

Reflected Light in P. B. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*

IKEDA Keiko

Introduction

In late August or early September in 1818, P. B. Shelley began to write his poetic drama, *Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts*. As for the process of Shelley's writing the drama, critics' opinions have not agreed with each other: According to Mary Shelley, the first three acts of the drama were written by the spring of 1819, and Shelley was supposed to complete the drama in May, but he added a fourth act to the existing three in the autumn of 1819; Some critics said that both the second and fourth acts were written at the almost same time in the winter of 1819 (Reiman & Fraistat 202-203). In any case, critics have agreed that Shelley's addition of the fourth act enlarges the dimension of the drama. The release of Prometheus, which is described from the first to the third acts, has an organic link to the transformation of human beings and of the universe in Act IV.

In previous research, some critics have evaluated that the finale of the fourth act describes the magnificence of the universe and mainly have paid attention to the description of the moon's chariot, the planets, and the Earth.¹ Others, who have tried psychoanalytic approach or genre criticism, have regarded the boat and the sea as the significant metaphors in the fourth act to complete the drama's scenario (Twitchell 37-38; Abrams 305-307). On the other hand, they have not noticed that the image of the light reflecting on the sea is not irrelevant to the transformation of human beings in Act IV. Interestingly enough, a similar metaphor of the light's reflection can also be found in his essay, *A Defence of Poetry* which was written from February to March in 1821, two years later from *Prometheus Unbound*.² This essay will examine the common theme between *Defence* and *Prometheus Unbound*, by considering the metaphorical significance of the light reflecting upon the water-mirror. The second step will clarify that the metaphor of reflected light is shared in

both the preface and the narrative of *Prometheus Unbound* and that the metaphor connects the first three acts to the fourth organically. Finally, I will conclude that the metaphor realizes the aim of *Prometheus Unbound* - the aim of displaying the social effect of poetical imagination.

As a procedure of this discussion, I will confirm that Shelley emphasizes the process of poetical creation and the social effect of poetical imagination, employing the metaphor of reflecting light upon a mirror both in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound* and *Defence*. In both works, the metaphor of reflection is accompanied with the motif of parts and the whole. Upon the mirror, parts of the light are combined and recreated into the whole one. Secondly, I will examine how this motif of parts and the whole is relevant to the release of Prometheus in the work. In conclusion, I will clarify that the poetic vision shown by the reflected light embodies the triumph of love and "the highway of life" in human beings (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 209). At the same time, I will consider that the transformation of human beings in the fourth act is not at odds with the theory of *Defence*.

1. Reflected Light in *A Defence of Poetry* and the Preface of *Prometheus Unbound*

In the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley mentions a crux of imitation and originality in poetic creation.

As to imitation; Poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature, which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect,

even in him, would be strained, unnatural and ineffectual. A Poet, is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others, and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is in this respect modified by all the objects of nature and art, by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors and musicians, are in one sense the creators and in another the creations of their age. (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 208)

Although Shelley in this preface concedes that poetry is “a mimetic art”, he emphasizes that “Poetical abstractions” are partly original because they consist of “combination and representation” (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 208). For Shelley, “the portions” of human minds and nature are combined and recreated into “the whole” poetical abstraction (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 208). In this way, Shelley employs the motif of parts and the whole in order to explain the originality of poetic creation. This motif comes from the philosophical tradition in the ancient Greece, such as Plato and Aristotle (Plato 235; Aristotle 11). On the other hand, in Shelley's case, the motif of parts and the whole is accompanied with the idea of combination. According to Wasserman, the idea of combination is one of key concepts in Shelley's poetic theory (Wasserman, *Shelley's Prometheus Unbound*, 54.). In *Defence*, Shelley emphasizes that poetry is “a [...] representation of the actions and passions of our internal being, and is susceptible of [...] various and delicate combinations” (513). Similarly, Shelley in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound* mentions “A Poet, is the combined product of” his external influence and his internal power to keep it (208). Since this idea of combination and of poetic creation is so deeply associated with Shelley's theory on the process of poetic creation, we can also find the motif of combination in the process of collecting and of dividing the light upon a prismatic mirror in *Defence*. Shelley, in *Defence*, defines a drama as a kind of poetry and evaluates its high quality.

