

AESCHYLUS' PROMETHEUS
IN ENGLISH DRAMATIC LITERATURE

With Introduction, Notes, Appendix, Bibliography,
and Index

by

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To

My Father

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οὐδ' ἐδέεχθης
 ὀλιγοδρανίαν ἄκικυν
 ἀντόνειραν, ἧ τὸ φωτῶν
 ἄλαστον
 γένος ἐπεποδισμένον;

"Sawest thou not the power-reft weakness, like unto a dream, in which the blind race of men wandereth?"

Wecklein, ll. 564-568

οἱ πρῶτα μὲν βλέποντες
 ἐβλεπον κατῆν,
 κλύοντες οὐκ ἤκουον.

"Who seeing, at first saw not, and hearing, they heard not."

Wecklein, ll. 463-464

PREFACE

Believing that the most representative and permanent standards of literary form will always be marked by that simplicity, strength, and coherence of thought which made the literature of ancient Greece a sincere and adequate expression of that age, I offer this study in Greek influence as one pertinent to a genuine interest in the development of English literature.

Among my instructors in the Greek language I wish especially to express my gratitude to Dr. William Gwathmey Manley, sometime Professor of Greek Language and Literature, The University of Missouri, under whose guidance my first translation of the Prometheus Bound was made.

I wish also to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Selden Lincoln Whitcomb, Professor of Comparative Literature, The University of Kansas, for advice, assistance, and general supervision in editing this study.

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C. M. J.

Lawrence, Kansas

May 7, 1923

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INTRODUCTION

World events of the past decade, stirring the most profound depths of human emotion, - affairs of life and death, of nations and ages, of the creation of new worlds and of the immortality and eternity of all true things, - these events have truly attuned the minds of men to the tragic pitch.

The sway of human affairs, and the importance of earthly penalties and compensations have fallen away from the immediate perception, - we sense, over and beyond these considerations, the deeper, truer note of a genuine appreciation of things sincere, sublime, and elemental. Thro the rallying of economic forces we perceive, - in all forms of artistic expression, - a new depth of feeling, dramatic and intense, - a reflection of humanity which is truly primitive and poignant.

The revival of interest in the drama of classical Greece is the clearest expression of this tendency. The Greek play, as legitimate drama, is more popular now than it has been since the days of Pericles. Recently Mr. Gilbert Murray has contriouted a very

large share to this general interest in classical plays by his metrical translations of the plays of Euripides. His fame as a translator and as a poet has been perpetuated by Granville Barker, the English author and actor who produced Murray's translations on the stage.

In America these plays have been recently produced in New York by Barker and in California by Margaret Anglin. The vogue of the Greek play has also been increased by the construction of Greek theatres, such as the one at Berkeley, California, where these productions may be correctly and beautifully staged.

In general, their influence may also be seen in Greek dances, choral odes, pageants, and allegorical plays of the present day.

As literature,¹ the Greek plays - dramatic portrayals of the retribution of Deity - have at last claimed a place as complete dramatic unities of universal interest. The versatility of the Greek type, the fearlessness of Greek thought, the exquisite beauty of Greek art, the clear, exact, expressive character of the Greek language, - the union of beauty and truth, of art and science, the supremacy

of mind over sense, of spirit over matter, all tend to this complete perfection of human artistic development - the Greek type. "We have, in fact, grown more and more dependent on Greece with every generation of our literature since the days of Chaucer."¹

Of Greek literature, the drama is the especial poetic glory; the Prometheus Bound offers the most interesting topic of study for the analyst, as this myth has been handed down to us in almost original simplicity of form. Isolated by the grandeur and simplicity of its theme, it stands as the truest example of the primitive Greek myth; thus differing from the Oedipus legend (for example) which, because of its more general adaptability to literary uses, became so modified as to possess, finally, few of the attributes of the original Greek myth.

The Prometheus myth - "the legend of the origin of suffering and woe"² - is very distinctively embodied in English dramatic literature. It is the purpose of this study to trace this influence, by means of the classical dramas of Milton, Byron, Shelley, and Bridges, in particular.

.....
1. Tucker. p. 40.

2. New International Encyclopedia. Prometheus.

Furthermore, the Aeschylean play, in chronological order following the Book of Job,¹ marks also a transition of philosophic thought, as well as of literary form, in the history of world literature, - and considered in connection with the later development of the theme, gives rise to much interesting speculation.

Altho the possible historical connection of the story of the Book of Job and the Prometheus Bound is purely conjectural, the Hebrew version of the theme enters so largely into the consideration of this subject that it necessitates a recognition of the relationship of theme at least.

CHAPTER ONE

Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound

Aeschylus, the first of the three great tragic dramatists of Greece, was born in 525 B.C. He fought at Marathon and at three other battles during the Persian wars. One may well believe that he was a mighty fighter, for there is something of titanic energy and unrestrained power in all his tragedies. His conceptions are bold. His sense of sin and of the weight of the moral law reminds us of the prophets¹ of Israel.

We have the titles of seventy-two plays, by Aeschylus, but only seven of these are extant. Of these the Prometheus Bound is, beyond all question, his greatest work. This play was one of a trilogy, being preceded by The Fire-bringing Prometheus, and followed² by the Prometheus Unbound. A few fragments of the last play have been preserved, and used in a Latin translation by Attius.³ The trilogy is based on the ancient myth.

.....
1. Richardson and Owen. p. 85.

2. A. W. Schlegel. pp. 92-93.

3. Botta.

The Prometheus Bound has been called "the sublimest poem, and simplest tragedy of antiquity".¹ Protector and benefactor of mankind, Prometheus, the Titan, defiantly endures his bound and tortured isolation which the sense-gods have thrust upon him, - to be redeemed in the fullness of time by the laws of that Greater Power, -Adrasteia. (Necessity, Fate.) Before Adrasteia even Zeus and the other gods of Olympus are powerless.

This redemption of Prometheus by "some god" who "shall appear as a substitute.....and shall be willing to go both to gloomy Hades and to the dark depths around Tartarus"² is the theme of the last play of the trilogy, Prometheus Unbound.

It is interesting to note that this idea of a self-devoting divinity has been mysteriously inculcated in many religions, in dim foreboding of the true.

Prometheus Bound, the second play of the trilogy, is the dramatic portrayal of the titan Prometheus in chains upon the high Scythian crag on the shore of the "earth encircling ocean", - the personification of humanity in woe, of constancy under suffering, and that the never-ending suffering of a god; of the ineffectual

.....
1. Hotta.

2. Wecklein. ll. 1058-1061.

efforts of the mighty elements of nature, (Oceanus and the nymphs) and of the sad Io, a fellow-sufferer, to free him from his bondage; and of his defiance to the temporal power of Zeus.

The drama arises to an emotional climax in the poignant cry of Prometheus, "O dread majesty of my mother, Earth; O sky that diffuseth over all thy common light, behold thou the sorrow I bear!"¹ and in the answering shudder of the Universe, for even as the cry of Prometheus arises "doth the earth quake, and the echoing roar of thunder rolls heavily by, bright gleaming shafts of lightning break, the high winds whirl the dust, the storms of all the elements leap forth against each other in violent struggle, and the firmament is embroiled with the deep".²

The influence of this legend can be traced in many forms of the literature of the world, but in none with more sincere appreciation than in English literature. There are many translations of this drama, both in prose and in verse; of these, the translation of Mrs. Browning is especially noteworthy.

The most interesting treatment of this theme, however, is found in that dramatic adaptation of the myth

.....
1. Wecklein. ll. 1125-1127. Cf. Lamentations, I, 12. "behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow".

2. Ibid. ll. 1115-1122.

to the individual interpretation of the author, resulting in a freedom in the use of the myth which gives rise to a wide variety of choice of dramatic characteristics. These, combined, yield us such individualistic dramas as *Samson Agonistes* by Milton, Byron's *Manfred*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, and *Prometheus the Firegiver*, by Robert Bridges.

These are the representative adaptations of this myth in English dramatic literature. The *Prometheus* has been used by each of these dramatists in a different manner, for a distinctive purpose, and with a different understanding and interpretation. Milton made use of the Greek play chiefly as a model of dramatic form, and excelled in this. The *Samson Agonistes* more nearly resembles this Greek play, in structural form, than does any other drama of English literature. In atmosphere, theme, and content, the *Samson Agonistes* is Hebraic. It is in the dramas of Byron and Shelley that we find the philosophical interpretations of the great Pythagorean. Aeschylus was a mystic, - his contemplation concerned that Greater Power, Necessity, or Fate, which had control over the destiny of Zeus and all the younger gods.¹ The Promethean drama treats of the race, mankind in its relations with the Deities

and Fate. The characters are Prometheus, (Humanity); Strength, Force, and Vulcan (Environment); Oceanus and Chorus of Nymphs, daughters of Oceanus, (Nature); Io, (a mortal); and Mercury, - (Messenger of Zeus). The scene of the drama is placed upon the heights, which is to say, beyond the realm of the immediate circle of consciousness, and the story is that of the anguish of the soul of man. Both Byron and Shelley built upon this myth individualistic philosophical dramas. Byron's adaptation of the Promethean myth, - *Manfred*, approaches more nearly to the Greek model in feeling, or emotional effect, while Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* most resembles the Greek play in atmosphere, or setting.

