

The Revolutionary Desire for Ideal Utopia in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*

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[Abstract]

Shelley envisages his revolutionary desire for an ideal utopia in *Prometheus Unbound*. He seeks to fulfill his imaginative vision after all the failure of the French Revolution, with the urgency to challenge the social conventions and the political authorities through the revolutionary vehemence in his age. The Romantic poet Shelley finds an ideal model for his romantic hero in Prometheus, who tried to save the haunted world from the tyrant Jupiter. In spite of Jupiter's malicious acts and cruelty, Prometheus showed the invincible will to redeem the world from, and his forgiveness and pity on, Jupiter seem to have inspired Shelley's poetic imagination. According to Shelley, it is in its union with the virtue of love and beauty that the revolution can complete itself in this masculine world. Prometheus comes to realize the significance and direction of ideal revolution when he has met Asia. In addition, Prometheus already recognizes that even human virtues can be distorted into self-destructive ones, unless any human virtues, including wisdom and will, would be associated with love. It is only through his reunion with Asia that Prometheus can liberate himself and realize the revolution for utopia, restoring One Mind. It means that, in his utopian vision, Shelley upholds the idealized community of One Mind and the ideal for individual freedom and creativity in *Prometheus Unbound*. In this

sense, Prometheus can be said to be Shelley's surrogate for his Utopian idealism, on whom Shelley's ideal of individualism and politics remains centered. In him, Shelley sees the symbolic representation of human psyche and the recovery of a true individualism.

Key Words: *Prometheus Unbound*, Revolution, Individualism, Freedom, Love

I. Introduction

In *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley reveals his revolutionary desire for ideal utopia. With the self-contained motivation for revolution, he determined to write *Prometheus Unbound* so that his imaginative vision can be fulfilled despite the failure of the French Revolution. As a young upstart, Shelley's "writings and actions are dominated by a belligerent passion for reforming the world" (Hope 403). Shelley realized the urgency of challenging the social conventions and the political authorities through the revolutionary vehement in his age. Moreover, he thought that the current age was filled with the oppressive power of monarchy and felt the necessity of democratic reform for the progress of human improvement. Recognizing the role of a romantic poet, Shelley creates his romantic hero, Prometheus as his ideal model, who saves the haunted world from the tyrant, Jupiter. Even though Prometheus is a victim of unspeakable torture and anguish, he feels lamentation on and sympathy with Jupiter and Furies that consistently try to annihilate the world.

In particular, Jupiter only "brings famine, toil, pain, terror, madness, crime, remorse, and self-contempt" in the earth (Steichen 44). As William Hope argues, for Shelley, Jupiter is not real being, not even a representation of a real being, but rather

an allegorical symbol for certain malignant forces, such as ignorance and greed, which have long been at work in society and which in the end will spell heartless tyranny and untold suffering for humanity in general (407). In addition, Jupiter's cruelty accelerates the suffering of humankind. In spite of Jupiter's malicious acts and cruelty, Prometheus's invincible will to redeem the world from Jupiter and his forgiveness and pity on Jupiter seem to have touched Shelley's poetic vision. Indeed, Prometheus tries to remove the oppressive power of Jupiter in order to resuscitate the repressed condition of England. It is through his own revolutionary spirit that Prometheus struggles to transcend the political boundary of Jupiter for the creation of freedom and social justice. Furthermore, Prometheus takes the pursuit of usurping the established power with his moral and political autonomy. Prometheus' revolutionary spirit and his humanitarian attitude function to bring about the internal awakening from the readers. Besides, Shelley upholds the idealized community as his utopian vision and ideal perfection for individual freedom and creativity in *Prometheus Unbound*. In this sense, Prometheus can be said to be Shelley's surrogate for reflecting his Utopian idealism. In this paper, I will discuss Prometheus' endless journey toward ideal Utopia which can be founded upon individual freedom and social justice.

