foster's edition of his poems. The reviewer states that although Shelley has a lofty and delicate imagination, this imagination dominates all else and overpowers the thought of his poems. His beautiful mind and spirit are admired by the reviewer, but not his "impious blasphemous" philosophy.

The second article dealing with Shelley in this magazine was written by Joseph Hartwell Barrett. The poet was...

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a failure as a reformer, Barrett thought, for he was merely "an agitator without aim and without wisdom." He should have confined himself to poetry. He was not a successful poet because he never grew to full maturity. \textit{Adonais} is the best example of his poetry, because it contains all of his "characteristic beauties and defects."

The final mention of Shelley by a New York magazine during this period was very favorable. This review appeared in \textit{The Harbinger}, a short-lived but excellent magazine. It was an article on George Gilfillan's \textit{Sketches of Modern Literature and Eminent Literary Men}.\textsuperscript{32} The comment on Shelley referred to Gilfillan's tribute to Shelley.

A nobler tribute has seldom been paid to Shelley's transcendental merits as a poet, as a pure and child-like man, and one in whom the \textit{spirit} of religion dwelt more clearly than in whole calendars of canonized and church-accepted saints; and yet he [Gilfillan] mourns a long time over his unfortunate "Atheism," as if it could be Atheism!—as if one whose deeds were godlike could be "without God in the world!" The saving clause in his condemnation quite outweighs the whole. The world will not long fear such a man, as the Shelley of this portrait.

\textbf{Philadelphia Magazines}

Philadelphia's contributions to Shelley were considerable. This was the city in which an edition of his prose works was published in 1840 and his complete poems in 1845. Like the New York periodicals, the Philadelphia magazines were generally favorable.

\textsuperscript{32}The Harbinger, Vol. II (1846); quoted in Power, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 82.
The earliest known criticism of Shelley appeared in *The Philadelphia Monthly Magazine* in 1828. The reviewer, who signed himself "P. P.," did not find a great deal of merit in his poems, although the review is generally favorable. Shelley misused his genius and his powers, the reviewer admits, but he certainly does not deserve the harsh treatment which he has received from most critics.

There are few men who have received so much ill treatment and hard accusation as Shelley, without in good measure deserving them ... Though a great deal that he did was exceedingly wrong, yet he seems always to have been acting under a strong impression that he is doing what is right ... No one can rise from the consideration of his character with the conviction that he was a bad man. We pity him for the blind fatality by which he seems to have been led, and mourn for that waywardness of fancy and disposition which lost to the world powers of so high an order as Shelley unquestionably possessed.

After defending Shelley's character from the attacks of the critics, the reviewer makes a general analysis of his poetry. He finds that

... there is too much obscurity and intricacy in his writings. In passages where he condescends to be intelligible, he is often splendid, and sometimes sublime. But most frequently his volumes are closed in despair ...

It is in [his longer pieces] that he failed. He aimed at too much ... He was ambitious of awing and startling his readers, and his ambition leads him where his genius was unable to follow ... Occasional passages of great strength and beauty can never compensate for general obscurity; and therefore Shelley will be for many years wondered at, but not long read.

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One of the most famous early Philadelphia magazines, Godey's Lady's Book, published a "Sonnet to Shelley" in 1831.\textsuperscript{36} The poem, signed "N.P.--Genessee," possesses so little literary value that it is almost embarrassing to Shelley's memory. It does, however, point out his growing popularity in America.

The American Quarterly Review was a magazine devoted largely to the development of American literature, but it did make three comments on Shelley during the period from 1825 to 1845. The magazine's treatment of American writers was always over-indulgent, but it was usually hypercritical of British writers. Historians have united to characterize this magazine by one adjective: "dull."\textsuperscript{37}

This magazine's first notice of him was in a review of Henry Taylor's Philip Van Artevelde, a dramatic romance.\textsuperscript{38} The review is rather ordinary, lamenting his imagery and obscurity. While the reviewer does not believe that Shelley is the greatest of poets, he does believe that his poetry possesses great beauty.

The longest review by this magazine was a discussion of "The Shelley Papers" in 1836.\textsuperscript{39} The title is misleading,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{36}Godey's Lady's Book, Vol. II (May, 1831), 278.
  \item \textsuperscript{37}Mott, op. cit., p. 273.
  \item \textsuperscript{38}American Quarterly Review, Vol. XVIII (September, 1835), 1-19.
  \item \textsuperscript{39}American Quarterly Review, Vol. XIX (June, 1836), 257-287.
\end{itemize}
for the article is actually an essay on Shelley, Wordsworth, and Byron, the "three greatest poets of the century." The writer believes that of the three poets, Shelley is the greatest. All three poets are especially important because they were men who lived for a better day.

Shelley's chief difficulty was that his soaring spirit carried him too far away from the earth, and he lost communication with his fellow men. The reviewer seeks to separate Shelley's faults from his perfections in order to make a better evaluation of his genius. The poet may not be too widely accepted at the present time, but the reviewer predicts that "Time and Truth will establish Shelley's fame and genius."

