

Preface

The purpose of this study is to determine, if possible, wherein Shelley might have been influenced by Hindu thought, and examine the sources of such influence for whatever value they may be to the proposition, that there are statements in the works of the poet which agree in doctrine and spirit with Hindu belief, that Shelley might easily have had in his possession books in English or French which discussed India, its thought, religion, customs and traditions, that he may have read in translation the Bhagavad Gita, one of the sacred poems of India, included in the ~~great epic~~ Mahabharata.

Chap I

~~There are many books devoted to the study of Shelley's poetry, and all of them present a different aspect of his mind.~~ Since Shelley was not a Christian in the nominal sense, it has afforded an opportunity to many scholars, it would seem, to offer an explanation of his guiding philosophy. A large share of these critics have, by reason of habit and tradition, been bred in Christian orthodoxy, and nursed by prejudices natural to their culture. Hence the many attempts to make of Shelley an atheist, a heathen, a lunatic or a mixture of all the undesirables which a well bred young man should avoid!

What^{is} probably nearer the truth is that Shelley had a mind of immense range and sensitivity and he was not unwilling to defend ideologies or radical propositions which he considered to be of merit.

It is well known how his reputation suffered in his life time and, as might well be expected, has since.

¹ Barnard

Platonism, is one of the influences which has been exhaustively treated with reference to Shelley, without question was a tremendous force upon his thinking. This, of course, does not necessarily preclude his interest in other fields of thought, nor his expression of their ideas ~~whether by design or unwittingly.~~

There is nothing new about the question, "Did Indian Philosophy influence the Romantic Movement?" It is a reasonable speculation and would naturally arise in the minds of English scholars since India has been so close to England during the last couple of centuries.

"It is interesting to speculate to what extent Indian philosophy influenced Coleridge, Carlyle, and the pioneers of the English Romantic Movement, through the medium of Germany. Shelley and Wordsworth looked to France rather than Germany for inspiration, but their pantheism is full of unconscious reminiscences of Hindu thought, which reached

'Notopoulos, The Platonism of Shelley, A Study of Platonism and the Poetic Mind, Duke University Press, Durham North Carolina, 1949, hereafter referred to as Notopoulos

them through the medium of Neoplatonism.
Nowhere is the Vedantic doctrine of Maya
more magnificently propounded than in
Adonais

The One remains, the many change and pass
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

Even more striking is Shelley's passionate
conviction that Adonais has found that final
absorption which in Hindu philosophy
is the end of the Quest. He is not dead:
He has awakened from the dream of Life.
He is made one with Nature:

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely; he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull sense world compelling
these

All new successions to the forms they wear;

Garnet, G.T. editor, The Legacy of India
Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1937, p. 33

Neoplatonism was a ^{undoubtedly a} popular subject of discussion and study between Coleridge and Wordsworth. "Knowing how steeped Coleridge was in Neoplatonism, we can infer the degree of Neoplatonic influence on Wordsworth. This influence from Coleridge is evident in the Ode on Imitations of Immortality which is one of the finest expressions of the Platonic tradition in English poetry. In a study of this ode, Read has shown how sections V-VIII, which express Neoplatonically the doctrine of pre-existence, were the result of conversations with Coleridge, who expressed the same thought in his Sonnet on the Death of his Son. The list of Coleridge's readings is significant of the close affinities of the Romantic mind to Neoplatonism. Coleridge knew both Plato and Neoplatonism but he found the latter more congenial. Its dreams and "dreamers" which include Thomas Taylor also read by Shelley supplied the poet with Neoplatonic

Notopoulos, pp. 164-165

II

a great many works were

During Shelley's lifetime, ^{abundant material} ~~was~~ written ^{and there was some translating of Indian religious and philosophical literature} about ~~for~~ India. ^{India's geography (that became)}

history, literature, philosophy, and religion, ^{became} topics for deep study some years before the poet's birth, ^{while} since the East India Company ^{was expanding,} was ~~expansive~~ in its policy. Unfortunately,

^{though} no indication seems to exist that Shelley ^{wrote to} ~~any~~ of his friends ^{concerning} of his reading in ^{Indian literature, or works about India, or the same general evidence} this field. ~~Source material of this kind~~

would be invaluable ^{in no way} to this study but ~~its absence~~ does not ^{precludes} the probability of his being aware of the literature current in his time, nor his discussion of it with his friends.