In a drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect. Neither the eye nor the mind

can see itself, unless reflected upon that which it resembles. The drama, so long as it continues to express poetry, is as a prismatic and many-sided mirror, which collects the brightest rays of human nature and divides and reproduces them from the simplicity of these elementary forms, and touches them with majesty and beauty, and multiplies all that it reflects, and endows it with the power of propagating its like wherever it may fall. (*Defence* 520)

A drama, especially a tragic drama of ancient Greece, is “a prismatic and many-sided mirror” whose reflection implies the process of creation and the social effect of a drama (Shelley, *Defence* 520).³ The lights which the mirror collects are the inner rays of the human mind and are divided into “the simplicity of these elementary forms” and recreated into “all that it [a prismatic mirror] reflects” (*Defence* 520). Similarly, in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley emphasizes that a poet’s mind is a mirror which collects “all forms”, combines them and then recreated them into “one form” (208). Now, let us consider what this “form” stands for and what influence it brings upon the society.

This answer can be found in Shelley’s other metaphorical description of a poet’s mind in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*. Here, Shelley shifts the metaphor of the mirror’s reflection into that of a cloud’s discharging the light. In the preface, Shelley explains two elements of which poetry consists: “the spirit” and “the forms” (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 207). The form is “language and tone of thought” and refers to “the poet’s choice of themes” (Wheatley 119). While the form is “the endowment of the age” which a poet can imitate from his superiors, the spirit is the peculiarity of his own mind and thus the originality of the poet’s inspiration (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 207). According to Shelley, the spirit of a poet “must be the uncommunicated lightening” (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 207). If a great poet’s mind is a cloud which “is discharging its collected lightning”, a poet’s mirror collects forms from his superiors, recreates “its collected lightning,” and then discharges it as his own inspiration to the society (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 208).⁴ As a result, “some unimagined change” is brought to the society and human beings can attain the triumph of love and “the highway of life” (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 208, 209).⁵ In this way, the social effect of poetry is not only declared in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*, but also described as the reflection of

the light upon the water-mirror in the narrative of the release of Prometheus.

2. The Reflection of the Water-Mirrors in *Prometheus Unbound*: An Indication of the Release of Prometheus and His Marriage with Asia

First, I will discuss the scene which indicates the release of Prometheus. At the beginning of Act I, Prometheus is bound upon the rock in Caucasus in India because he stole a fire from Jupiter. Although he knows Jupiter's secret fate in which Jupiter will be overwhelmed by his son later, Prometheus resists Jupiter's attempt to reveal it. As a result, Jupiter summons four Furies, such as Geryon, Gorgon, Chimera, and Sphinx, to torture Prometheus. To heal Prometheus' mental anguish, six spirits, who comes from human mind, visit Prometheus to bless his secret. By the spirits' blessing, Prometheus recovers from his mental damage, which indirectly causes the release of Prometheus. Critics have said that the release of Prometheus means the recovery of poetical imagination because Prometheus stands for a poet.⁶ In fact, the Fourth Spirit is associated with a poet because he sleeps on a poet's lips and blesses the power of poetical imagination (Campbell 212).

FOURTH SPIRIT

On a Poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses
But feeds on the aerial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He [a Poet] will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees i' the ivy-bloom
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality! -

One of these awakened me
And I sped to succour thee. (*Prometheus Unbound* I.737-51)

Since a poetical vision triggers the spirit's succoring Prometheus in a hurry, the poetical imagination is a cause of the release of Prometheus. Here, the spirit explains that how a poet's imagination works to create the poetical vision. This process of poetical creation is similar to the theory in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*. First, a reflected sunlight illumines the natural surroundings around the lake, such as the bees and the ivy-bloom.⁷ These surroundings are unified as a whole scene, such as "What things they be" or "these" (*Prometheus Unbound* I.746, 747). From these natural things, a poet can recreate "Forms more real than living man", or "Nurslings of immortality" (*Prometheus Unbound* I.748, 749). This process of poetical creation is similar to the motif of combination in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*: A poet creates "Poetical abstractions" by collecting and combining the parts of nature and human mind (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 208). However, a poet, whom the Fourth Spirit describes, is generalized and not entirely identified with Prometheus himself. Prometheus' poetical creation is performed after his marriage with Asia in Act III.