Bridges, in *Prometheus the Firegiver*, treats of the content of the Promethean myth - from an historical standpoint, and puts stress upon the Greek form and atmosphere, also.

We have thus, for our consideration, a study of Greek dramatic structure, of feeling, of atmosphere, and of content, as exemplified by these four plays. It is a notable fact that these plays considered - in their chronological order, show an increasing tendency to approach more nearly to the likeness of their Greek model, the *Prometheus Bound*, - showing thereby the trend of appreciation toward the unmodified Greek style.

CHAPTER TWO

Milton's Samson Agonistes

The most successful use of the Greek dramatic form of the Prometheus Bound is shown in Milton's great classical drama, Samson Agonistes. This play is written in blank verse and in irregular metres, - it is the last work of the poet. It was published in 1671. In diction, also, this play shows Greek influence, in a moderate degree. In the prefatory comment, Milton says, "Chorus is here introduced, after the Greek manner, not ancient only, but modern,The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks Monostrophic, or rather, a Apolelymenon, - without regard to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode, which were a kind of stanza framed only for the Music, - then used with the Chorus that sung; - not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called Alloeostropha.

Division into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (for which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly

called the plot.....they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule of all who endeavor to write tragedy. The circumscription of time wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is, according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of twenty-¹four hours."

The drama is based on the story of Samson in Judges XIII - XVI. The dramatic action is limited to the final episode in the life of Samson, - his death - "self-inflicted" - and the destruction of great numbers of the Philistines when Samson pulled down the pillars of their theatre, at a public festival to which he had been brought as a captive, to entertain the people. A series of events of a single day leads up to the catastrophe, - these events arouse Samson to make final use, for the glory of God, of the power which had been entrusted to him, and which, thru his own fault, he had temporarily lost. A Chorus of Hebrews reviews the events of Samson's life and interprets the changing emotions of the action. "The intensity of feeling which Milton has put into his picture of Samson

.....
1. Milton's preface to Samson Agonistes.

is due to the analogy which he felt between the lot of his hero, a chosen champion of God 'blind amid enemies' and his own position in the alien society of the Restoration. Though lacking the poetic brilliancy and the variety of 'Paradise Lost', 'Samson Agonistes' by virtue of its moral and spiritual energy and its consummate art, makes a profound impression on the reader. More nearly than any other work in our literature it is the modern counterpart of the 'Book of Job'.¹

For comparison with the Samson Agonistes, with the purpose of making a more specific analysis of construction, one naturally selects that Greek drama most closely allied in theme; - the Prometheus Bound, - and indeed, a comparison of these two plays cannot fail to lead to definite conclusions in regard to this source, or model, of the Samson Agonistes, in the matter of structural dramatic action, - the matter of concern in this chapter.

"The action is a still action, because the force which is to produce the catastrophe is the inward force of Samson's own despair, not an external necessity, pressing upon him. Precisely the same is the case in the Prometheus Vinctus of Aeschylus, a drama consisting,

.....
1. James H. Hanford in The Americana. (Samson Agonistes.)

like the Samson Agonistes, - of a series of interviews.¹
 During the whole play of Aeschylus the figure of Prometheus does not move, - he is chained to the crag -
 "There is no action on his part, - nothing but speech.
 Different gods, demi-gods, and a mortal visit him, condole with him, advise or threaten him. He remains firm to the end, the spectacle of an utterly resolute heart rebelling against fate."²

In comparing the structural form of these two plays we find that they fall into a series of four acts or episodes correspondingly similar. Note the following selections; -

I - Act I-I-325	.	
(Samson bemoans his	.	Prometheus -
fate)	.	
".....a person separate	.	"Look upon me, what
to God	.	treatment I, a god, am
Designed for great	.	enduring at the hand of
exploits,	.	the gods.
Made of my enemies the	.	Behold with what indigni-
scorn and gaze,	.	ties oppressed I shall have
To grind in brazen	.	to wrestle thro time of
fetters under task	.	years innumerable.

.....
 1. R. C. Jebb. p. 2.

2. Tucker. p. 2.

With this heaven-gifted .
 strength! .

O glorious strength . Such an ignominious bondage
 Put to the labor of a . hath the new ruler of the
 beast, debased, . immortals devised against
 Lower than bond-slave! . me!

But peace! I must not . But I needs must bear my
 quarrel with the . doom as easily as may be,
 will . knowing, as I do, that the
 Of highest dispensation.. might of Necessity cannot
 . be resisted.

Enter Chorus

But who are these? for . Ah-what sound, what
 with joint pace I . ineffable fragrance hath been
 hear . wafted to me?.....
 The tread of many feet . Has there come anyone to the
 steering this way, . remote rock as a spectator
 Perhaps my enemies, who . of my sufferings, or with
 come to stare . what intent?
 At my affliction, and .
 perhaps to insult, .

I hear the sound of words . The air, too, is whist-
 their sense the air . ling faintly with the
 Dissolves unjointed ere . whirrings of pinions!
 it reach my ear .

Chorus

.....apt words have power .
 to swage.

Chorus

.....words are the physi-
 ans of a distempered
 feeling.

Just are the ways of God . They that do homage to
 And justifiable to men." . Adrasteia are wise.

2. Act II. 326-731

(Manoa, Samson's father . (Oceanus, the father of
 wonders at God's purpose.) . Hesione, bride of Prome-
 theus, comes to offer his
 aid.)

"Samson -

. "Prometheus -

Nothing of all these

. But I knew all these things

evils hath befallen

. willingly, willingly I

me

. erred, - I will not gain-

But justly; I myself have . say it!

brought them on, .

Sole author I, sole cause!.

Manoa- . Oceanus -
 I already have made . And now, for my part,
 way . I will go and will try,
 To some Philistine lords, v if I be able to disenthral
 with whom to treat . all thee from thy suffer-
 About thy ransom. . ings.

Samson - . Prometheus -
 Spare that proposal, . But trouble thyself not,
 father, spare the . for in vain, without
 trouble . being of any service to me,
 Of that solicitation, . wilt thou labor.
 let me here, .

As I deserve, pay on my . I will exhaust my present
 punishment, . fate until such time as
 And expiate, if possible. the spirit of Jupiter
 my crime. . shall abate its wrath.

Manoa - . Oceanus -
 Be penitent, and for thy. Know thyself and assume
 faults contrite . to thyself new manners
 But act not in thy own .
 affliction, son; .

Repent the sin; but if	.	O hapless one, dismiss
the punishment	.	the passion which thou feel-
Thou canst avoid, self-	.	eat, and search for a deliver-
preservation bids;	.	ance from these sufferings/
	.	of thine!

Samson

Prometheus

His pardon I implore;	.	Verily thou wouldst
but as for life,	.	hardly bear the agonies of
To what end should I	.	me to whom it is not doomed
seek it?	.	to die. Truly, this
.....	.	would be an escape from my
This one prayer yet	.	sufferings."
remains, might I	.	
be heard, -	.	
No long petition, -	.	
speedy death,	.	
The close of all my	.	
miseries and the	.	
balm."	.	

3 - Act III. 732-1299

Samson and Delilah . Prometheus and Io

Harapha .

..... .

"Chorus - . "Prometheus -

But patience is more oft. Fate, that

the exercise . brings events to their con-

Of saints, the trial of . summation ordained to

their fortitude . accomplish these things: but

Making them each his . after having been bent by

own deliverer . countless sufferings and

And victor over all . calamities thus am I to

That tyranny or fortune . escape from my shackles.

can inflict. .

.....sight bereaved . And art is far less powerful

May chance to number . than necessity.

thee with those

Whom patience finally . Time, as he grows old,

must crown." teaches all things."

4 - Act IV. 1300-1758

Samson and officer	.	Prometheus and Mercury
"Samson	.	"Prometheus
Can they think me so	.	Seem I to thee in aught
broken, so debased	.	to be dismayed at, and to
With corporal servitude	.	bow to the new gods?
that my mind even	.	Widely, qye altogether,
Will condescend to such	.	do I come short of such
absurd commands?	.	feelings."
I will not come."	.	

The conclusion as to the fatality of the catastrophe is thus expresst;-

"Chorus.....thou.....	.	"Mercury -
liest victoriousfor the divine voice
Among thy slain, self-	.	knows not how to utter
killed,	.	Falsehood, but <u>will bring</u>
Not willingly; but	.	<u>every word to pass.</u> "
<u>tangled in the fold</u>	.	
Of dire Necessity."	.	

Another interesting fact is found in an entry, or memorandum which Milton made in his list of schemes for literary projects, - in anticipation of writing,

at some time, a great drama on this subject.