II. Prometheus' Change of Mind On His Way to Ideal Transformation

It is Asia and Demogorgon that Prometheus has to rely on in order to accomplish his redemption and forgiveness. Moreover, the process of Prometheus's liberation is connected to the change of his mind; his hatred is purged with the ideal love of Asia

and the help of Demogorgon. Prometheus makes harmony with the love of Asia by reuniting his fate with her. In addition, the principle of the new world that Prometheus expects is only possible when Demogorgon's sublime power overthrows Jupiter. Jupiter, representing the evil or self-destruction, is doomed to be destroyed by the power of Demogorgon. According to Shadi Neimneh, *Prometheus Unbound* is "an advocacy of rebellion against all forms of tyrannical authority enslaving humans' soul and minds and limiting their imagination and potential" (21). In this sense, Shelley's philosophy of human progress and regeneration with no shackles, which is reflected in the image of Prometheus, is ultimately penetrated into One Mind¹⁾ throughout the poem. When Prometheus loses love toward humankind and struggles against Jupiter's sovereignty for the utopian desire, his personality becomes divided. Because everyone including Asia, Demogorgon, and even Jupiter, is part of One Mind, the division of One Mind makes human being evil and the world full of suffering. Moreover, Jupiter's reign reflecting the evil aspect of Prometheus can be said to worsen the world. Under this circumstance, Shelley's volition to save the humankind becomes actualized as the truth.

Prometheus's revolutionary desire for ideal utopia is first triggered when he brings fire to human being. Prometheus is an existence that knows the truth of the history and the possibility of reform. Furthermore, he thinks that informing humankind of the possibility of reform is his essence. Under the reign of Jupiter, however, the hope for future seems far away to be realized. In spite of the inevitable reality, Prometheus conducts his daring behavior of stealing fire, and he is eventually caught in Caucasus by Jupiter. After recognizing the intention of Jupiter who tries to annihilate human being, Prometheus groans his painful situation without help:

No change, no pause, no hope-Yet I endure
I ask the Earth, have not the mountain felt?

I ask you Heaven-the all-beholding sun,
Has it not seen? The sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below-
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me, me, alas, pain, pain ever, forever (I. 24-30)²⁾

The bulwark Prometheus clings to is associated with the social situation in which Prometheus cannot help but undergo. The extreme situation provides Prometheus with painful desolation and frustration, but it is something that should be eventually overcome by him. In addition, defining Jupiter as the fatalistic ruler, Prometheus assumes that the old servitude for Jupiter makes humankind lose some sort of hope and courage to reform the world. However, he does not fall into despair, but rather restores confidence in himself for future hope.

Prometheus's invincible will to bring humans to an ideal utopia becomes clearer, as suffering and frustration imposed upon him gets stronger. In particular, his will comes to be realized by clearing himself of negative feeling toward Jupiter. At first, Prometheus mistakenly regards Jupiter as the savior from the humankind, but he realizes that his thought is false. Even though Prometheus himself permits Jupiter to dominate the world, his initial mind is entangled with hatred and contempt toward Jupiter. Nonetheless, he tries to forget his negative emotion with the help of reason:

Disdain? Ah no! I pity thee.-What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven!
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a Hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then, ere misery made me wise,-The Curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall (I, 53-59).

The conflict between his revenge upon Jupiter and his pity on him, deeply embedded in Prometheus's inner mind, gradually surface. Nonetheless, as a rebel, he becomes wise and mature enough to be awakened. And, as the steps to overcome his emotional aspect, it is necessary for him to know both current and past identity. He is overwhelmed by his desire to hear the past curse against Jupiter. Since he knows that the curse toward Jupiter is a wrong thing, however, he does not want to repeat the same curse with his own mouth. On the other hand, he still tries to hear the curse from others. Earth is not afraid of repeating Prometheus's curse, but Prometheus cannot understand it, because of her dead language. What Earth as a venerable mother consoling Prometheus, tries to do is to converse with Prometheus through her interaction, as Prometheus comprehends Earth's words with imagination. Earth pushes Prometheus to recall the phantasm of Jupiter so that he can take revenge upon Jupiter and finally usurp his dictatorial position.

Recalling the phantasm of Jupiter, Prometheus starts to be convinced that the curse is the illusion of wrong intention. If Prometheus represents the spirit of human being, Jupiter symbolizes the evil instinct that inheres in Prometheus. Because of One Mind divided or conflicted, Prometheus cannot escape from the pressure of torture. It is essential for the recovery of Prometheus's One Mind to comprehend what Jupiter's true identity is. Jupiter is only the illusive phantasm; it is the help of Prometheus that enables Jupiter enthroned as a dictator. Accordingly, without the principle of Prometheus, Jupiter is doomed to be destroyed. In a word, Jupiter's power, though superior, is transient. Only during the moment when Jupiter thinks himself as an omnipotent god, he can remain omnipotent. By negating the consent for Jupiter's sovereignty, however, Prometheus threatens the destruction of Jupiter's omnipotent power. Shelley thinks through the relationship between Jupiter and Prometheus that all things are in the process of change and something omnipotent is relative.