In this drama, Asia is a daughter of Oceanus, the god of the sea. As a nymph of love, Asia is equivalent to Intellectual Beauty that recurrently appears in Shelley's works.⁸ Asia is important if this drama aims to describe that love can transform human beings. In fact, she plays a significant role in the plot because she directly triggers the release of Prometheus. In Act II, Asia, instead of Prometheus, visits Demogorgon, the ruler of the underground in search for the truth. Demogorgon, who is a symbol of Eternity and who is "fatal child" of Jupiter and Tethys, wins Jupiter in Act III (*Prometheus Unbound* III.i.19).⁹ When Asia encounters Demogorgon, she realizes that love surpasses any yokes that rules human beings. At the same time, Prometheus is released and Jupiter has fallen from power. This is the beginning of the new world which follows the marriage of Prometheus and Asia. From a point of psychoanalytical view, this marriage is the happy ending of "a psycho-drama of the reintegration of the split personality" because they are doubles (Abrams 302). If Prometheus and Asia are split parts of a self, their marriage in Act III means that the whole self is unified. This structural outline of the plot reminds us of two concepts

- a motif of combination and that of parts and the whole. After their marriage, Prometheus and Asia are unified forever and will produce a new vision.

PROMETHEUS

Thy [Asia's] gentle words
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld, and ye
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
[.....]
Henceforth we will not part.[...]

[.....]
We [Prometheus and Asia] will entangle buds and flowers, and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things
Like human babes in their brief innocence; (*Prometheus Unbound* III.iii.4-8,
10, 30-33)

Prometheus and Asia will unify the “common things” in nature, such as flowers and reflected light upon the fountain (*Prometheus Unbound* III.iii.32). By making “Strange combinations” of these natural things, they will create a new vision (*Prometheus Unbound* III.iii.32). This process of creation is not simply the embodiment of Shelley's theory on poetical creation in the preface of the drama, but is also similar to the Fourth Spirit's description of a poet's creation in Act I. For, according to the spirit, a poet can recreate a vision of “Nurslings of immortality” by combining reflected sunlight, the bees, and the ivy-blooms (*Prometheus Unbound* I.749).

Now, I will pay attention to the metaphor of the vision of immortality. The vision created by Prometheus and Asia is “Like human babes in their brief innocence” (*Prometheus Unbound* III.iii.33). In Act I, the Fourth Spirit also says that a poet creates a vision of “Nurslings of immortality” (*Prometheus Unbound* I.749). In this way, a poet's vision is associated with the motif of infant. There are two reasons Shelley refers to an infant in these scenes. First, Shelley's reference to infant implies

that a baby will be born after the marriage of Prometheus and Asia. Secondly, the motif of the infant is linked to the marriage of the Earth and the Moon in Act IV. After the Moon and the Earth get married, the child of the Spirit appears and casts the light upon the universe. This spirit is also described as a child of Asia in Act III. Thus, this motif of the Spirit is anticipated as a poetical vision of immortality by the Fourth Spirit of human mind and Prometheus in both Act I and Act III. If so, the motif of innocent infant symbolizes celestial innocence which plays an apocalyptic and prophetic role and which can be found in other Romantic works, such as William Blake's and William Wordsworth's (Hughes 112). In other words, a poetic vision created by Prometheus and Asia displays celestial innocence. To whom is the celestial innocence displayed? We can find the answer in the scene of human transformation in Act IV. As I have discussed, Shelley's aim of *Prometheus Unbound* is to describe the release of Prometheus as the triumph of love and "the highway of life" (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 209). To emphasize this concept, the poetical vision of immortality implies a new birth of humanity because Prometheus and Asia will produce "human babes in their brief innocence" as their vision (*Prometheus Unbound* III.iii.33).

3. The Reflection of Light upon the Water-Mirror in *Prometheus Unbound*: The Transformation of Human Beings after the Release of Prometheus

Now, I will consider the transformation of human beings which is described through the dialogue between the Earth and the Moon in Act IV. According to the Moon, human beings are reborn and a new world is established.

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror
Which could distort to many a shape of error
This true fair world of things - a Sea reflecting Love;
Which over all his kind, as the Sun's Heaven
Gliding o'er Ocean, smooth, serene and even,
Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move, (*Prometheus Unbound*
IV.382-87)

After the release of Prometheus, human beings have transformed from “a many-sided mirror” which reflects error into “a Sea reflecting love,” or “the Sun’s Heaven/Gliding o’er Ocean” (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.382, 384, 385-86). In this drama, the task of establishing a new world is called “Promethean” (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.158). If Prometheus’ mental transformation is equivalent to human beings’, the Sun reflected upon the sea symbolically refers to Prometheus.¹⁰ There are other reasons we can interpret the Sun as Prometheus. First, the motif of the sea reflecting the sunlight in Act IV is similar to that of “the lake-reflected sun” in Act I (*Prometheus Unbound* I.744). Secondly, Prometheus is a figure of the sun because “Prometheus shall arise / Henceforth the Sun of this rejoicing world” (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iv.126-27). Thirdly, in this drama, Prometheus brings not only the fire but also the light of hope to human beings. By bringing the light/fire of hope to human, he releases human from many mental yokes (Cousins 40). In addition to these elements, if the goal of the transformation of Prometheus is his marriage with Asia, Prometheus is transformed by the love of Asia and casts the sunlight upon human beings.