In the list of these schemes, the following entry is found:

	1	2
"Samson pursophorus	or Hybristes,	or Samson
marling or in Ramath Lechi		

Judges 15. -

Dagonalia,

Judges 16. -

From this it is evident that four scenes in the life of Samson had attracted the attention of Milton, as material for a drama. They were as follows, (in

.....

1. Pursophorus, from Greek, $\pi\upsilon\rho\sigma\omicron\varsigma$, a fire-brand, - a torch; and verb $\phi\epsilon\rho\omega$, to bear (frequentative of $\phi\epsilon\rho\omega$) $\pi\upsilon\rho\sigma\omicron\phi\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma = \pi\upsilon\rho\phi\omicron\rho\omicron\varsigma$, an appellation of Prometheus. (Purphoros), torch-bearer) Samson pursophorus is, therefore, an allusion to Prometheus Purphoros; Prometheus, the torch-bearer, or fire-bringer.

2. Hybristes = Caucasian. The river Hybristes, (a violent stream) breaks forth from the crest of Mount Caucasus, (Wecklein l. 717) where Prometheus was bound, according to the ancient myth. Samson Hybristes = the Caucasian Samson.

3. Verity. p. XXX
Also see Appendix. Note 4.

the order enumerated in the M.S.):

1. Samson, the torch-bearer ("divinely called")¹
or, in other words the Caucasian (Promethean)
Samson ("chained")².
2. "Samson marrying" - his marriage with the
Philistine woman of Timnath.
3. - "in Ramath Lechi" - the slaughter of the
Philistines at Lechi.

(Judges XV. 14-17.)

4. Dagonalia - (analogous to Bacchanalia) the
festival to the heathen god.

As a matter of fact, the development of the Samson Agonistes was carried out in exactly this order. As far as is known, Milton made no acknowledgment of his use of the Prometheus Bound. Possibly this is because he was not altogether consistent in following the structure of this play to the end. Just before the end of the Samson, Milton changes from the Aeschylean to the Sophoclean form of dramatic structure, and we find the Hyporchême, - or "tragic moment", and the Messenger scene, in which the catastrophe of the play is related.³

.....;.....
1. Samson Agonistes. 1. 226.

2. Ibid. 1. 7.

3. Compare Sophocles' Antigone.

The likeness to the Aeschylean play ceases at line 1380, or thereabouts, (the play has, altogether, 1760 lines); Samson decides to go with the officer to the temple, and after his departure, his father, Manoa, returns, with news of the hope of arranging for the ransom, - and this short scene between Manoa and the Chorus, (the Hyporcheme) by reason of the hope it engenders, makes the subsequent catastrophe all the more vivid and horrible, because of the contrast. It is extremely artistic, but it is not Aeschylean. Even less relevant to this study are the many other points of interest of the Samson Agonistes, which might engage our attention in a research into Biblical literature.

CHAPTER III

Byron's Manfred

"The mind, the spirit, - the Promethean spark."

Manfred.

Byron is said to have confessed that all of his rebellious spirits were modeled upon the character of Prometheus.¹ Especially does this seem true of Manfred (published 1817) in the drama of that name, - "The most perfect expression of his romantic temperament".² Altho showing a general direct influence of the Aeschylean play, the Manfred is, for the most part, influenced indirectly by the Promethean myth, through a German modification of the legend, the Faustbuch (1857). To follow the history of this legend down thru the centuries, - to understand the conditions and influences which caused the modifications in the myth, from age to age, in any country, - is to know the history of the civilization of that land, - so persistent is this theme as a vehicle of expression of the personal relationship of man to God. Prometheus

.....
1. Tucker. p. 22.

was, primarily, a benefactor of mankind; - of a "philanthropic disposition". His theft of fire for mortals was only one of the many benefits he conferred upon humanity,¹ - who "seeing, saw not, and hearing, they heard not". For he also showed them the treasure that lay hidden under the ground, - brass, iron, silver, and gold; and taught them to tame steeds to the rein, and invented ships. He also pointed out to them the composition of mild remedies, wherewith to ward off illness, and many modes of the divining art, the interpretation of dreams, and of unknown tongues, haruspical omens, the flight of birds, the fiery symbols, the risings of the stars, and their settings, humbers, the combination of letters, and memory, - mother of all arts. In one brief phrase "all arts among the human race are from Prometheus". For he had compassion on mortals", said Aeschylus, "and ransomed mankind from being utterly destroyed and from going down to Hades." And it was for this that he was doomed to suffer.² After the downfall of the Greek and Roman centers of learning and culture, and during the subsequent centuries of the Medieval ages, when the light of learning seems to have been so nearly extinguished, the Arabs were

.....
1. Appendix. Note 5.

2. Appendix. Note 6.

rising to preeminence in the field of scientific studies. They were especially interested in mathematics, in chemistry, and in astronomy and astrology. The influence of the investigations in these lines, penetrating thro to the universal ignorance, delusion, and superstition of the age in Western Europe, resulted in the prevalence of rumors of wizards and witches, astrologers and magicians,¹ and their craft. Learning, partaking thus of the flavor of the Arabian development, was looked upon with suspicion. Powers and abilities not understood were unholy, - displeasing to God. And implying, therefore, a collusion with occult forces, not only supernatural, but Satanic. From Italy the influence of the Renaissance, and the revival of interest in the study of the Greek language and philosophy invested with a new force these old notions of magic, and the practices including the dangerous excursions in astrology and alchemy which had been suggested by them. One of the consequences was the revival of the ancient philosophical trains of thought, and this was also embodied in the legends and the literature of the time. We therefore find this late Medieval conception

.....
 1. Placed in this class of Magicians were also the true scientific ~~xx~~ inquirers, as was Roger Bacon, 13th Century.

of the Promethena story thus embodied in the German Faust buch, a narrative representing "a stage in the growth, expansion and development of the Faust legend, some of the fibres of which stretch back among the traditions and records of the ancient world, - to the Prometheus and the Book of Job".¹ The emphasis is placed especially upon the unholy character of Wisdom - "black-magic", - as with Prometheus, the philanthropy and knowledge of Faustus was displeasing to God, therefore the acquisition of such supernatural power implied a pact with Satan. The influence of the Greek Promethean legend is clearly seen in the Faust story, in the portrayal of inevitable despair, and resignation, in the attitude of absolute justice and self-condemnation, and the expression of lofty isolation of martyrdom which marks the Greek myth.

The Hebraic influence is also discernible, thinks Dr. Schusart. He considers that the Book of Job is the ground work of that side of the tradition "according to which Satan or the Devil forms one of the Lord's Host, not as a rebel against His will, but as a powerful tempter, authorized and appointed as such".

These are the chief elements of the Faustbuch

.....
1. A. W. Ward. Introduction to Marlowe's Dr. Faustus.

¹
 story, and of the two plays which were based upon this story; - the Faustus of Marlowe and the Faust of Goethe, later. It is throughe, or possibly both of these plays that Byron is said to have received the idea for the Manfred.

In passing, it is interesting to note these dramas, as possible influences upon the work under consideration.

In the earliest of the two Faust dramas, the English play called "The Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus" by Christopher Marlowe, the Greek influence is chiefly seen in a few Greek geographical and historical references and a pseudo-Greek Chorus which opens the play and carries on the narration of the necessary action where the characters fail to manage it; (notably in the middle of the play).

A chorus in a Greek play, it may be noted, sympathizes with the martyr; or relates expository events or philosophizes. The incidents of the Faustus are, for the most part, acts of legerdemain, the plot seems shallow and puerile. The finale of the chorus strikes
²
 the key-note of the style and the story:-

-1.....
1. There are also some traces of historical fact in the Faust story, - a long and complicated history of Faust or Faustus - a Medieval name borne by various persons of note.
 2. Appendix. Note 7.

"Faustus is gone, regard his hellish fate,
 Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise
 Only to wonder at unlawful things,
 Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
 To practice more than heavenly power permits."

The real merit of Marlowe's work lies in the beauty of diction, - showing the influence of the Latin dramatists of the second century, Plautus and Terence, rather than any influence of the Greek, - and clearly presaging the beauty of English drama at its best, - in the work of Shakespeare. Even more memorable in the Faustus are those rare flashes of mystical insight, which like sharp and sudden gleams in the darkness of verbal inadequacy, reveal the great poet and his real message, thro' the intervening years.

As in the Book of Job, the first scene of the Faust of Goethe is laid in Heaven. This drama is Goethe's criticism of life; - his philosophy is expressed with lucidity and evenness throughout the work, by means of the symbolism of Hebraic religious literature. Both of these Faust dramas are intensely Promethean in theme and in the characterization of the protagonist

-
1. "The hero (Faust) was manifestly a big fellow, of the Titanic type dear to these beseigers of Heaven". Introduction to Goethe's Faust.

but other than this, they show very little Greek influence.