After recognizing the contradiction of Jupiter's superior power, Prometheus begins to liberate himself and even humankind from Jupiter's dictatorship. Prometheus's imagination becomes wiser and mature, realizing that his curse upon Jupiter only increases his control over humankind. In other words, it is the change of his mind that enables Prometheus to liberate himself as well as humankind from Jupiter's influence. By retracting the curse and feeling pity on Jupiter, Prometheus's inner reform in morality is accomplished. Furthermore, he even knows the fact that someday Jupiter will be overthrown; he just waits for the future when he will be unbound from Jupiter. Above all, what is important here is that Prometheus does not despise Jupiter, but rather he shows pity on Jupiter. In other words, Prometheus has to change his attitude toward Jupiter so as to reform the world with his revolutionary vision. Overcoming hatred against Jupiter is made possible by Prometheus's awakening. However, the recant of curse drives Earth into despair, because Earth misunderstands Prometheus's behavior as the last submission to Jupiter. Even though Earth embraces Prometheus in her body, it appears that she does not recognize the maturity or the change of Prometheus's consciousness. Obsessed with the transient evil and revenge upon Jupiter, Earth cannot serve as some sort of catalyst to help Prometheus to be liberated from Jupiter any more.

Meanwhile, as the dictator, Jupiter sends Mercury to Prometheus in order to conciliate him as soon as Prometheus recants his curse, telling that he has to accept the self-contempt and Jupiter's power. The dictator does whatever he can do in order to strengthen and continue his control. He even compels the leading intellectuals longing for the revolution to sell their consciences. When the intellectuals resist against him, he secludes them from the society as he did Prometheus. Fear of the seclusion makes people including the intellectuals obey his power. Mercury as evil aide for Jupiter in seducing Prometheus tries to investigate the unknown secret of

Prometheus:

...There is a secrete known
To thee, and to none else of living things,
Which may transfer the scepter of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme,
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart,
For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest (I, 371-380).

Like Christ, Prometheus endures the mental torture upon himself Mercury imposes. He does not surrender and give up hope for himself and humankind because his concession means suffering and frustration for humankind:

And yet to me welcome is Day and Night
Whether one break the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climes
The leaden-coloured East; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling Hours, one among whom
-As some dark priest hailes the reluctant victim-
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale fee, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave (I 44-52).

Finally, Prometheus's will leads to the denial of Jupiter's all efforts to reconcile. In addition, because revealing the secret means "death seal" for humankind, it is

impossible for Prometheus to disclose it. In this sense, it is Prometheus's will that enables him to carry out the revolution.

After the failure of Mercury's trial to seduce Prometheus, Furies come again to put Prometheus under Jupiter's control. As Kenneth Neill Cameron argues, "Furies are the tormenting thought-images of the aftermath of war and dictatorship of the French Revolution" (730). Throughout the first act, we inhabit a world of negation, a world which, as the imagery suggests, is endlessly empty. Emptiness and hollowness are everywhere; Jupiter's ministers, the Furies, are 'hollow underneath, like death while even Heaven itself is 'hollow' (Webb 697). In addition, Timothy Webb continues to say that the power of Jupiter is based on emptiness, he is himself a negation; therefore, it is entirely appropriate that he should be consumed by nothing (698). However, Prometheus does not surrender himself to the evil power sent from Jupiter, since he sees the Jupiter as the authority to oppress humankind:

Yet am I king over myself, and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous (I. 492-494).

It is through the Furies who don't recognize the tradition and the command that control them that Shelley implicitly shows people living like slaves without their true identities or free will. However, Furies also do not give up their will and try to instill in Prometheus's mind that his defiance is vain:

The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,

But living among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt: they know not what they do (I. 625-631).

Nonetheless, Prometheus does not feel despair about the current phenomenon of human beings Furies suggest. And he does not give up the hope for humankind. Of course, even though Prometheus cannot escape from Jupiter's continuous imposing torture upon himself, what he selects is the sacred torture for recognizing his new identity and, in a broader sense, saving humankind. Such grand cause enables Prometheus to give up Furies' seduction and to let them leave Prometheus.