On the contrary, all indications point to his familiarity with India as a subject both of ~~his~~ reading and of ~~his~~ conversation.

The following is a ^{selected} list of books ^{in this field} in circulation during his lifetime. [These sources are of course external and circumstantial, but without them it is ^{easier} ~~difficult~~ to ^{understand} ~~comprehend~~ the occurrence of Indian elements in his works to be discussed in succeeding chapters.]

Out

While in London in 1818, Shelley visited the
Indian Library¹. In 1821 he wrote Hoagg from
Italy,

p? I have some thoughts, if I could get a respectable
 appointment of going to India, or anywhere I might
 be compelled to achieve exertion, and at the same
 time enter into an entirely new ~~field~~^{sphere} of action.

..... Have you seen a poem I wrote on the
 death of Keats, a young writer of bad taste, but
p? wonderful power and promise. It is called
 Adonais — when you pass Ollivré you may tell
 him I desired you to call for one. It is perhaps
ap? the least imperfect of my pieces.²

X Peacock took a dim view of ~~it~~
 Shelley's desire to go to India, and explains
 to him why.

I should not like your Indian project
 (which I think would agree neither with your
 mind nor your body), if it were practicable.
 But it is altogether impossible. The whole of

¹ Newman Ivey White, Shelley, vol. i, p. 555
 hereafter referred to as White.

² W. S. Scott, New Shelley Letters, p. 133,
 hereafter referred to as Scott

the Civil Service of India is sealed against all but the Company's covenanted servants, who are inducted into it through established gradations, beginning at an early period of life.³

In Dec. 1810, Robert Southey's ~~poem~~ poem The Curse of Kehama was published. Shelley informed Elizabeth Hitchener that it was his favorite poem.⁴ Thus Shelley was early brought into indirect contact with India through the works of a poet whom he greatly admired. In the introduction to Alastor Mary says that Southey's Thalaba was Shelley's favorite poem. It is not important which poem was his favorite. It is important that he read both ~~carefully~~ carefully.

Explain why?
What is in them?
Did S. show any sign of them?

³ The Halliford Edition of the Works of Thomas Love Peacock, edited by H. F. Brett-Smith and C. E. Jones, ^{Vol. VIII,} p. 225, hereafter referred to as Peacock.

Take care of their kind of reference in the bibliography.

⁴ The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, edited by Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, vol. VIII, p. 103, hereafter referred to as Julian Works.

The influence of these poems upon Queen Mab is discussed by Peck, at length.

quots? > 100

By 1813, Shelley was a member of a "numerous society" Peacock ~~describes~~ describes them and their topics of conversation.

quots?

At Bracknell Shelley was surrounded by a numerous society, all in [a] great measure of his own opinions in relation to religion and politics, and the larger portion of them in relation to vegetable diet.

no of? quots?

J. F. Newton
See Peck I, 278.

The person among them best worth remembering was the gentleman Mr. Hoagg calls J. F. N. of whom he relates some anecdotes.

I will add one or two from my own experience. He was an estimable man and an agreeable companion, and he was not the less amusing that he was the absolute impersonation

5 Walter Edwin Peck, Shelley His Life and Work, Vol. 1, p.p. 303-324

Tended the garden from morn to even:
 And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
 Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,
 Laughed round his footsteps up from the Earth!

Ll. 123-126

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
 On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
 And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
 She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
 And sustained them with rods and osier-bands;
 If the flowers had been her own infants, she
 Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
 And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
 She bore in a basket of Indian wool,
 Into the rough woods far aloof, —

In a basket, of grasses and wild flowers full,
 The freshest her gentle hands could pull
 For the poor vanished insects, whose intent,
 Although they did ill, was innocent.

Ll. 147-162

11.

Sacountala

Hear, O ye trees of this hallowed forest, hear and proclaim that Sacountala is going to the palace of her wedded lord; she, who drank not, though thirsty, before you were watered; she, who cropped not through affection for you, one of your fresh leaves, though she would have been pleased with such an ornament for her locks; she, whose chief delight was in the season when your branches are spangled with flowers!