Much has been said about the relation between Manfred and Faust, and- Byron has been accused of plagiarizing the idea of his poem from Goethe.¹

Byron indignantly denied the allegation, which was made by the German dramatist, in a comment on the Manfred, and in answer said that Goethe had taken the plan and incidents of his Faust story from Calderon;² that he, himself, had only heard an oral translation of Goethe's poem read at Diodati; and that he had never read Marlowe's Faustus. Altho Manfred is strikingly original, there are undoubtedly in it echoes of the German work, - certain ideas of a philosophical trend were probably inspired directly by a recollection of Faust, and some modes of expression, such as the following;³ Manfred, - Scene I, Act I, says, -

"Sorrow is Knowledge, they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of life.
Philosophy and science and the springs

-
1. Appendix. Note 8.
 2. Ibid. Note 9 (Baumgartner) Vol. VII. p. 128
 3. The Italics are the author's.

Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world
I have essay'd, and in my mind there is
 A power to make these subject to itself
 But they avail not:"

And later in the same act the seven spirits refer
 to -

"the elements
 Of which we are the mind and principle."

In Act II, Scene II.

"Manfred - (to the Witch of the Alps) a Son
 Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
 At times to commune with them -

Witch -	Son of Earth
<u>I know thee, and the powers which give thee power;</u>	

.....

Manfred -

"The face of the Earth hath maddened me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern her
 But they can nothing aid me."

Witch.....What could be the quest
 Which is not in the power of the most powerful,
The rulers of the invisible?

Witch(to Manfred)

.....but if thou

Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do

My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

.....

Scene III. Act II, the summit of the Jungfrau Mountain and the Destinies on their way to the Hall of Arimanes, on the night of the great festival, cannot fail to bring to mind the Walpurgis night episode in Faust; and again, in the last scene of Manfred, (Scene IV. Act III.) the attempt of the Evil Spirit to obtain dominion over the soul of the dying Manfred is, incidentally, at least, like the German drama. But here the resemblance ends. Byron uses this incident in particular, to a different end, - his method, - his conclusions, and his effects all indicate a source of inspiration far broader and more intellectually vigorous than the German drama could afford. For Manfred says -

"...my past power

Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,

.....

Back to thy hell!

Thou hast no power upon me, that I feel;

.....

What I have done is done; I bear within
 A torture which could nothing gain from thine.
 The mind which is immortal makes itself
 Requit for its good or evil thoughts, -

.....

I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey,
But was my own destroyer, and will be
 My own hereafter."

Thus the vast difference between Manfred and Faust.
 It is evident, then, that we must turn to the original
 classical drama as the real source of inspiration to
 Byron in this work. The name of Byron is always
 associated with enthusiasm for Greece, - modern Greece,
 it is true, it was that he loved, - but the real reason
 for his warm affection lay in the fervor of his admir-
 ation for the Greece of old.

Byron's Manfred is unmistakably modeled upon the
 character of the Prometheus of Aeschylus, in the tone
 and pitch of the composition, in the resolute spirit of
 the central character, in his mental suffering, and his
 tremendous solitude and in the supernatural character
 of the surroundings. Byron stands above all other
 dramatists in the interpretation of the true spirit of
 the Promethean drama. As a vehicle for the personal
 expression of his individuality, no work of classical

literature could be more appropriate.

The two master traits of Byron's genius are the revolutionary spirit and classical art. By classical is meant a certain predominance of rational thought (the intellect) over the emotions, and a reliance on broad effects rather than on subtle impressions; - these two characteristics working harmoniously together, and being subservient to human interest.

Predominance of rational thought, or intellect, does not necessarily imply spiritual insight; the true wisdom. In Byron it implies, rather, keenness of wit, a tendency to a biting satire, and sharpness of criticism, whether true or false, and precision and unity of conception. Byron never entirely escaped from the bondage of that "fate, or will that walk'd astray" - Death - almost self-sought, came, with infinite beauty of sadness and significance, while he still walked in the wilderness before the appointed time for him to see the real Vision.

In its larger effect, this predominance of rationalistic tendency causes simplicity and tangibility of design. Thus, on reading *Manfred*, we feel that a single and very definite idea has been grasped and held throughout, and we, in turn, receive a single and definite impression, namely, that of the comprehensive

character of the individual mind, the cause and the effect, the fore-knowledge, and the justification of life, the Alpha and Omega- within the individual intelligence - yet this predominance of intellect which forms so important a factor in classical art, is far from excluding all emotion. On the contrary, the simple, elemental passions naturally provoke intense mental activity, which almost inevitably leads to an art which depends on broad effects, sustained feeling, and vivid impressions. Byron made a conscientious effort to be, - as he himself calls it, - classical in this respect, - and gave to the world a portrayal of the individualistic revolutionary spirit of his age, expressed with characteristic vigor and vitality of art, and with marvellous sweep and force of language. In a comparison of Manfred with Aeschylus' Prometheus, there is evident a striking similarity in scene-location of the dramatic crises of the play, as well as in the type of characters. The localities of four of ten short scenes are thus indicated as being, as in the Prometheus, - on the heights; -

"Scene II (Act I) The Mountains of the Jungfrau.
Manfred alone upon the Cliffs."

"Scene III (Act II) The Summit of the Jungfrau mountains."

"Scene IV. The Hall of Arimanes, Arimanes on his throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by his spirits."

"Scene IV. (Act III.) - the Castle of Manfred
Interior of the Tower."

Then, too, most of the characters in the play are of the supernatural type, as in the Aeschylean drama; - the Seven Spirits, who are not able to grant to Manfred the forgetfulness for which he begs; the Witch of the Alps; the Three Destinies. Arimanes and his Spirit Attendants who sing the Choral hymn; and Memesis; - to all of whom Manfred appeals in his grief; and finally, the Phantom of Astarte, the shade of Manfred's lost love. The character of the Phantom of Astarte corresponds, in significance to the theme, in occurrence in the play, and in importance, to the character of Io in the Greek play.

Changed into a heifer by the cruel jealousy of Juno, and driven frantically up and down the world, for a brief space Io brings upon the scene on the Caucasian heights the story of her ill-matched love. She calls upon Zeus for an answer to her prayers; - "O whither do my wanderings wide carry me? In what, O son of Saturn, hast thou found me transgressing, that thou hast enthralled me with such sorrow? O King, hearest thou the plea of the ox-horned maiden?"¹

.....
1. Wecklein. 11. 613, 614.

It is an interesting, and perhaps a significant coincidence, to note that Astarte was also the name of a Phoenecian goddess "sometimes represented with her symbol, the dove, or in the form of a cow".¹ From Cypress the cult of Astarte was carried to Greece, and appears as that of Aphrodite.

Without doubt the most striking and convincing comparison between the two plays is found in the eloquent apostrophe of Manfred to the elements of Nature, as he stands alone on the cliffs of the Jungfrau.

Manfred -

Prometheus -

<u>My mother Earth!</u>	.	O divine aether, and
And thou, fresh breaking	.	ye swift-winged breezes,
Day, and you, ye	.	and ye fountain of rivers,
mountains, -	.	and countless dimpling of
.....	.	the waves of the deep, and
<u>And thou, the bright</u>	.	thou <u>Earth, mother of all,</u>
<u>eye of the Universe,</u>	.	<u>and to the all-beholding</u>
<u>That openest over all and</u>	.	orb of the Sun I appeal;
<u>unto all</u>Behold with what
Art a delight, - thou	.	sorrow I shall have to
shin'st not on my	.	strive thro time of years
heart.	.	innumerable.

.....
1. Astarte, New International Encyclopedia.

Cf. "Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn."
Poe. Ulalume.

And you, ye crags, upon .	Alas! O ye daughter of
whose extreme edge .	Ocean, who rolls around
I stand, and on the tor- .	the whole earth in his
rent's brink beneath .	unslumbering stream,
Behold the tall pines - .	behold and see the mourn-
..... .	ful watch and keep on
.....hours, all tortured .	the topmost crags of this
into ages, hours .	ravine!
Which I outlive! Ye .	
toppling crags of .	
ice! .	

These comparisons of phrases in Manfred and Prometheus serve to illustrate, not only the similarity of expression, of scene locality and characterization, but they show the breadth and mental scope that Byron identifies with his use of the classical metaphor and the method of his treatment of nature.

The classical influence excels in artistry of form, rather than of detail, in the philosophical, rather than the botanical treatment of nature. The same tendency is shown in the classical use of metaphor, the idea and mental imagery is concrete, definite, large, rather than abstract and vague. For example, note, in the foregoing pages, the subjects are the mountains and crags; the earth day, the sun, the ocean

torrent, ages of time, the air, etc. There are no daisies, nightingales, cuckoos, little boats, or sea-shells in the classical poetical forms.