III. Prometheus' Understanding of Love For the Completion of His Journey

In spite of overcoming the seduction of Mercury and Furies, Prometheus feels frustrated by the extreme tremor the French Revolution leaves. Even though Earth sends Prometheus several spirits to console him, Prometheus is powerless, which serves to unite himself with Asia. According to David Bromwich, "Asia is the personal prophet of a great change and only love between Prometheus and Asia can bring hope and the possibility of reform into the world" (255). Indeed, Prometheus's fate is to become a savior for the tortured humankind with the help of Asia: "How fair these airborne shapes! And yet I feel / Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far, / Asia!" (I. 807-809). In Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry," Shelley shows his thought about love as follows:

The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of

Our own nature and an identification of ourselves with the
Beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not
Our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely
And comprehensively: he must put himself in the place of
Another and of many others; the pains and pleasure of his
Species must become his own. The great instrument of moral
Good is imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by
Action upon the cause (Shelley 282-283).

As mentioned above, for Shelley, love is to comprehend others and to meet the world around him. In addition, for Shelley, love is revolutionary one and the saving principle that is at work.

Shelley's point of view on love and its effect is reflected in the relationship between Prometheus and Asia in the poem. The forcible separation of Asia and Prometheus caused volcanic upheavals, as implied in the fact that Earth recalls the outbreak of "new fire from earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow" when Prometheus was first enchained. However, eventually the consummation of Love and its immediate effect on Prometheus are to "initiate his reunion with Asia, his beloved, from whom he has been separated during the years of his torture on Caucasus" (Steichen 46). As Lilian Steichen argues, she is "the Ideal of Life, Beauty, Nature: she is All that mankind has ever hoped for or longed for or loved" (48). Thus, Prometheus "becomes his own preserver as he acknowledges and assumes the power of love, the quality that can exist only in the original state of his union with Asia" (Duerksen 626). Furthermore, Asia symbolizes Platonic love, which means the desire for the everlasting possession of goodness. Instead of despair surrounding Prometheus, Shelley provides Prometheus with the invincible and ideal type of love rather than with secular love. In a word, Shelley tells through Asia that he pursues some sort of altruistic love and the spirit of philanthropy. As the symbol of an ideal

beauty, Prometheus's reunion with Asia is to overcome their incompleteness in order to restore the complete human nature. Without ignoring the feminine characteristic inherent in Asia, Shelley believes that the revolution of masculine world can be completed through the union with the virtue of love and beauty. In this sense, Prometheus tries to harmonize the sacredness with Asia in order to fulfill his ideal utopia. As Richard Isomaki argues, the necessary reciprocity of love suggests that "Prometheus will be freed when he and Asia achieve an equivalence of position or outlook" (669). In addition, Prometheus already recognizes that even human virtues can be turned into the distorted and self-destructive ones, unless all human virtues including wisdom and will would be associated with love. That is, it is only through the reunion with Asia that Prometheus can liberate himself and realize the revolution for utopia and that he can restore One Mind.

However, Prometheus's ultimate desire for revolution can be actualized by combining the help of Asia with Demogorgon. Asia's inevitable response to the change of Prometheus is realized, only when Demogorgon is presented as destiny to punish Jupiter and to liberate mankind from his dictatorship. Thus, Asia and Demogorgon in the poem function as some sort of social existences to facilitate the liberal movement and to eliminate seclusion and isolation. Prometheus's travel with Asia in search of Demogorgon is followed by Panthea's dream that forecasts his liberation from Jupiter. Panthea apologizes for her delay, saying that she is able to remember one of her dreams about Prometheus:

I saw not-heard not-moved not-only felt
His presence flow and mingle through my blood
Till it became my life and his grew mine
And I was thus absorbed-until it past
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,

Gathering again in drops upon the pines
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed, and as the rays
Of my thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of far melody. Thy name,
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate; thought still
I listened through the night when sound was none. (II, i, 79-92).

.....