Shelley's atheism is forgiven because he was young and impetuous; his beliefs were the result of the tyranny of the church and state.

But Shelley's atheism was of an ideal nature; he felt that there was a power pervading and governing all things, but he knew not how to distinguish it... It was impossible for him not to acknowledge, in accordance with the sensibility that animated his mind, and the disposition to admire and even venerate, was one of his strongest characteristics, the surpassing grandeur, the wide spread loveliness and majesty, were imwrought with creation. He saw and felt these, and thence came his impassioned sense of the great Author of all--and the conceptions that so far transcended those of other men. 40

*Prometheus Unbound* was described by the writer of an essay on "Modern English Tragedy" as an "unsuccessful attempt

40 Ibid., p. 277.
to give a substitute for the lost sequel of the Prometheus myth."\(^4\) Although he believes that Shelley is a great poet, the writer does not feel that he is a great dramatist. This article was the last of the reviews by The American Quarterly Review.

Rufus W. Griswold's The Poets and Poetry of England was published in Philadelphia in 1844. Although Griswold cannot be considered a Philadelphia magazine critic, his comments on Shelley should be noted because the book was one of the most important of early American critical works.\(^4\) His prefatory essay on Shelley is sympathetic and admiring; he condemns any attitude which does not guarantee the poet just treatment. He finds the same faults other critics found in Shelley, but he believes that these faults shrink into insignificance in the light of the beauty of the poems. The Cenci, he says, is "unquestionably the most remarkable of modern plays."\(^3\)

The first notice in Graham's Magazine was a favorable comment in an unfavorable review of Griswold's book.\(^4\) This journal was perhaps the most famous and influential of the


\(^{42}\) Power, op. cit., p. 75.

\(^{43}\) Quoted by Power, op. cit., p. 76.

\(^{44}\) Graham's Magazine, Vol. XXVI (February, 1845), 94-95.
Philadelphia magazines, and it was the first to review Foster's American edition of Shelley's complete poems.

This review was published a short time after the publication of the volume. The reviewer devotes much of the article to comments on Foster's preface. He believed that Foster had allowed his enthusiasm for the poet to overpower his critical faculties. However, it is in the analysis of the preface that the criticism of Shelley is to be found. While the reviewer is not infected by Foster's enthusiasm, he does praise Shelley as a great poet. After having noted what he considered errors in the preface, the reviewer says,

Having entered this protest against what our position forced us to take notice of, we join with Mr. Foster in his warm testimony to the beauty of Shelley's poetry. The writings of Shelley, in truth, are just beginning to be appreciated. His glowing language—his exuberant fancy—his lofty ideality—and the graphic power of description he yields, have had no superiors, in many points no equal, during the nineteenth century.

Shelley's writings are for readers of taste, the reviewer says. His poetry will never be for the masses. One cannot enjoy his poetry in a passive state; there must be a definite effort made by the reader in order to comprehend the poet's work. Unless his readers are willing to give him their undivided attention, they will never be able to comprehend his work.

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45 Mott, *op. cit.*, pp. 545-546.
... Four persons out of five on first reading Shelley's poetry will put down the book, wondering what the author means, and retaining no clear conception of the idea, but only a confused remembrance of glittering imagery and seductive beauty. Before we can appreciate him we must be accustomed to his manner; but then our love for him becomes extravagant, and we wonder how we could have so long overlooked his beauties. 47

Although George William Curtis was a New England writer, his one published comment on Shelley was printed in Sartain's Union Magazine, which had been transferred from New York to Philadelphia in 1846. 48 This article was a letter from Curtis from Naples. 49 He writes with great appreciation of Shelley's description of the Italian city in the "Ode to Naples," and he quotes part of the poem. This was the last of the articles of the Philadelphia magazines of the period.

The New England Periodicals

The New England critics had widely contrasting views on Shelley. Some were extremely enthusiastic, others were disapproving, and some were indifferent to him. Even in specific literary groups there were widely divergent opinions concerning him. The Transcendentalists are typical of this disagreement.

Whittier was the first of the New England writers to

47 Ibid.
48 Mott, op. cit., p. 770.
discuss Shelley. His remarks are to be found in his essay, "Infidelity," which was printed in The Essex Gazette of Haverhill, Massachusetts, in February, 1830. The article is the most hostile comment on Shelley by a New England writer. He felt that the poet's "immorality" had destroyed all the fruits of his genius:

The glorious gift of intellect with which his God had blessed him, revolted at the dark and cheerless philosophy which turned its greenness and beauty into a mental desert.

There is much in the history of man's life to convince a rational mind of the utter worthlessness of intellectual power, and extended knowledge, when united with a depraved heart. With all the glorious feelings of high and beautiful poetry, with an imagination that went upward to the stars,—gifts which if rightly applied might have placed their possessor among the "talent spirits" to whom the great multitude do homage,—he died, as he had lived, with a cloud upon his soul, and the seal of infamy upon his memory.