More important even than the poet's treatment of Nature is the manner of his treatment of Mankind. This theme of the struggle of the human soul, an essential feature of the classical spirit, - is above all, the main theme of *Menfred*. In the ultimate analysis, Byron sympathizes, not with Nature, but with Man and in the expression of this sympathy he exemplifies the strongest phase of classical art. The following phrases illustrate; -

Spirits -

"His sufferings

Have been of an immortal nature, like

Our own; his knowledge and his powers^o and will

As far as is compatible with clay

Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such

As clay hath seldom borne, his aspirations

Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth

And they have only taught him what we know,

That knowledge is not happiness, and science

But an exchange of ignorance, for that

Which is another kind of ignorance."

.....

In the Hall of Arimanus -

"Manfred - I have known
The fulness of humiliation, for
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation."

.....

"I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself."

.....

"How beautiful is all this visible world
How glorious in its action and itself."

.....

In the last scene of the play the Abbott, like Mercury in Prometheus, comes as the messenger and representative of Deity.- The reader is sufficiently familiar with the scene between Mercury and Prometheus in the Greek play to note the similarity without further suggestion in the text.

In Manfred - the Abbott says -

"I come to save and not destroy
.....there still is time

For penitence and pity; reconcile thee

With the true Church, and thro the Church to Heaven

Manfred -

I hear thee. This is my reply; whate'er

I may have been, or am, doth rest between

Heaven and myself; I shall not choose a mortal

To be my mediator.

.....

But the last words of Manfred are to the Abbott. -

"Fare thee well -

Give me thy hand."

Thus ends the perfect and ever memorable tragedy of the spirit of revolution, of individual isolation, of unrestraint, of limitless desires which found in Byron side by side with his classic rationalism its most sincere utterance. The tormented personality and the revolutionary spirit are easily recognizable as essentially characteristic of the individuality of Byron; - the union of these qualities with an authentic and sincere classicism has produced an extraordinary result, - a work of literature of permanent and vital interest. The question that Byron asks in this poem is the age-old question of

humanity in its sufferings - "what means", he seems to say, "this constant baffling of man's best efforts, this universal presence of pain and sin, this obscurity of the paths and purposes of life?" The answer is not found in this segment of life which Aeschylus has indicated in the Prometheus Bound. This drama is only part of the planned whole, and it is to a consideration of the redemption of humanity that we must turn for our answer. As Prometheus was restored, so is mankind redeemed. As Job learned the explanation of God's ways, so will each man, in the latter day understand that the Redeemer liveth.

CHAPTER FOUR

Shelley's Prometheus Unbound

"the omnipotence of God
Which sweeps thro all things"

(Shelley, Prologue for Hellas)

The culmination of the Romantic Movement in English Literature has a characteristic embodiment in the works of Shelley, our greatest lyric poet.

His drama, Prometheus Unbound, the finest example of the genius of Shelley, is the poet's interpretation of the redemption of Prometheus.

This is also the subject of the Aeschylean Prometheus Unbound, in the Promethean trilogy,¹ a drama of which only a few fragments remain to us.

In Shelley's work we find, not only the characters of Prometheus, Hercules (Strength), Earth, Mercury, Ocean, and the Oceanides, as in the drama of Aeschylus, but also Demogorgon, Jupiter, the Spirit of the Earth, the Spirit of the Moon, Spirits of the Hours, Spirits,

.....
1. Wecklein. p. 20.

Echoes, Fauns, and Furies.

The Prometheus Unbound continues the story from the last episode of the Prometheus Bound, - the visit of Mercury advising submission and reconciliation with Zeus and the defiant refusal of Prometheus, - and relates the annihilation of Zeus, and the fulfillment of the prophecies of Prometheus, - how he was restored, - and the revelation of his glorious estate.

Shelley bases the incidents of his play upon these prophecies which are voiced in the Prometheus Bound, rather than upon any information found in the fragments of Aeschylus' Prometheus Unbound. There are remaining only thirty-eight lines of this Greek play, - fragments which happen to be preserved because they were quoted by other Greek authors. The original play by Aeschylus is lost. The quotations preserved are found in the works of the Greek authors Arrian, Strabo, Plutarch, Stephanus Byzantium, and Galenus; they were, for the most part, used by these authors for their value as geographical references. From Cicero we have a transcript from the Prometheus Unbound of Aeschylus, - a passage of twenty-eight lines, - speech of Prometheus
1
on Caucasus.

.....
1. Cic. Tusc. II. Adfixus ad Caucasam (Sc. Prometheus apud Aeschylum) dicit haec:-

In these ten authenticated fragments we find Prometheus, wearied in the struggle, wishes for death to end his woe. The Titans have come to the Caucasian heights to comfort him, and he tells of the tortures Zeus has put upon him, and of his own services to mankind. Hercules appears, and destroys the eagle which Zeus had set to prey upon the heart of Prometheus, and he, in gratitude, relates to Hercules the prophecy of his future travels.

References to the text of this play are found in Apollodorus; - and also in Philodemus where we note an allusion to an agreement between Zeus and Prometheus, whereby the Titan reveals the prophecy which had been spoken about Thetis.¹ Authorities differ as to whether, in the lost Aeschylean play, Prometheus was freed because Zeus was hurled from his throne and defeated, or because a reconciliation was effected between Zeus and Prometheus. Those who believe that there was a reconciliation base their arguments (a) on this passage from Philodemus; (b) on the fact that the Titans are mentioned in Fragment I as having come to comfort Prometheus (having been released from Tartarus, therefore, by Zeus, who had imprisoned them);

.....
1. Cp. Hygin. fab. 54.

"fide data, (by Jupiter) monet (Pr.)
Jovem ne cum Thetide concumberet."

(c) on the Evidence in Fragment VI, that Hercules had been sent to destroy the eagle, and (d) on the belief that Aeschylus, a pious man, would not have represented the downfall of Zeus in the play.

The prophecies of Prometheus, as to the dethrone-¹ment of Zeus, are vague, and the threatened downfall is conditional upon his marriage to Thetis.²¹ Shelley represents the fall of Zeus and the liberation of Prometheus, but he utterly neglects the cause of the defeat of Zeus, which was an important part of the prophecy of Prometheus; - "the ruler of the gods shall need me to reveal to him the new plot by which he is to be despoiled of his sceptre and his honors, --- nor will I.....divulge the matter before he shall have³ released me."

The weight of the evidence seems to show that the plot of the Greek Prometheus Unbound followed the plans thus indicated for the solution of the complication in the Prometheus Bound; that Zeus released Prometheus in return for the proclamation of the secret which would preserve his sovereignty, and that a reconciliation followed.

.....
1. Appendix. Note 3.

2. Ibid.

3. Wecklein. 11. 167-198.

It is evident, then, that Shelley's treatment of the Prometheus dramas of Aeschylus is very free, as to incident and form. From the Prometheus Unbound he uses the incident of Hercules as the agent in the release of Prometheus (according to prophecy) but the incident of the arrival of the Chorus of Titans is disregarded. Instead, he retains the suggestion of the larger Chorus of Oceanids, in the characters of the two, Panthea and Ione. As in both of the Aeschylean plays, Prometheus (Act II. Sc. 4) tells of the benefits he has conferred upon mankind:

"Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart;"

This paraphrase of the long speech in Prometheus Bound follows very closely the original in the Aeschylean drama.

1

In the Medicean manuscript there is a marginal

which suggests the idea that Gaea¹ (Greek Ge, the earth) was one of the characters in the Greek Prometheus Unbound; and this idea is generally accepted, as consistent with the reference which Prometheus makes (in the Greek Prometheus Bound) to "my mother, Themis² and Terra, the same person with many names". In the Shelleyan drama we find the analogous character of Earth, called by Prometheus "venerable Mother" and "parent".

The character of Ocean, in Shelley's drama, is reproduced from the Greek Prometheus Bound. There is no trace of this character in the Greek Prometheus Unbound. True to the Aeschylean delineation, Oceanus appears, as the father of the bride of Prometheus, and also as Prometheus' friend and adviser.

In the Greek play the Chorus, composed of the daughters of Oceanus, sings "Far different is this strain.....from that hymenaeal chant which we sang.... when, after having won Hesione with thy love-tokens, thou didst conduct her, our sister, to be thy bride";³ and Oceanus, coming to the scene soon after the arrival of the Chorus, - the first comforters of Prometheus, is prompt in hastening to the assistance of the suffering Titan.

.....
1. Gaea was the mother of the Titans.

2. Wecklein. ll. 209-210.

3. Ibid. ll. 555-560.

Shelley has brought this character into his play: in Act III, Scene II, as an interested listener to Apollo's account of the down-fall of Zeus. Oceanus, in Shelley's play, is the father of the Oceanids, Panthea and Ione, who are found seated at the feet of Prometheus at the opening of the poem; he is also the father of Asia, the bride to whom Prometheus is finally re-united. (Act III. Scene IV.)

Panthea, the faithful, who finally carries to the waiting Asia the message of Prometheus, "Most vain all hope but love", is one of the most important characters in the Shelleyan play.