Chorus of Wood Nymphs

May her way be attended with prosperity!
 May propitious breezes sprinkle, for her delight, the odoniferous dust of rich blossoms.
 May pools of clear water, green with the leaves of the lotus, refresh her as she walks;
 and may shady branches be her defence from the scorching sunbeams!

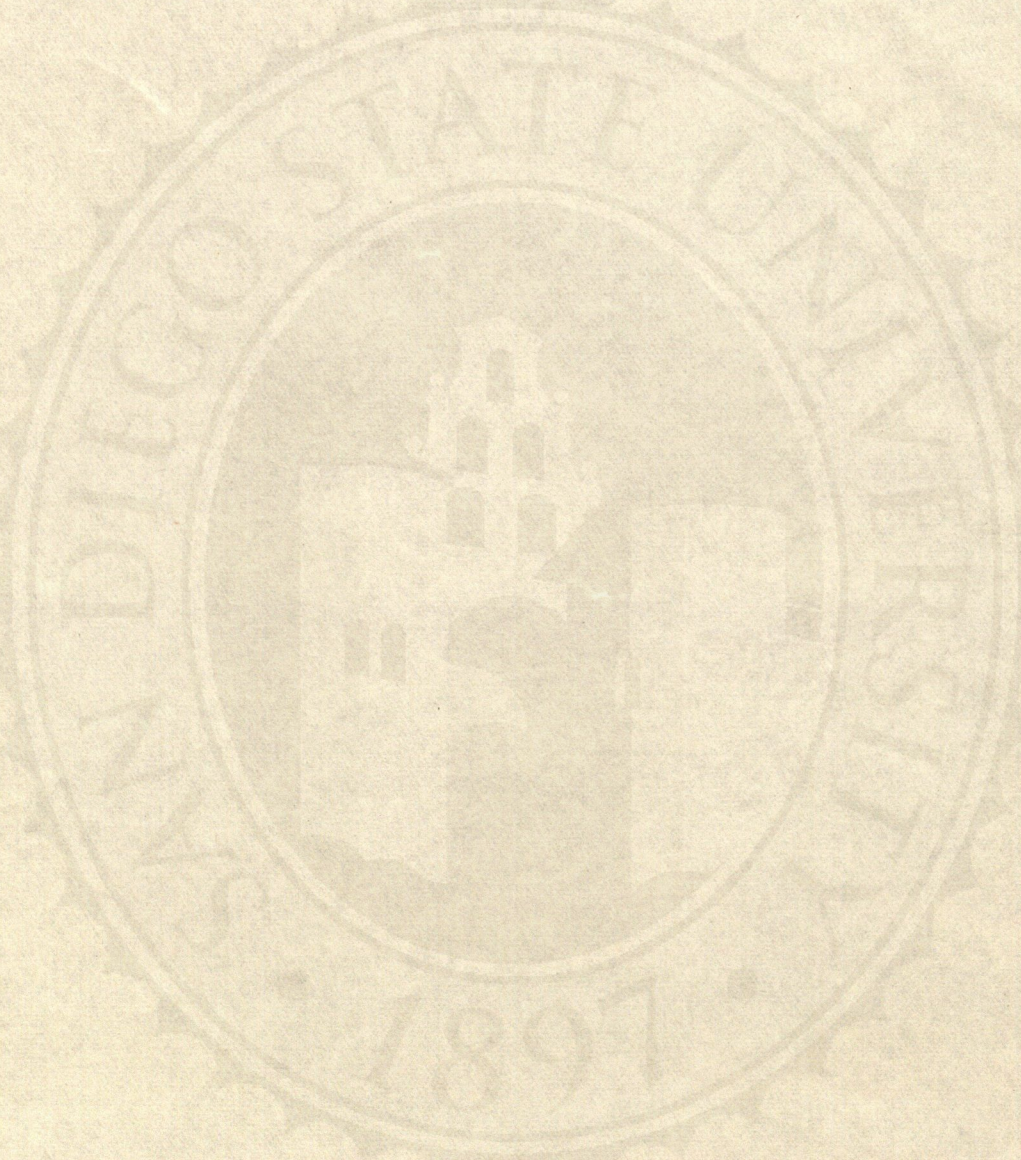
Sacountala, just as she was departing from the grove, turns to Cana:

Suffer me venerable father! to address this Madhavi-creper, whose red blossoms inflame the grove.