His most ardent admirer in New England was Margaret Fuller, who edited The Dial from 1840 to 1842. Miss Fuller's enthusiasm for Shelley began at least as early as 1833, when she quoted two lines from his early poem, "On Death," in her journal on July 4. She was not a blind admirer of him, and she gives adequate proof of her critical insight in a letter to a friend in 1836:

... it is true the unhappy influences of early education prevented his ever attaining clear views of God, and the soul. At thirty, he was still... an experimentalist... Had Shelley lived twenty years longer, I

51 T. W. Higginson, Margaret Fuller Ossoli, p. 42.
have no doubt he would have become a fervent Christian...
It is true that we always feel a melancholy imperfection in what he writes. But... I cannot allow his faults of opinion and sentiment to mar my enjoyment of the vast capabilities, and exquisite perception of beauty, displayed everywhere in his poems.

In her critical writings Miss Fuller was always loyal to her principle of discussing Shelley as a poet and not as a philosopher. Her major criticisms were printed in 1845 and 1846. The first was on the occasion of the publication of the American edition of his poems in 1845.53 In this criticism she finds true greatness in Shelley, revealed not only in his style but also in his overflowing humanitarianism. She condemns those critics who say that his chief fault is obscurity; by such a statement they are actually confessing that they lack understanding.

She concludes this review with a quotation from Foster’s preface:

Mr. Foster has spoken well of him as a man: "Of Shelley’s personal character it is enough to say that it was wholly pervaded by the same unbounded and unquestioning love for his fellow-men—the same holy and fervid hope in their ultimate virtue and happiness—the same scorn of baseness and hatred of oppression—which beam forth in all his writings with a pure and constant light. The theory which he wrote was the practice which his whole life exemplified. Noble, kind, generous, passionate, tender, with a courage greater than the courage of the chief of warriors, for it could endure—these were the qualities in which his life was ombalmed.54"

53Margaret Fuller Ossoli, "Shelley’s Poems," Life Within and Life Without, pp. 149-152.
54Ibid., p. 152.
The other study was part of "Modern British Poets," printed in 1846. In this essay she reveals her partiality for Shelley and asks that the errors of his youth be overlooked. His poetry lacked serenity because of the struggles of his mind. It was this internal conflict which prevented his poems from gaining the heights of perfection of which he was capable. In spite of this obstacle, he surpassed any poet of the day in two particulars.

First, in fertility of Fancy. Here his riches, from want of arrangement, sometimes fail to give pleasure, yet we cannot but perceive that they are priceless riches. In this respect, parts of his "Adonais," "Marianne's Dream," and "Medusa," are not to be excelled, except in Shakespeare.

Second, in sympathy with Nature. To her lightest tones his being gave an echo; truly she spoke to him, and it is this which gives unequalled melody to his versification.

She concludes with praise of his magnetic genius; she is happy beyond measure that his works are no longer neglected. She places Byron second to him in poetic genius. She returns to him throughout the essay with brief comments on his genius.

The Dial printed only two articles dealing with Shelley. The first of these was by Emerson, who was not a great admirer of Shelley's work. The contrasting opinions of the

55 Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Literature and Art, pp. 58-99.
56 Ibid., pp. 68-69.
57 The Dial, Vol. I (October, 1840), 137-150.
two leading members of the Transcendentalist group became evident in this essay, "Thoughts on Modern Literature," which was written during the period of Miss Fuller's editorship of The Dial.

Emerson said that Shelley possessed a poetic mind, but he was never a poet. His lack of enthusiasm for Shelley's work might be explained by saying that the poet's fiery, passionate verse annoyed the calm, sedate Emerson. However, if this is the case, he makes no reference to it in this article. One cannot be sure what he means when he says that Shelley's

... muse is uniformly imitative; all his poems composite. A good English scholar he is, with ear, taste, and memory; much more, he is a character full of noble and prophetic traits; but imagination, the original authentic fire of the bard, he has not. He is clearly modern. ... All his lines are arbitrary, not necessary. ...

This comment is an almost exact duplicate of an entry in his journal a year earlier.  

John M. Mackie, another member of The Dial circle, was much more in agreement with Margaret Fuller than he was with Emerson. Writing on Mary Shelley's 1840 edition of the poems and the American edition of his prose, Mackie rivalled Miss Fuller in his enthusiasm for Shelley.

58 Ibid., p. 150.
He makes no effort to excuse Shelley's offenses, but he believes that the critics should not take into consideration any of the poet's personal faults when they study his poems. He defends him by quoting Byron's remark that Shelley was the best and least selfish man he ever knew. The review is in part a biography and an apology for his life, and Mackie praises him for his inviolable faithfulness to his principles.