The main action of the Promethean plays turns upon the answer of Prometheus to the demands of Mercury to reveal the secret which threatens the sovereignty of Zeus.¹ As in the Greek Prometheus Bound, Shelley represents Mercury coming as a messenger of Zeus,- but characterizes him as more sympathetic with the suffering of Prometheus than does Aeschylus. Shelley's Mercury says,

"Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself

That I can do no more:

Wise art thou, firm and good

But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife

Against the Omnipotent:" (Act I.)

while the Mercury of Aeschylus is supercilious. His advice, "Resolve, O vain one, resolve at last, in view of thy present suffering, to come to thy right senses", epitomizes his conversation and his attitude.¹

In all the plays Prometheus refuses to proclaim the secret unless Zeus will release him from his suffering. In the Aeschylean Prometheus Unbound, as we have seen, the kindlier aspects of the god are indicated by the release of Prometheus upon the revelation as to the way Zeus shall retain the authority of his rule, and by the reconciliation of Prometheus and Zeus. In Shelley's play the release of Prometheus following the violent overthrow of Zeus by Demogorgon characterizes the unyielding quality of the god. Upon the refusal of Prometheus to reveal his secret unconditionally, the Furies are let loose to torture him, and his agony takes the form of a vision of all the suffering of the world. The Vision passes, and Earth calls up spirits to soothe him with images of delight, but he thinks of Asia, and Panthea carries the message of his dreams to her sister.

In Act III Zeus is triumphing in heaven when the car of the Hour arrives; Demogorgon descends from it, and hurls the tyrant into the abyss. Prometheus,

freed by Hercules, is again united to Asia.

¹
Act IV is really an epilogue to the drama proper; the action of the play has ceased at the end of Act III. This act is composed of lyrics celebrating the great regeneration and transfiguration of the Universe, - heralded by Earth herself, and the spirits of the earth and the Hour. The Spirit of the Earth describes the transformation as it effects all Nature, and then follows Shelley's greatest picture of the felicity and goodness to which men may attain: - (Scene IV. Act IV.)

".....thrones were Kingless,
.....and men walkt
One with the other ever as spirits do,
None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed.....
The painted veil.....called life
.....is torn aside;"

All traces of the Greek legend have disappeared from Shelley's drama in Act IV, - and, freed from this only perceptible trace of Greek influence upon the drama, we may say that this last act shows none of the influences of classicism, in so far as the form of expression is

.....
1. Appendix. Note 11.

considered. There is, on the other hand, a decided evidence of the influences of romanticism in the style of the work, - a reliance upon subtle impressions and vague emotion rather than upon the large effects and precision of design which is characteristic of classical art. The abstract metaphors, the predominance of the impressions of light and motion, the vague shifting tints and various colors of his thought, half unexpressed, mistily defined, - the iridescence of thought, - these are all the marks of romanticism.

This style, however, is supremely suitable to the thought of the drama, for Shelley was a philosopher and a seer as well as a poet. The Prometheus Bound is a philosophical drama, the expression of Shelley's religious ideas in an allegorical treatment of the problems of life. His view is that of abstract truth, - of the things above and beyond human contact, - far removed from the world in which we live. The images of this world of sense perception are merely used as symbols to embody the conceptions of the spiritual universe. The very vagueness of expression in reality arises from the clearness of the poet's perception; it is the right instinct for what is abiding that impels him to clothe his thought so appropriately.

The philosophy of Shelley is shaped by the Platonic

theories, - the thought content of Prometheus Bound is therefore, decidedly under the Greek influence. The Greek doctrine of Necessity, the earliest form of his interpretation of Plato, appealed to Shelley very strongly, in its ethical and philosophical aspect;¹ his Pantheistic conception of the Nature of the Divine Spirit permeating all space is closely related to his idea of the Supreme Power of Necessity.² This intensely individualistic attitude toward the outer world gives rise to the mysticism of Shelley, - another outstanding characteristic of the themes of Plato. This is seen in the later developments of Neo-Platonism,³ and in the mystical cults of Alexandria.

The influence of Plato on the thought of Shelley cannot be over-estimated, the identification of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True is the basic assumption of the poet's philosophy.

"To see things as they really are," says Arnold, "and by seeing them as they are to see them in their beauty, is the simple and attractive ordeal which Hellenism holds out before human nature, and from the simplicity and charm of this ideal, Hellenism, and

.....
1. Waterlow. p. 21.

2. Cf. ref. to "...God, and Nature, and Necessity"-Shelley's Laon and Cythna.

3. Appendix. Note 12.

human life in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of aërial ease, clearness, and radiancy."¹

This adherence to the Classical in the content of the Prometheus Unbound directs our attention from a consideration of the technical inconsistencies² in Shelley's treatment of the form of the legend and lifts our gaze to the higher implications, the spiritual significance of the drama. The two basic theories of the philosophy of Shelley were Pantheism, - Nature pervaded by the divine spirit of Necessity (Fate), - and the theory of the perfectability of man.

Consistent with the Platonic idea of the force of Necessity as the determining factor of life, the unpropitious attitude of environment is inferred and adaptation to environment is expressed as a struggle which involves the soul of humanity in unutterable woe. With Plato, the idea of the Good was banished from man's consciousness at birth, and only returned to it thro that turning of the soul to the light, which is the result of the discipline of life. Hence Virtue, with Plato, tho intuitive, was realizable only with difficulty, by the regaining of the idea of Good by the human soul. This is the reward of the struggle and contest of life, the home-coming after the voyage.

.....
 1. M. Arnold. Hebraism and Hellenism.
 2. Appendix. Note 13.

In the record of life, sorrow and fantasy seem indissolubly connected; that poets "learn in sorrow what they teach in song" is re-echoed by Francis Thompson; in his monograph in Shelley - "The harvest waves richest over the battlefields of the soul". This concept of the conflict of life as a means for the regeneration of man finds its most inspired expression in English Literature in the Prometheus Unbound.

As perhaps the greatest of world-myths, it does no more than put into objective form what is subjectively true.

In the drama by Aeschylus Prometheus is chained to the crag, his flesh is torn by vultures, he is overwhelmed by the fury of the storm, the cliffs are torn asunder, and he sinks into the abyss.

¹
It is in the story of Shelley's life that we find the reason for the choice of this theme as a means of self-expression, and the measure of his sympathy in the treatment of the myth.

To the unescapable bondage of his neurotic temperament, impulsive disposition, and ill-balanced judgment was added, not only the burden of physical pain and the grief of death's desolation, but remorse for the crime of his youth. Like Prometheus, he seemed

.....
1. Strong. pp. 107-147

doomed to share the sins and sorrows of mankind through
 ages interminable, tho seeing even in his anguish
 the Eternal Plan and Purpose.

"O mighty God,

Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
 Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
 Nailed to the wall of eagle-baffling mountain
 Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
 Insect, or beast, or shape, or sound of life.
 Ah Me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!"¹

Understanding the personal intimation of the drama,
 the song of freedom from such anguish seems all the
 more glorious; for it is the song of redemption from
 himself, - from the Furies

....."ministers of pain and fear
 And disappointment and mistrust and hate
 And clinging crime"

Prometheus knows that Zeus will some day be over-
 thrown, tho he does not know when, - and he knows,
 too, that he himself will be released.² As the new
 day begins Prometheus arises to become a harmonious
 part of the great whole of the Universe, - to the

.....
 1. Prometheus Unbound. Act I.
 2. Appendix. Note 14.

realm of thought above the sway of Zeus, - above the rule of sense-perception, into that world of a higher knowledge and comprehension which enables him to see the Universe in such a way that the things of the world fade away in the luminous vision which transfigures all things, into the clear perception of relationships of vital elements. Science recognizes this psychological state as one of perfected thought. It reveals itself in a seeming withdrawal of the veil of the subconscious, revealing the perfection of harmony in all phenomena.

It is of greatest importance, for the right understanding of the poet's thought, to realize the intensity of his psychical, or religious experience; for the drama is an expression, in terms of the symbolism of Christian mysticism of a psychical experience transcending the ordinary facts of human mental processes or expectations; it is the drama of another world, - of the secret and mystery of things, rather than of the things themselves. The poet who finds himself at home in this region does really (as Shelley himself says) see before him always a white radiance, and the life of men with its thoughts and actions; he rests in a conception of the whole, of a universe of interrelated facts, and of a permeating controlling spirit.

To the mystic the attainment to this realm of perfected thought is the great miracle of the resurrection, the symbol of which is seen in every phase of nature, in the lily from the earth, the radiant morn from night, in springtime after the dark winter, and in the orisons of the elements. To the mystic there is truly a voice from the burning bush. Those who live in the world of sense-perception only are dead souls; they sleep, for the days of their lives are as the night is to the day.

The plan and purpose of the Prometheus Unbound is to convey to us Shelley's interpretation of life as a way of the cross, leading to that day when

"Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs¹
And folds over the world its healing wings."

The key to the meaning of the drama is found in the words in the dream of Asia

"O follow, follow, follow me!"²

.....