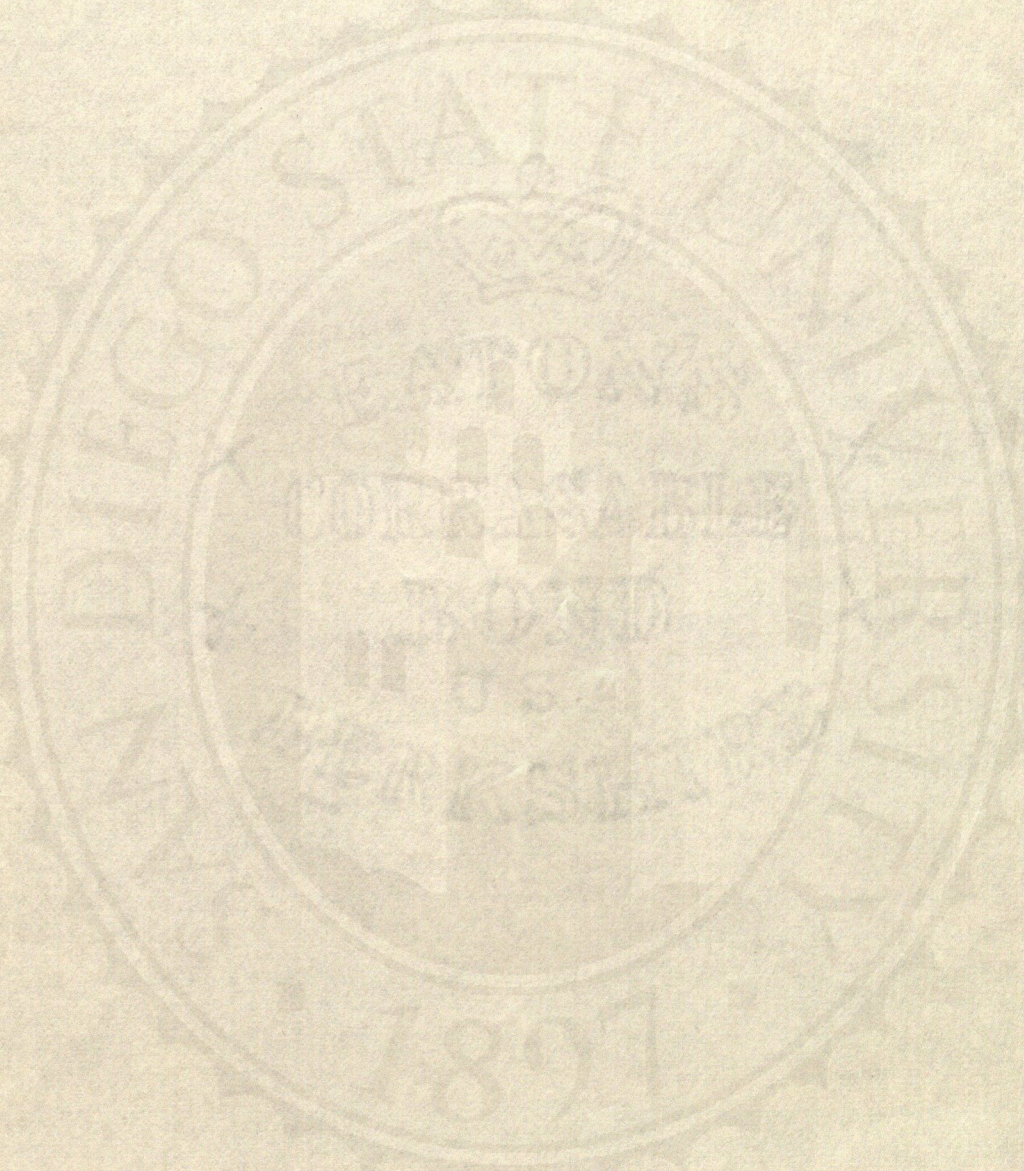
Cana

My child I know thy affection for it.

The care the Witch bestows on the animals, and the
tenderness and affection of the Lady



spiritual. An example of the same extion appears



APPENDIX A