According to Mackie, he made two mistakes as a reformer: he overestimated the evils of the existing state of society; and he approached the question of reform from the wrong side, desiring to change institutions, not men. But in spite of his errors, the reforms which he advocated are gradually being accepted by the people. This, Mackie argued, was proof that Shelley's ideas were not altogether evil.

Mackie's evaluation of his poetic powers forms a striking contrast to that of Emerson:

In the power of his conceptive faculty, few will deny that he was unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries. His poetry is chiefly "the expression of the imagination." . . . But while he possessed, in such superabundance, the creative power of genius to form new combinations from the materials of real existence, it must be confessed that these combinations were often striking or beautiful, than analogous to reality, and illustrative of truth . . . .

Love of the beautiful was another characteristic of Shelley's genius. No eye was quicker to detect, or slower to turn from, beauty, wherein, according to his belief, consisted the divinity of things . . . .
Shelley was a complete master of all poetic measures, and had at his sovereign disposal all the treasures of the English language. His numbers are smooth, various, and musical; his language rich, tasteful, and expressive. 61

The North American Review was the first American magazine to gain an international reputation. 62 However, this famous Boston magazine cannot be considered in any way a representative of the attitude of New England intellectuals to Shelley. Until 1850 it seemed determined to carry on a policy of indifference towards him. He was mentioned occasionally, but only in connection with other British poets. The only favorable comment in the period from 1825 to 1850 is to be found in Edwin P. Whipple's review of Griswold's The Poets and Poetry of America. In this review Whipple quotes Griswold's statement that Shelley's feeling for beauty is superior to that of Longfellow. 63

One of the strongest defenses of his life is to be found in The Yale Literary Magazine. This magazine was founded in 1836, and is the oldest of college monthlies. Many of its writers later became famous in American literature, including Sylvester Judd, George H. Colton, and J. P. Thompson. 64 The essay on Shelley was printed in the 1839-1840 issue. 65

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61 The Dial, loc. cit., pp. 491-492. 62 Mott, op. cit., p. 188.
64 Mott, op. cit., p. 488.
The writer of the essay explained that Shelley's atheism was brought about by his hatred of the tyranny of church and state in England. He is not a dangerous writer; on the contrary, his work contains some of the most beautiful passages in the English language. While the author laments his lack of reverence for Christianity, he condemns those critics who are so blinded by prejudice and bigotry that they can see nothing of value in his work. His character was excellent; he was

... a man of superior talent, one of the few that each age distinguishes from the multitude; a good scholar, especially fond of the Greek writers, and as has been the case of more than one infidel scholar, fond of the poetry of the Bible; of a disposition generous and amiable, unless when sometimes made fretful by disease; in his conduct, so far as we have been able to learn, excepting his illicit connection with her who afterwards became his wife, of irreproachable purity and temperance; an enemy to oppression ...

The editor of The Boston Quarterly Review was one of the most interesting men in the history of American literature. Orates August Brownson was a very changeable man in his opinions. In religion he was first a Presbyterian, then a Universalist, then a Unitarian, and finally a Roman Catholic. Politically he was a kind of Christian socialist. At one time he was in close association with the Transcendentalists; but after his acceptance of the Catholic faith

in 1844, he frequently attacked them in Brownson's Quarterly Review, the successor to The Boston Quarterly Review.\footnote{Several such attacks may be found throughout the volumes from 1844 to 1847. After this the pages of the magazine were devoted almost entirely to debates on Catholic problems. See Mott, op. cit., pp. 685-691.}

In a short essay on Shelley in 1841, the writer regards him as a persecuted spirit.\footnote{The Boston Quarterly Review, Vol. IV (October, 1841), 252-253.} English domination of American literature has made it impossible for Shelley to receive just treatment at the hands of American critics. This statement seems rather strange in the light of an almost general acceptance of him by the critics. The principal purpose of this essay seems to be the overthrow of American literary dependence on England.

In letters as in costume, we are the merest tools of fashion and slaves of foreign influences, afraid to award deserved praise even to native merit, without the imprimatur of English criticism. Here we adopted the notions of Shelley expressed by foreign reviewers, without examination or reflection, and united in denouncing him as agrarian, atheist, blasphemer, until his name became a sound of horror, and to read his works was considered evidence of unsoundness in religious and political faith.

Six years later Shelley was not looked upon so kindly by Brownson's Quarterly Review. This was after Brownson's conversion to Catholicism. In an article on "American Literature," he is called a member of the class of "professional authors," who constitute a "moral excrescence on the body of society."\footnote{Ibid.}
The last of the reviews of Shelley in New England was by a Unitarian minister, Amory D. Mayo. His comments appear in an article on "The Poetry of Keats" in The Massachusetts Quarterly Review. This journal was edited by Theodore Parker, a friend of Emerson and Miss Fuller, and was closely allied with the Unitarian movement in New England.

Mayo's short passage was filled with praise, although he conceded that Shelley never reached full poetic maturity. His incomplete development was caused by the terrible persecution he received from his critics.