1. Prometheus Unbound. Act IV.
2. Ed. John. 1-43.

These words of the Great Teacher who gave the two¹ commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets, are the key to the gate of the mystic way, - the via crucis, - by which the human soul, lighted by that ineffable hope that guides the transience of the human to the divine, attains to its vision of the immortal clarities, and sees

"aloft in high emblazonry;

Truth, liberty, and love!"

There is an ideal and inspired beauty in the lyrics of Shelley which few poets have rivaled; they show his imagination at work upon the materials of human life and nature.

"Whatever the correct label, he was eminently² religious," says Waterlow, and this statement is verified by his truly inspirational works. Like all great men, he changed his opinions, avowing atheism in his early youth - then later becoming an earnest advocate of "the everlasting universe of things", the "soul of man", and those

"mysteries of being which have made,

And shall continue evermore to make

Of the whole human race one brotherhood".

.....
1. Matthew. 22:37-40.

2. Shelley. p. 46.

In Queen Mab he announces his belief in "a pervading spirit co-eternal with the Universe," and religion meant for him a "perception of relation in which we stand to the principle of the Universe".

The Prometheus marks a step still further in the development of the philosophical system of Shelley, and in it we find an expression of Christianity as the complement and crown of the Greek spirit. For whatever the attitude of Shelley in his early years, the Prometheus is memorable for the exaltation of the spirit of Christ, - it is beautifully expressed in the Vision of Prometheus, where Christ is shown, weeping over the "million-peopled city".

"One came forth of gentle worth,

Smiling on the sanguine earth;"

In Hellas, written a few months before Shelley's death are the lines: -

"A power from the unknown god

A Promethean Conqueror, came;

Like a triumphal path he trod

The thorns of death and shame"

The whole of Prometheus is an expression of the religious faith of Shelley, a profound and characteristic intuition of the universe expressed with perfect

sincerity, vivid emotional force, and that universal benevolence that appeals to men almost with the force of divinity, even carrying even when mutilated and obscured by frailties, as with Shelley, some suggestion of the Man of Sorrows.

The study of the drama would not be complete without a recognition of the scientific conceptions of literature, which concern the relationship of the poet to his age, and identifies the source of the inspiration of the poet with the passions and ideals of history.

This drama was written in 1819, - it belongs to the greatest cycle of English song since the Elizabethan age. A study of the history of the period reveals the same tendency for the introspective trend of mind, and the optimism which is reflected in the work of Blake and Keats, and which has found its fullest expression in the Prometheus Unbound.

It is the natural expression and outcome of a great period of the resurrection of the modern world, and this drama is the supreme expression of it.

From the trammels and bondage of political and economic forces humanity, like individuals, was struggling upward to the light, thro the tragic restlessness of the age. Thro the upheaval consequent to the French Revolution, the world, guided by the faith of her poets and teachers, finally, at the beginning of

our century caught the glimpse of the ideals of
democracy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Bridges' Prometheus the Firegiver

"....."happy is he

Who thus from chance and change has launched his mind
To dwell forever with undisturbed truth.

This high ambition doth not prompt his hand

To crime, his right and pleasure are not wronged

By folly of his fellows, nor his eye

Dimmed by the griefs that move the tears of men.

Son of the earth, and citizen may be

Of Argos or of Athens and her laws,

But still the eternal nature, where he looks

O'er rules him with the laws which laws obey,

And in her heavenly city enrolls his heart."

(Bridges. Prometheus the Firegiver)

We have noted in these three treatments of the Promethean myth by Milton, Byron, and Shelley, that each successive drama, as a unified work of literary expression has, in increasingly marked characteristics, continuously approached nearer the original Greek model.

The structural points of resemblance between Milton's Samson Agonistes and Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound, deeply embedded in Hebraic subject matter and Latinized style of expression, were far from patent to the casual observer.

More evident is the likeness of Byron's Manfred, for here the similarity between the English and the Greek dramas lies in the tone and feeling, - the spirit - of the work; - a quality more easily discernible. There is a striving after the same emotional effect as that inspired by the Greek model.

The more entire incorporation of the Greek legend into Shelley's drama is the next step in the process which finds a very satisfactory expression in the mask by Robert Bridges, - Prometheus the Firegiver. This is "a mask in the Greek manner", and it owes a larger proportion of its content to the influence of the Greek myth than do any of its predecessors.

Robert Bridges, the present Poet Laureate of England, was born in 1844. He is, essentially, a lyric poet. His published work includes seven plays modeled directly upon the Elizabethan or upon ancient models; one derived from the Latin, being partly a translation from Terence; two masks in the Greek manner, Prometheus and Demeter; a long version of

Vergil in classical versification, and five little books of Shorter Poems. The most obvious feature of his work is his discontent with the models of his day; and the result has been a complete breaking away from the modern forms and methods and a persistent and satisfactory use of the models of the great past ages of literature, and particularly of the models of Classicism. He has been called a "classical revivalist".

Altho he is not one of the great poets, there is an arresting note in his work in the appreciation of beauty in Nature - his lyrics are like the delicate traceries of filagree. But the chief merit of his work lies in an unsurpassed grace, sincerity, and precision of diction which indicate an innate classicism. This influence is also shown in his mastery of the art of metre, in his simplicity and restraint of expression, in symmetry and decorum of form.

His "pleasant unhindered order of life, his happy enchantments of fortune, easy surroundings, courteous acquaintance"¹ have produced a sweet and wholesome personality, a poet of undoubted genius and appreciation of the refinements of his art, but have withheld from him the greatest gifts.

.....
1. Young. p. 150.

Love for all humanity, the freedom of the imagination, and that vision of essential truth which endows the soul with power and purpose, are all the results of communion with that spirit which comes to mankind as the comforter, at the mandate of necessity.

All of these gifts of the spirit are lacking in Bridges, - he still has hostages in the hands of Fate.

Prometheus the Firegiver is based on that part of the Greek trilogy which would constitute the first act, if the trilogy were given altogether at one performance, in the manner of a three-act play. Authorities disagree as to whether Aeschylus, in composing the trilogy, wrote Prometheus the Firebringer first, in point of time.

There are remaining no lines of the play, - merely references, in other Greek works, to a play of that name, by Aeschylus.

Altho Prometheus gave many benefits to mankind, of which the gift of fire was only one example, it was this which especially caused the anger of Zeus, because fire was prerogative of the gods. The theft of fire was the preliminary action to this play, and its bestowal upon mankind is the incident upon which the story of the play turns.

The characters of this mask by Robert Bridges are, - Prometheus, Inachus, Argeia, his wife, Io, his daughter,

a Servant, and Chorus of youths and maidens.

The scene is in Argos before the palace of Imachus. An altar inscribed to Zeus is in the centre of the stage.

Prometheus, coming to give fire to men, appears before the palace of Imachus, on a festival day. He "prologizes". The substance of the prologue is the story of the overthrow of the Titans, which is given in the long speech of Prometheus in the Greek Prometheus Bound. In this play by Bridges, the speech is much longer, and very leisurely. Indeed this whole play proceeds at a much slower pace - if it can be said to proceed at all - than the Greek play.

While exquisitely Greek in metre, form of thought, expression, and even choice of words, it resembles Homer more than it does Aeschylus. This is quite intentional, it seems to me, and in keeping with the nature of the play, as a mask is quite different in effect from a regular drama, - especially from a tragedy. It is not supposed to rise to the emotional effect of drama, and therefore its style must be more narrative, and leisurely.

Very noticeable is Bridges' absolute command of all his material, - revealing an inexhaustible fund of classical lore. Even the more remote ramifications of the legend, more or less related facts of myth and

allegory unmentioned by the other authors who have used the myth, are introduced by Bridges throughout the play. For instance, the allusion to the flood does not occur in the Aeschylean legend, but a mention of the deluge is often found in other legends of the remoter times of the struggle between Zeus and the Titans.

The announcement of entrances by such speeches as

".....See here a servant bears

For the cold altar ceremonial wood:"

has been criticised, as being awkward, but in truth it is a sincere and consistent following of the exact style of the Greek tragedies. Some sentences are almost exact quotations. For example, - the speech of Prometheus,

"Or else thy whole race perish root and branch" is a quotation from Sophocles' Antigone.

After the prologue and the conversation between Prometheus and the servant who comes to place the wood on the fireless altar, the Chorus of youths and maidens enter. In metre, in diction, and in the subject matter, the choral ode is as nearly true to the spirit of the Greek play as an English mask could possibly be. The Chorus sings in praise of Zeus, and relates stories of the high gods and of their kingdoms. Imachus comes upon the scene, and Prometheus offers him the gift of fire which also implies the anger of Zeus. It is

interesting to note that Bridges has taken full advantage of all the different versions of the Promethean role to merge them all into one in his Prometheus, making him thus a many-sided character. For when Prometheus first tempts Imachus to accept the fire, even tho Zeus will be angry, one recognizes the Miltonic conception of Prometheus used in Paradise Lost, - Satan is the rebellious Prometheus.