There is a change: beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade-a shape-‘tis He, arrayed
In the soft light of his own smiles which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.
Prometheus, it is thou-depart not yet! (II, i, 119-123)

As a personal prophetic, Asia is allowed to see Panthea's dream through her eyes that Prometheus is transformed as Christ and that even he appears to free himself from Jupiter's control with unselfish pleasure. Panthea's dream forecasts that the moment when the revolutionary desire for the utopian world is realized comes near at hand. Moreover, Shelley implies that Prometheus's love with Asia in the dream signifies the revolutionary love instead of simply sexual love. Asia's activeness enables her to recall the past days with Prometheus. This experience helps Asia to restore the love with Prometheus. Through the vehicle of dream, Shelley tries to awaken Asia from the realm of reality into that of possibility that Prometheus and Asia are capable of being liberated and saved from Jupiter's tyranny. As Neimneh argues, Shelley is deeply convinced that "Prometheus's moral regeneration caused by Asia can be interpreted as a form of revolt and as a turning point for the social and

political change” (21).

However, the darkness still lies on the way to get Jupiter dethroned even though the darkness is some sort of divine gloom toward Demogorgon:

I see a mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun (II. Iv. 2-4)

Demogorgon lives in a cave, because a cave is dramatically more appropriate than Bayswater. Why Demogorgon emits infra-red rays is because he is extremely hot; too hot to be visible. Demogorgon is, in fact, realized in terms of molten magma, the obscure and terrible volcanic agent hidden in the depth of the earth (Matthews 558). The dark and even secret passage is solved by Asia’s direct experience in the summit of mountain; it ultimately expands the scope of Asia’s consciousness in the long run. Moreover, as G. M. Matthews points out, Demogorgon’s presence enables Asia’s divine inspiration to be conceived and loosened in her breast (556). The accumulated maturity of self functions as the catalyst for the change of Asia’s consciousness. Asia’s new consciousness leads her to reveal the identity of Demogorgon, while he refuses to disclose his identity. Though Demogorgon realizes the necessity of reform from Asia, his refusal for the fear of Asia’s revenging upon Jupiter stimulates Asia’s curiosity.

At the same time, Asia is awakened to receive a new historical consciousness in the process of her journey; she thinks of Jupiter as an enslaved victim and comes to gain the revolutionary spirit that liberates even Jupiter in this revolving world. Shelley tells through Asia’s awakening that all existences are entangled with fate, time, occasion, chance, and change. Only love can transcend these transient things to expand the permanent world. Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* is based on the

structure of awakening and the expansion of existence. Revealing one's own identity is the impetus to reform oneself, which leads to the ideal world. Prometheus's inert awakening is engaged with Asia and Asia's inward awakening is connected to the world of Demogorgon. The awakening of love is associated with the complete unity with Prometheus. The conversation between Demogorgon and Asia implies the triumph of Prometheus:

ASIA

Who is the master of the slave?

DEMOGORGON

-If the Abyss

Could vomit forth its secrets:-but a voice

Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;

For what would it avail to bid thee gaze

On the revolving world? What to bid speak

Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To these

All things are subject but eternal Love.

ASIA

So much I asked before, and my heart gave

The response thou hast given; and of such truths

Each to itself must be the oracle.-

As my own soul would answer, did it know

That which I ask.-Prometheus shall arise

Henceforth shall the destined hour arrive?

DEMOGORGON

Behold! (II. iv. 114-128)

From the inexpressible truth, Asia knows the passionate certainty of heart's oracle and becomes the object of Prometheus's purified desire. In this way, to borrow John

Rieder's phrase, "Prometheus's aggressive desire in the revolution" can be fulfilled (787). John Rieder continues to say that the desire to end Jupiter's reign thereby becomes two wishes: one, the purified wish to reunite Asia and Prometheus; the other, the "evil wish" which disappears into the esoteric, unutterable power of the Abyss (788). The trust of Demogorgon enables him to destroy Jupiter. Jupiter's collapse is the predetermined fate Asia and Panthea wait for. Asia's intense love beats the darkness with its light and fever.

Shelley's reform for ideal utopia with no dictatorship culminates in Demogorgon's confrontation with Jupiter. Ironically, however, Jupiter does not recognize Demogorgon's identity because of his indifference to the change of heaven. Demogorgon's identity once lost is awakened and eventually restored with the help of Asia:

Eternity. Demand no direr name.
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. (III. i. 52-56)

Jupiter, a transient figure, is destined to disappear within the inside of the permanent time. Demogorgon takes him to his cave, saying that there will be no tyranny anymore in the future. Jupiter cannot help but accept his miserable fate. In this sense, Jupiter's falling is the passive one caused by the power of fate. The fall of Jupiter under a "bursting cloud" brings the concept of volcanic activity into close relation with that of the storm. The basis of much of the volcanic imagery surrounding Demogorgon's overthrowing Jupiter in Shelley's poem must now be clear; as Matthews notes, "this is the perception of revolutionary activity in the

external world and in the human mind-or irrepressible collective energy contained by repressive power?" (563).