Yet what might not that Genius, in the maturity of its power, have accomplished, that amid the chaos of a life like this could shape such forms of awful grandeur as rise before us in "Prometheus Unbound," that could sway the passions as in "The Cenci," that could glide into the realm of the spiritual world, as in "Adonais" and "Alastor," or revel in the pure sunshine of beauty, as in "The Sensitive Plant" and "The Skylark"? It has been truly said of Shelley, "He was a broken mirror, whose fragments reflected the forms of all things. He was a poet for poets." His writings are to the bard what the Belshazzar's Feast of Allston is to the artist--more precious that their creator left them with all their imperfections, to work their way into the souls of men.

The Southern Literary Messenger

Although it was not established until 1834, The Southern Literary Messenger soon became the leading periodical of the

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70 The Massachusetts Quarterly Review, Vol. II (September, 1849), 414-428.

71 Mott, op. cit., pp. 775 ff.

72 The Massachusetts Quarterly Review, loc. cit., p. 421.
South; and it rapidly became one of the more important national magazines. Many of the South's greatest writers, including Poe and Simms, contributed to the famous Richmond magazine, and Poe was its editor for more than a year. Its reviews were modeled after those of the more liberal British journals—Blackwood's, The Edinburgh Review, and The London Quarterly. 73

Romanticism did not gain any widespread popularity in the South until the beginning of the second quarter of the century. Sir Walter Scott may be credited with bringing the movement to the South, for he was the first of the romantic writers to become popular. His Waverly Novels seemed to fit in naturally with the feudalism of the region. The attitude of the Southern aristocrat in the early nineteenth century was that of the medieval baron. Southern Romanticism was also typified by a deep love for the strange and beautiful. 74

After Scott, Moore and Byron became Southern favorites. It was not until after 1830 that Keats and Shelley became popular. There is another factor which probably united with the South's interest in Romanticism to bring about an interest in Shelley. From the beginning, the wealthy Southern gentleman was influenced by Jeffersonian liberalism in his thought. Deism and skepticism were popular among those who

73 Mott, op. cit., pp. 629 ff.

74 Rollin G. Osterweiss, Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South, pp. 11 ff.
were interested in literature and philosophy. This philosophical attitude probably made Shelley's ideas more acceptable to the literati of the South.

The first and probably the most important of the direct reviews printed in The Southern Literary Messenger was not written by a Southerner, but a New Yorker, Henry T. Tuckerman. Tuckerman's essay, which was printed in June, 1840, was based upon Mary Shelley's collection, Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations, and Fragments. Tuckerman contended that Shelley was one of the most original and powerful of poets. His love for all humanity, his thirst for knowledge, and his complete devotion to his principles in the face of the worst sort of persecution add to his greatness. In truth, he is the greatest of heroes. Queen Mab was the product of a naturally atheistic period natural to all young philosophers. This work is only a stage in his development, and no one should use this as evidence against him.

As a poet, Shelley was strikingly original. He maintained the identity of poetry and philosophy; and the bent of his genius seems to have been to present philosophical speculations, and "beautiful idealism of moral excellence," in poetical forms. He was too fond of looking beyond the obvious and tangible to form a merely descriptive poet, and too

75 Ibid., pp. 21 ff.

76 The Southern Literary Messenger, Vol. VI, 393-397.
metaphysical in his taste to be a purely sentimental one. He has neither the intense egotism of Byron, nor the simple fervor of Burns. In general, the scope of his poems is abstract, abounding in wonderful displays of fancy and allegorical invention. 77

Tuckerman concludes the review with praise of The Revolt of Islam, Prometheus Unbound, and The Cenci. He lauds Shelley's power and tact in the development of the "somewhat objectionable theme of The Cenci."

The essay by Tuckerman stirred up a great deal of controversy in the pages of The Messenger, for many readers believed that he was converted to Shelley's atheism. Mrs. Seba Smith condemned Shelley's opinions as "wicked and licentious" in a letter to the magazine. 78 She denounced the writer of the essay for not having objected to the principles of the poet. Another writer, who signed himself "A Friend of Virtue," protested the review. 79 Tuckerman, he said, was blinded by his admiration of the poetry of Shelley, whose principles, if followed, "would break up the home and established society."

Tuckerman replied to these letters in January, 1841. 80 If the people who denounced Shelley so bitterly knew anything of his life, they would know better than to criticize him so harshly. The chief reason so many people disliked him

77 Ibid., pp. 395-396.
79 The Southern Literary Messenger, Vol. VI (December, 1840), 826-828.
was the lack of direct information and a reliance on second-hand information. Tuckerman again comments on Shelley's idealism and makes an eloquent plea for sympathy and generosity. He urges that people make an honest investigation into the poet's life and works before judging him.