Later in Bridges' Mask, Prometheus assumes the role of benefactor and prophet, giving the interpretation of Shelley. The two conceptions are reasonably combined, however, - and consistently carried through the Mask. Later in the Mask Prometheus refers to himself as the "only rebel" of Zeus.

Imachus and Argeia accept the gift of fire, and its consequences; but first Prometheus prophecies the long wanderings of Io, and her fate. He tells her how she shall at last come to "earth's remote verge".

"A sound then thou shalt hear.....

..... a far-off cry,

Whose throat seems the white mountain, and its passion

The woe of earth.

.....Stretched on the rock,

.....

From year to year he lies. Refrain to ask
 His name and crime - nay, haply when thou see him
 Thou wilt remember - 'tis thy tyrants' foe,
 Man's friend, who pays his chosen penalty.
 Draw near, my child, for he will know thy need
 And point from land to land thy further path."

Then follows a long choral ode upon the woe of
 mankind, the fire is placed upon the altar-and Prome-
 theus, after writing his name upon the stone, disappears.
 The last choral ode is in praise of Prometheus,

"Of righteous Themis the lofty-spirited son;"

and it is followed by the lyric Jewel of the whole work:-

"My soul is drunk with joy, her new desire
 In far forbidden places wanders away.
 Her hopes with free bright-colored wings of fire
 Upon the gloom of thought
 Are sailing out.
 A-while they rise, a-while to rest they softly fall,
 Like butterflies, that flit
 Across the mountains, or upon a wall
 Winking their idle fans at pleasure sit.

O my vague desires!

Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires:

That are my soul herself in pangs sublime
Rising and flying to heaven before her time;

What doth tempt you forth
To melt in the south or shiver in the frosty north?
What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,
Forever soaring aloft, soaring and dying?

.....

Ah! could I control
These vague desires, these leaping flames of my soul:
Could I but quench the fire, ah! could I stay
My soul that flieth, alas, and dyeth away!"

APPENDIX

Note I

"The points of contact with the models of Greek literature have been numerous, - the influence has not always been shown in the same way. First we merely borrowed some of the matter of Greek writing, - some of its stories of mythology and history, figures and similes, fragments of philosophy. At another time we have copied some of its forms of production, such as the Epic form of Homer, the Pindaric Ode, the Idyll of Theocritus. At another time we have borrowed its literary criticism, and either garbled it or misapplied it, like Pope, or rightfully assimilated it, like Matthew Arnold. It is possible, also, to adopt its matter, its form, its Hellenic principles of criticism, all together and that is what so many of the best writers of today are, consciously or unconsciously, laboring to do."

Tucker. p. 40.

Note 2

"A parallel may also be drawn with Aeschylus's tragedy 'Prometheus Bound'. Professor Genung points this wout and traces the struggle of Job upward to truth and light by means of 'five acts or stages with their points of objective'."

Richardson and Owen. p.48

Note 3

A clear understanding of the theogony of the Prometheus is necessary, in order to comprehend the meaning of the myth. The Highest Power isAdrasteia (Necessity, Fate). Even Zeus and the Olympian gods (the new gods) are subservient to Adrasteia, "that brings events to their consummation ordained to accomplish these things Even art is far less powerful than Necessity" - (Prometheus).

Note the following quotations from the Prometheus Bound -

"Chorus - Is Jupiter, then, less powerful than this?
Prometheus - Most certainly he cannot in the least
escape his Fate.

Chorus -

Why, what is fated for Jupiter but to reign forever-
more?

Prometheus -

This thou mayest not yet learn - and do not press it.

Chorus -

'Tis surely some solemn mystery that thou veilest.

Prometheus -

.....it is by no means the time to proclaim
this it must be shrouded in the deepest con-
cealment."

And later -

Prometheus (to Io)

".....there is no limit set to my hardships
until Jove shall have been deposed from his tyranny.

Io -

What, is it possible that Zeus should ever fall from
his power?

.....

Prometheus -

.....thou mayest assure thyself of these things
that they are so."

And -

Prometheus -

Yet truly shall Jove, albeit he is headstrong in temper, be humbled, in the alliance such as he is about to enter, which shall hurl him from his sovereignty and his throne, * a forgotten thing, and the curse of his father Saturn shall at last be entirely fulfilled, which he (Saturn) swore when he himself was dispossessed of his throne of old.

.....

Prometheus (to the Chorus) -

Do homage, make thy prayer, cringe to each ruler of the day, I, for my part, care for Jove less than nothing; let him act, let him lord it for this brief space, as he wishes, for not long shall he rule the gods!"

From these quotations it will be seen that these intermediary gods (Zeus and all the Olympus) seemed far from infallible, - it was the Greater Power of Necessity (Adrasteia), moving behind the Olympians that is near our Hebraic idea of the Almighty God. As a matter of fact, the idea of the god-head was in a transitory stage at this time, according to Schlegel; - worship of the Olympian gods, tho inadequate, still existing;-

the Monotheistic doctrine was not preached among them until Paul, on the Areopagus at Athens, declared to the Greeks the true divinity of their "Unknown God".

Note 4

Some authorities say that the appellation "fire-bearer" refers to Samson and his use of foxes and firebrands. (Judges 15:485). Also that Hybristes may be explained merely as "violent".

Note 5

The legend of Prometheus is not necessarily a fire-myth. "The legend of Prometheus has too often been treated in this fashion, tho he is really a culture-hero, of whose exploits, such as making men of clay, fire-stealing is no more than a single example."

(Prometheus, Encyclopaedia Britannica.)

Note 6

Byron's interpretation of the character of Prometheus is best exprest in his poem of that name. The character early and strongly attracted Byron. His first exercise at Harrow was a paraphrase from a Chorus

of the Prometheus Bound, and there are many allusions to the god in his later works:-

"Titan! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?"

.....

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high
Still in thy patient energy
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable spirit
Which Heaven and Earth could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit."

Note 7

"The style of Marlowe.....is weak and childish compared with the depth and force of much of Byron, and the disgusting buffoonery of low farce, of which the piece is principally made up, place it more in contrast, than in any terms of comparison with that of his noble

successor. In the tone and pitch of the composition, as well as in the character of the diction, in the more solemn parts, Manfred reminds us more of the Prometheus of Aeschylus than of any more modern performance."¹

Note 8
Byron and Goethe

"The Manfred undoubtedly contains echoes of the German work."

(Preface to Byron's Manfred.)

"Tieck discountenanced the notion that Byron was under any literary obligation to Goethe."

Note 9
Calderon

"La Estatua de Prometeo (The statue of Prometheus) by Calderon is the name of a play from a group in which the poet chose old myths for opening pieces (curtain-raisers) for brilliant performances, - mostly festival performances at the court, modernized into the thought of his time and symbolized with his own deep thoughts

.....
1. Lord Jeffrey, in The Edinburg Review.

and dealt with in his own poetic freedom. The parallels with the Prometheus of Aeschylus and the Prometheus Fragment of Goethe offer a rich fullness of interesting comparisons, and show how Calderon has utilized the inheritance of a Christian Renaissance poet. ... There is a German translation of the Calderon by Pasch, 1887-1893. Everyone who is interested in the Prometheus saga will look upon this little volume of Pasch as a welcome gift, - no modern rendering of the famous myth in such a deep-thoughted manner has been set forth and Christianized (Christianisiert) as has Calderon in this piece."

(Translated from Baumgartner, Geschichte der Weltliteratur, Vol. VII. p. 129 Gruppe der Calderonischen Dramen.)

Byron said in regard to the incidents in Faust, that they "are all from Cyprian", (hero of El Magico Prodigioso, by Calderon).

Note 10

"He (Prometheus) knows that Zeus will hereafter contemplate a marriage with Thetis and that the son

born from the union is destined to be mightier than the sire. With the aid of this secret Prometheus thinks to take signal vengeance on his tormentors. Zeus must humble himself or be hurled from his throne."

(Wecklein.)

Note 11

"We are in a strange, metaphysical region, an interstellar space of incredibly refined fire and light, the true home of Shelley's spirit, where the circling spheres sing to one another in wave upon wave of lyrical rapture as inexpressible in prose as music."

(Shelley, by Waterlow. p. 48.)

Note 12

"In the writings of St. John and St. James relating to Christian doctrine and Greek philosophy, and full of the technical terms of the Greek Mysteries, the Christian Mystics found the basis of their beliefs."

(Monroe. pp. 281-2-3.)

Note 13

See pages 51 and 52.

Note 14

Vida Scudder translates Shelley's Spirit of Love into democracy; and ascribes its source to the French Revolution, - rather than considering it the Christ-taught percept, the foundation of Christianity.

"We may best understand the Prometheus Bound if we recognize it as the supreme expression in imaginative form of the new spirit of democracy. The ideas which inspire at first found dynamic power in the Revolution of 1789.

.....
 This view, of the Prometheus Bound will, it is true, be challenged by a whole school of critics.
 Shall we turn the most ethereal of poets in a doctrinaire?" Etc., etc.

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