However, it is Love that the sea reflects. In Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*, the person who symbolizes Love is not Prometheus but Asia. Like Prometheus, Asia also casts the light because she is called “Child of Light”, or “Lamp of Earth”, or “light of life” (II.v.54, 66; III.iii.6). After her dialogue with Demogorgon, Asia transforms both physically and mentally, spreading the light into the cloud instead of the sun.

PANTHEA

O Spirit! pause and tell whence is the light
Which fills the cloud? the sun is yet unrisen.

SPIRIT

The sun will rise not until noon. - Appollo
Is held in Heaven by wonder - and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aerial hue
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
Flows from thy mighty sister. (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.8-14)

Asia's light is compared to the bright color of the roses reflected upon the water because it is "the aerial hue / Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water" (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.12-13). The light reflecting on the cloud is metaphorically associated not only with the reflection upon the water but also with the lightening from the cloud. If so, Asia's light shows the aim of this drama, and at the same time, realizes a poetical vision earlier than Prometheus. If Asia's light is also a poetical vision, "a Sea reflecting Love" symbolizes human beings who reflect the love of Asia (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.384). The image of Asia is not at odds with "the Sun's Heaven / Gliding o'er Ocean" (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.385-86).

ASIA

My soul is an enchanted Boat
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing,
And thine doth like an Angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever - forever -
Upon that many winding River
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A Paradise of wildernesses,
Till like one in slumber bound
Borne to the Ocean, I float down, around,
Into a Sea profound, of ever-spreading sound. (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.72-84)

Asia's soul is compared to "an enchanted Boat" after her encounter with Demogorgon and her transformation (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.72). This boat floats upon the winding river and through "A Paradise of wildernesses" and up to the sea, and then goes back to the earth (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.81). This journey of Asia implies her inner one to Eternity, and the sea stands for "Shelleyan lower Paradise".¹¹ Thus, the sea is equivalent to the earthly paradise and is recovered as "a Sea reflecting Love" in Act IV (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.384).¹² In a similar vein, "Heaven-

reflecting sea” in Act III casts “the light / Of waver-reflected flowers” as a guide for human beings (*Prometheus Unbound* III.ii.18, 31-32). Additionally, the movement of Asia’s boat is similar to that of “the Sun’s Heaven” which glides through the sea (*Prometheus Unbound* 385). Asia’s boat moves quietly because it is compared to “a sleeping swan” (*Prometheus Unbound* II. v.73), and because the frequent use of the sound “s” reinforces the boat’s quiet movement: such as “sleeping,” “swan,” “silver,” “sweet,” and “singing” (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.73, 74). Like Asia’s boat, “the Sun’s Heaven” also moves quietly because it glides upon the sea “smooth, serene” (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.385, 386). If the journey of Asia’s boat means the “quest for Love and Beauty” (Rogers 96), the movement of “the Sun’s Heaven” also pursues after love and beauty (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.385, 386).

Reflecting the “radiance” from the sea, “the Sun’s Heaven” is also called “starry depths” (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.387, 385, 387). This “starry depths” remind us of a star and of the dark dense of the sea’s water (*OED*, “depth,” 7.a.; “starry,” 2.a.). Thus, it implies the starlight in the night’s sky rather than the sunlight in the daytime’s sky. This image is closer to the star’s radiance before the dawn, and is linked to the image of Asia’s light. When the light is cast from Asia’s body, her sister, Panthea says “The sun is yet unrisen.” (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.9). To her reference, the Spirit of the Hour answers “The sun will rise not until noon.” (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.10). Their dialogue indicates not only that Asia’s light is not the sunlight, but also the morning star which shines until the sun rises.¹³ At the beginning of Act II, the morning star (“one white star”) also casts its light upon the “darker” lake when Asia first appears in this drama (*Prometheus Unbound* II.i.17, 20). From these elements, it is natural that “the Sun’s Heaven” symbolizes Asia who casts the light from the surface of the sea before the dawn.