In the same issue, in an article on "Lord Byron," by "H.," is a remark on the effect of Shelley's death on Byron. 81

In an anonymous article, "Pencillings on Poetry," in April, 1841, another brief comment was printed. While naming the greatest British and American poets, the author says, "Alas, for the great Shelley! He was a star, which left its sisters, for a world of cloud and gloom." 82

"E. D.," the author of a review of Prometheus Unbound, drew an analogy between Shelley and Prometheus in March, 1842. His only crime was "sympathy for the race of man." 83 The writer makes a defense of his life similar to that in Tuckerman's essay; he feels encouraged by the growth of appreciation for Shelley. This growth of popularity in the face of such bitter and damning criticism is sufficient evidence of his greatness. The author concludes:

But the genius of Shelley was as varied as it was strong. If the "Prometheus" evinces the daring sublimity of his genius, the "Adonais" equally exhibits the

81 Ibid., p. 32.
mastery over the gentler and softer feelings of our nature; for in it love and sorrow blend their sweetest notes...

One of his greatest admirers was Thomas Holley Chivers, an obscure Southern poet who is remembered more for his friendship with Poe than for his own works. Evidence of his devotion to Shelley may be found in the dedication of his unpublished biography of Poe: "To the Eternal Spirit of the immortal Shelley, this work is now most solemnly dedicated, by one who longs to enjoy his company in Elysium." 84

His essay "Shelley" was the first of his contributions The Messenger accepted, although he had previously submitted many articles. 85 The essay contains some good criticism, but on the whole it is greatly exaggerated. He compares Shelley's ability to delineate natural objects to that of Claude in delineating landscapes, and his poems to the paintings of Titian in that the execution far surpasses the design. One part of the essay is of special interest, however, and this is the statement that Shelley is greater than Byron. This is the first indication that he has become one of the most popular poets in the South.

In an article on "Miss Barrett's Poems" in 1845, Henry C. Lea compared Miss Barrett with Shelley in her command of

84 Foster Damon, Thomas Holley Chivers, Friend of Poe, 170.
language. The review is similar to that which Poe wrote
four months earlier in The Broadway Journal. Like Poe,
Lea says that she is too restrained in her poetry.

Four months after this, in another article on the poems
of Elizabeth Barrett, Letitia Elizabeth Landon wrote that
Shelley was the "ideal of the imaginative genius in poetry." The last of The Messenger reviews was by an anonymous
author in the issue for December, 1846. The writer con-
demns the literary world for having so long neglected Shel-
ley, a "poet of the true fire." The writer finds weaknesses
in addition to his virtues as a poet. His chief weakness,
the author says, is that his spirit took him so far away
from the world that he lost touch with his fellow men. The
great number of abstractions in his poetry often obscure
the real beauty.

One other Southern magazine, The Southern Quarterly
Review of New Orleans, gave Shelley brief mention in a
review of Ahasuerus, a poem by "a Virginian." The maga-
azine was published and edited by Daniel K. Whitaker, who

86 The Southern Literary Messenger, Vol. XI (April, 1845),
235-243.
87 See pp. 83-84.
88 The Southern Literary Messenger, Vol. XI (August,
1845), pp. 468-474.
89 The Southern Literary Messenger, Vol. XII, 737-742.
90 The Southern Quarterly Review, Vol. II (October, 1842),
312-321.
developed it into an important journal during his editor-
ship from 1842 to 1847. After his departure the magazine
entered into a state of decline and finally ceased publica-
tion in 1857.\footnote{Mott, op. cit., pp. 721-722.} The comment on Shelley was brief, but it
predicted his future popularity:

... Shelley, sacrificed, as his genius was, on the
altar of England's intellectual tyranny,—though
doomed, awhile, to obscurity,—now finds admirers
in a distant land, and the mutterings of the Cenci
will yet be rewarded with a resting-place in the
sea-girt isle.\footnote{The Southern Quarterly Review, loc. cit., p. 318.}

The Western Messenger

By 1837 Shelley's popularity had spread across the
nation. The chief "western" magazine of the period was
The Western Literary Messenger, a Unitarian journal pub-
lished in Cincinnati and Louisville from 1835 to 1841.
Under the capable editorship of James Freeman Clarke the
magazine became widely known not only as a religious peri-
dical but also as a literary review.\footnote{Mott, op. cit., pp. 658 ff.}
Throughout its short life the magazine seemed to be afflicted with nos-
talgia for New England, and its writers followed the stan-
dards of the New England Unitarian writers. Margaret Fuller
was one of its contributors. The magazine was especially
interested in the Romantic writers.\footnote{Bernard Smith, Forces in American Criticism, p. 85.
Clarke's essay on Shelley dealt largely with the poet's religious and political ideas. The whole essay is extremely friendly, and Clarke finds that he is neither immoral nor irreligious. His love for liberty, his essential goodness, and his devotion to humanity make him one of the greatest poets of the English language. Of his religious ideas Clarke says:

Shelley was an unbeliever. For this we mourn, and must condemn him for not making better use of his power and intellect, which would have taught him the truth of Christianity, and of his feeling heart, which could have revealed to him the unearthly beauty of Jesus. But we must keep one thing in mind, in passing judgement on Shelley for his avowed opinions. His opinions in regard to God and Christ were formed and declared in reference and indignant opposition to the prevailing ideas of bigots on those subjects. He denies God; but it is rather a God, whom bigotry had created, than the God of Nature and the Father of Christ. He rejects the doctrine of Christianity, but it is chiefly in view of the dogmas for instance, as that God is a God of Love, and yet has predestined from all eternity, a great part of his creatures to Endless Hell. But much as we condemn Shelley's extravagances, and mourn his proud, rebellious spirit, we must say, that he often exhibits more true Christian feeling, and even Christian faith, than many who scoff at him as an Atheist and an outlaw.

Clarke's essay drew considerable fire from the more conservative religionists. Andrews Norton, who represented the more orthodox Unitarians and some Trinitarians, denounced him in the Boston Daily Record for having fallen prey to

Shelley's infidelity. Emerson, by no means an advocate of Shelley, came to Clarke's defense. For some time the controversy raged, Emerson pleading tolerance and Andrews Norton charging atheism. Others were drawn into the dispute, and only Clarke remained aloof.96

The American reviewers were generally far more favorable to Shelley than those of England. Both Shelley's poetry and his principles received a great deal of praise in America. The reasons for the strikingly different attitudes of American and British critics will be presented in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The friendly treatment which Shelley's work first received from the American critics contrasts strikingly with the hostile attitude of the British critics who reviewed his work. It is true that by the time the American periodicals were printing reviews and essays on him the British journals had accepted him as an outstanding poet, with certain qualifications. It is equally true that in 1825 Shelley was as new and original to the American critics as he had been to the British critics in 1816. The earliest reviews in America were as friendly as those of most English journals which had been printing reviews of his poetry for ten years, and the American acceptance of Shelley in 1825 was much more wholehearted than that of the British in the same year.

There were other fundamental differences in the reviews of England and America. There were always two schools of thought concerning him in England. The radical group accepted him more as a spokesman of the radical reform movement than as a poet. The conservatives, if they thought of him at all, thought of him as a poet and denounced all of his ideas on church and state. The radicals
seldom took into consideration his poetic capabilities, and the conservatives would not grant him anything like a fair hearing on his ideas. The conservatives seemed to believe that his reputation would be based entirely upon the lyrical qualities of his poems. They dismissed the philosophy underlying his work without troubling to understand it.

After Shelley's death his popularity in England increased. He was generally accepted as a "good," but not necessarily a great poet. The growth of his reputation was due in great part to the unceasing efforts of Mary Shelley and other ardent admirers of his poems, such as Robert Browning and George Henry Lewes. But Shelley's reputation as a poet in Great Britain grew at the expense of his reputation as a thinker. His wife and others who sought a general recognition of him made every effort to lead his readers away from thoughts about his philosophical beliefs and to establish his position as a lyric poet.¹

But a great poet's reputation cannot exist for any considerable period only on the lyrical qualities of his work. There must be an inner spark which will give fire to his poems. Shelley's poetry was beautiful in its lyric qualities, but the factor that makes his poems

¹For a discussion of the development of Shelley's posthumous reputation in Great Britain, see White, Shelley, Vol. II, Chapter XXX.
great is the passionate idealism which gives life to every line he wrote. In stressing his position as a lyrical poet and in overlooking his radical idealism, his English advocates probably delayed his recognition at home as a great poet.

This was not the case in American criticism. If his radicalism was looked upon with some disfavor, the critic felt himself called upon to explain this radicalism as a phase of youth, or a too-eager desire to bring truth, liberty, and justice to the world.

There were many American critics, none of whom were either atheists or political radicals, who felt no need of explaining away Shelley's beliefs. On the contrary, they felt that his ideas on human liberty were as worthy of praise as the lyric beauty of his poetry. These early American critics were members of the first generation of the United States; they had been brought up in the tradition of freedom and justice. Shelley's ideas might be frowned upon in England, but in America they would find a sanctuary.

The reasons for the different attitudes in England and America are obvious. England under the Georges could have no more real freedom than the Continental nations had under their despots. The Tories ruled the nation with an iron hand, and they convinced the landed gentry and the industrialists that any reform meant revolution. No man
with even moderately liberal ideas was safe in England during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Religious rebels were no more tolerated than political rebels, for the established church was a weapon by which the ruling class might keep the people under its thumb. The desires of the common people counted for nothing in such a system.

The Americans were not likely to have much sympathy for the reactionary opinions of a nation against which they had so recently rebelled. The principles which caused Americans to revolt against the tyranny of George III were fundamentally the same as those principles which Shelley so ardently championed. His struggle against the intolerant ruling class of England would be expected to find allies in the United States. The expanding American democracy would be among the first to grant him a haven from the abuse of his English critics.