However, the sun is also one of stars. As a symbol of the sun, Prometheus shines in the sky (*OED*, “sun,” 6.). When Prometheus’ light is reflected upon the sea, his sunlight becomes Asia’s one. In this way, their lights are unified as a new “radiance and life” and cast upon the society (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.387). This is not at odds with Asia’s role of linking love and light to produce a new life. For, Asia is called “Life of Life”, and her “lips enkindle / With their Love, Make the cold air fire” (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.48, 48-49, 51). As such, the light and life, which are cast from the sea, implies the triumph of love and the birth of new human beings.

By describing this in Act IV, *Prometheus Unbound* realizes its aim of describing the triumph of love and “the highway of life” which is revealed by the poetical vision of celestial innocence (*Prometheus Unbound*, Preface 209). At the same time, this description is an indication of Shelley's later writing career. Two years later from *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley emphasizes the social contribution of poetry using the motif of the mirror's reflection in *Defence*. The light in Act IV of *Prometheus Unbound* continues to be Shelley's guide until he loses his trust upon the poetical imagination in his later years.

This is a revised version of the paper at the 23rd Annual Conference of the Japanese Byron Society held at Station Hotel Kokura in Kitakyushu on 22 July 2017.

Notes

- ¹ Hughes 109-26; Bloom 141-42; Campbell 220-22; Grabo, *Prometheus Unbound* 143; Butter 153-56; Oras 247-57; Smith 785-90; De Luca 80-81, 94-99 etc.
- ² E.g. Woodman, *The Apocalyptic Vision* 134-35; Gelpi 167; Cameron 496; Hughes 107-108.
- ³ As for the motif of a prism's reflection, critics have pointed to Shelley's allusion to the 18th century scientific explanation, such as Newton's *Optiks* and Goethe's theory on colors. E.g. Burwick 257, 265; Grabo 89-90; O'Malley 179.
- ⁴ Wheatley interprets the lightening as the inspiration of a poet because an inspired poet is described as the lightening coal in *Defence* (119).
- ⁵ See Cousins 25-26, 29.
- ⁶ Cameron 496. Lea regards Prometheus as “the imagination defying reason” (112). Similarly, Todhunter also interprets Prometheus as “the poetic imagination which is the true prophetic power” (136). According to Milne's discussion, Prometheus is compared to the sun not only because Prometheus is a symbol of poetical imagination, but also because the sun is often a metaphor of imagination in Shelley's prose works (683). See also Bodkin 257-58.
- ⁷ These lines imply a poet's social contribution since the verb “illuminate” means both an emission of the light and spiritual enlightenment. See *OED*, “illuminate”, def. 1-2.
- ⁸ Abrams 301; Campbell 218. Bodkin regards Asia as the divine muse of Shelley's poetry (254).
- ⁹ Demogorgon says to Jupiter “I am thy child” (*Prometheus Unbound* III. i.54).
- ¹⁰ Prometheus is an “archetypal self” of human beings (Cousins 36), and “the One Mind” who has the metaphysical reality, but who is not a part of human beings (Wasserman, *Shelley: A Critical*

Reading 257).

¹¹ Hughes 122. See also Abrams 305; Twitchell 38; Rogers 102-103; Bloom 129.

¹² See Bloom 132-33.

¹³ Asia's act of casting a light is identified with that of Keats' soul in *Adonais* (Bloom 126; Bodkin 218).

Works Cited

Abrams, M. H. *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*. London: Oxford UP, 1971.

Bloom, Harold. *Shelley's Mythmaking*. NY: Cornell UP, 1969.

Bodkin, Maud. *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination*. London: Oxford UP, 1934.

Burwick, Frederick. *The Damnation of Newton: Goethe's Color Theory and Romantic Perception*. Berlin: Gruyter, 1986.

Butter, Peter. *Shelley's Idols of the Cave*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1954.

Cameron, Kenneth Neill. *Shelley: The Golden Years*. Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1974.

Campbell, Olwen Ward. *Shelley and the Unromantics*. NY: Scribner's, 1924.

Cousins, James H. *The Work Promethean: Interpretations and Applications of Shelley's Poetry*. Washington: Kennikat P, 1938.

De Luca, V. A. "The Style of Millennial Announcement in *Prometheus Unbound*" *Keats-Shelley "Depth."* *OED*. 2nd ed. 1989. *Journal* 28 (1979): 78-101.

Gelpi, Barbara Charlesworth. *Shelley's Goddess: Maternity, Language, Subjectivity*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.

Grabo, Carl. *A Newton Among Poets: Shelley's Use of Science in Prometheus Unbound*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1930.

---. *Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1935.
"Illumine." *OED*. 2nd ed. 1989.

Lea, F. A. *Shelley: And the Romantic Revolution*. Norwood: Norwood, 1977.

O'Malley, Glenn. "Shelley's 'Air-Prism': The Synesthetic Scheme of *Alastor*." *Modern Philology* 55.3 (1958): 178-87.

Oras, Ants. "The Multitudinous Orb: Some Miltonic Elements in Shelley." *Modern Language Quarterly* 16 (1955): 247-57.

Rogers, Neville. *Shelley at Work: A Critical Inquiry*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1967.

- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Shelley's Poetry and Prose: Authoritative Texts Criticism*. Eds. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat. NY: Norton, 2002.
- Smith, Wiltrude L. "An Overlooked Source for *Prometheus Unbound*" *Studies in Philology* 48.4 (1951): 783-92.
- "Starry." *OED*. 2nd ed. 1989.
- "Sun." *OED*. 2nd ed. 1989.
- Todhunter, John. *A Study of Shelley*. London: Kegan, 1880.
- Twitchell, James B. "Shelley's Metapsychological System in Act IV of *Prometheus Unbound*." *Keats-Shelley Journal* 24 (1975): 29-48.
- Wheatley, Kim. *Shelley and His Readers: Beyond Paranoid Politics*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1999.
- Wasserman, Earl R. *Shelley's Prometheus Unbound: A Critical Reading*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1965.
- . *Shelley: A Critical Reading*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1971.
- Woodman, Ross Greig. *The Apocalyptic Vision in the Poetry of Shelley*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1964.

Reflected Light in P. B. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*

IKEDA Keiko

In *A Defence of Poetry* and the preface of *Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts*, P. B. Shelley uses the metaphor of mirrors reflecting light to emphasize the social contribution of poetry and the process of poetical creation. First, in both works, he describes the process of poetical creation as that of reflection of light upon a mirror. In this case, the mirror is compared to the poet and a new light is recreated upon the mirror by the combination of the parts of the collected lights. Secondly, in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*, the social contribution of poetry is explained in detail: the poet's mirror collects the poetical forms from his or her superior poets and then recreates the collected lighting. The collected light is scattered to the society as a poet's own inspiration and, as a result, the triumph of love and the heightened life are brought to the society.

In a similar vein, the narrative of *Prometheus Unbound* frequently emphasizes the effect of poetical imagination upon the society, which is compared to the reflecting light upon the water-mirror. The metaphor of reflecting light is also associated with the release of Prometheus. First, we can find the motif in an indication of the release of Prometheus, when one of the spirits, who comes from the human mind, mentions the process of a poet's creation. According to the spirit, a poet can create a new poetical vision of immortality, combining the reflecting light upon the lake and the nature surrounding the lake. Since Prometheus is a symbol of the poet, the motif of combination is not at odds with the theory of poetry in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*. However, the poet whom the spirit describes is generalized, and Prometheus himself fulfills the poetical vision in Act III.

In Act II, Prometheus is released and gets married with Asia. This plot also follows one in which the combination of split parts create one new whole. After becoming a united couple, Prometheus and Asia symbolically complete a new vision by combining the nature and the reflecting light upon the fountain. The image of combination is similar to the process of poet's creation which the spirit suggests

as an indication of the release of Prometheus. Thus, Prometheus and Asia create a poetical vision of immortality.

What matters here is that the motif of infancy is associated with the poetical visions in *Prometheus Unbound*. The significance of the infant is hidden in the transformation of humanity in Act IV. The newly transformed humanity is compared to the sun reflected upon the sea. Since this transformation is paralleled with the marriage of Prometheus and Asia, the sun reflected upon the sea symbolically refers to both Prometheus and Asia. In other words, the reflecting light from the sea is their vision. In addition, the light is also life which suggests the birth of humanity given by the triumph of love.

To this point, Shelley organically connects the first three acts to the last by using the metaphor of reflecting light upon the water-mirror. The metaphor of reflecting light significantly completes the scenario in which the release of Prometheus brings the transformation of humanity.