His religious ideas were rather advanced even for a nation whose constitution guaranteed religious freedom. But many American critics saw in him a Christlike humanitarianism which enabled them to argue away the more objectionable aspects of his atheism. They argued that Shelley was an atheist by compulsion, not by choice. He was forced into his religious opinions by the bigots of church and state. Some critics found more Christianity in
his professed atheism than they did in the professed religion of his attackers.

The conservative British critics were completely unable to accept the American point of view toward Shelley. The most they could do, as Wilson had done in Blackwood's, was to explain Shelley's beliefs on religion and politics as a sort of madness. What they could not accept they dispensed with as insanity. There seemed to be a blind spot in early British criticism; it could accept him as a poet, perhaps; but it could never accept him as a philosopher.

Of course, Shelley was not unanimously accepted by the Americans. There are unanimous opinions among critics only about poor poets. But there were not many American critics who did not feel that he was a great poet, however much they might disapprove of his opinions. Emerson wrote that Shelley was not a poet because he lacked imagination, but he did not explain his meaning of "imagination." It may very well be that he objected to Shelley's lack of "religious imagination;" for Emerson was first and last a religious man, and it is not likely that he could ever fully accept a man whose lack of belief in what is generally understood to be Christianity was so evident.²

The North American Review's early neglect may be explained on the grounds that its first policy was a sort of calculated Toryism, patterned after the policies of the

²Smith, op. cit., p. 109.
conservative British journals. But this magazine's offense against Shelley was indifference, not hostility.

America in the first half of the nineteenth century was a natural sanctuary for Romanticism. In a young nation, limited only by the ability of its citizens to realize themselves, everything in life was vitally important. The great wilderness of the West was a challenge to the nation's ingenuity. A man could be as great as his ambition; the vast land before him was ripe, delicious fruit, to be his if he chose to pluck it. The human spirit was free and untrammeled in America. The nation had been erected upon the foundation of a constitution which gave to all men certain natural rights which could never be taken from them by their government. It was a nation which believed in the infinite progress and happiness of the human race. The American people probably were not aware of it, but they were as surely awed and inspired by the vast, wild beauty of their land as the Romantic poets were by the beauties of nature and human freedom. The Romantics expressed their inspiration in great literature; the American people expressed theirs by work.

Shelley sang the same hymn to freedom, justice, and human perfectibility as Thomas Paine, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Jefferson sang. Prometheus Unbound and The Revolt.

\(^{3}\text{Ibid.}, p. 24\).
of Islam were inspired by the same beautiful, unconquerable spirit that inspired the Declaration of Independence. It is not surprising that Shelley found widespread acceptance in this nation both as a poet and as a thinker, for his works reflected a sentiment known to all who felt the beauty and innate goodness of this bright land. Although he was a British poet by birth, his poetry was the voice of the spirit that guided the young American democracy. It would have been surprising if he had received at the hands of American critics the brutal abuse given him by the British critics.

Much work could be done on the subject of Shelley and America, work which cannot be accomplished here because of the limitations of the subject of this thesis. The whole picture of early criticism of Shelley can never be complete until the American criticisms are collected as White collected the British criticisms in The Unextinguished Hearth. The criticism made of him in America is fully as vital as that in England, because the early reviews in this country demonstrate the great influence a nation's social and political background has in the criticism of a writer. Knowledge of the British reviews can give only a part of the overall prospect of the early criticism of Shelley.

Other investigations could be made into the relationship of Shelley's ideas and early thought in America. His influence on later American writers and thinkers could be studied. The field is infinite.
It is impossible to have clear, complete information on the early criticisms of Shelley by knowledge only of the British reviews. By and large, England was never wholly receptive to him. The contributions of the radicals can be overlooked, because they were interested not in his poetry, but in his ideas. To the radicals, Shelley was never more than the eloquent spokesman of a cause. It is to Shelley's credit that he espoused liberalism, but a man does not become a great poet merely by adopting noble causes.

England's most enthusiastic acceptance of him was still a qualified acceptance. Great Britain as a whole was senile and cynical. Its age of youth had passed, and it was in the twilight years. It had entered into its last great century; its rulers were tenaciously clinging to what they already possessed, fearing that one step toward liberalism would end everything. Shelley and the Romantics represented Youth, which could possibly be looked upon with some interest and nostalgia, but never with complete approval. His fiery, passionate love of liberty could find its way only into the heart of the young, free nation across the Atlantic.

As Bysshe Shelley was the wayward, erring offspring of Sir Timothy Shelley, so was America the wayward child of England. In their youthful spirits both were filled with bright hopes for the future happiness and welfare of all men in all lands. Both were informed by their angry parents that
their beliefs were impossible of attainment, but both knew in their hearts that it was not only possible but very probable, provided they spent every effort toward that end. The spirit of Shelley and the spirit of America are kindred. They sought the same goals which they knew would bring liberty, justice, and happiness to a world so much in need.

In England, Shelley might very well be a "beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain." In America he sang a lay familiar to all who loved liberty and beauty, and the door of the nation was opened to him.
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