In the end, Prometheus becomes unbound from the fetters as a free existence. He runs toward Asia to complete their love and enjoys reunion with Asia. In some sense, the love with Asia helps Prometheus to liberate himself from all shackles and eventually to connect all to One Mind. However, Shelley tells his final lesson to his readers through Demogorgon:

An empire o'er the disentangled doom.
To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or might;
 To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope will Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
 Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory. (IV. 570-578)

This is the virtue and a code of conduct Promethean Man as Divine Man should keep in mind. The ideal utopia is not monotonous or fixed world; it is the creative and hopeful one. This is possible only when love is ample enough. As the spirit of love, the reform is to achieve the ideal utopia for all human beings. In this sense, Shelley's revolutionary desire can be said to be the spirit of love through the self-negation and the self-endurance of woes. In addition, the recovery of sacredness is combined with the restoration of beautiful nature and the expansion of consciousness.

IV. Conclusion

To conclude, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* requires an ideological and political reading in connection with his book entitled *A Philosophical View of Reform*. Indeed, as Kenneth Cameron points out, it is difficult to think of works that are more the antithesis of social skepticism with its cynical concept of the uselessness of human endeavor than *A Philosophical View of Reform* or *Prometheus Unbound* (589). Shelley's political and social views were essentially positive. Shelley believes that human nature was conditioned by social forces and that the source of political oppression lay in the ruling classes, as we can see in *Prometheus Unbound*, with their "standing army," their "legion of spies," and their control of the press and pulpit. He was confident that this "tyranny" would be eliminated by "reform" or "revolution." He was convinced that humanity was advancing to an egalitarian society. Shelley's political ideas seem to sound, at the theoretical level, extremely radical. Shelley continually holds up as his ideal a free, classless society in which there would be unlimited freedom of speech and interposition of government only to stop one person from infringing the rights of another (Reiman 595). Like Jefferson, he believed that the less government, the better, and thus his social thought parallels Godwin's brand of philosophical anarchism. But at the practical level, Shelley believed compromise and an orderly, step-by-step progression to the necessary (Reiman 595). Indeed he also dedicated his life and writing to the battle against social evils and to the realization of the ideals that he holds up, as in *Prometheus Unbound* and *A Philosophical View of Reform*.

Another political aspect to be dealt with in *Prometheus Unbound* is his positive and convincing attitude toward individualism. His individualism is the central theme in that "each man is king over himself and, therefore, the biological individual is the

One unassailable point of resistance to Jupiter” (Rieder 791). The relationship between power and freedom is implied as the ideological function in his poem. Shelley’s political ideal is closely related to the spread of moral enlightenment and reform:

The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed-but man:
Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, -the King
Over himself; just, gentle, wise-but man:
Passionless? No-yet free from guilt or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance and death and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane. (III. Iv. 193-204).

The revolution is wholly one of purification and unmask of deceit and falsehood, exempting from vice and slavery. In a word, as implied in the above, individualism and the political ideals that Shelley dreams of remains centered on the figure of Prometheus. Prometheus’s struggle for freedom and his achievement of “the man” means, to borrow Rieder’s phrase, “the disintegration of classes, tribes, and nations into a multitude of individual sovereignties” (792). Indeed, Prometheus is the symbolic representation of human psyche and the recovery of a true individualism.

Notes

- 1) “The words, I, you, and they are not signs of any actual difference subsisting between the assemblage of thoughts, but are merely marks employed to denote the different modifications of the one mind; P. B. Shelley, “On Life,” p 508.
- 2) Quotations from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound are from Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed., Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (New York: Norton, 2002).

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국문초록

셸리의 『해방된 프로메테우스』에 나타난 이상적인 유토피아를 향한 혁명적 욕망

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셸리는 『해방된 프로메테우스』에서 이상적인 유토피아를 향한 혁명적 욕망을 형상화한다. 프랑스 혁명의 실패에도 불구하고 셸리는 혁명적 열정을 포기하지 않고 자신의 대리인인 프로메테우스를 통하여 기존 사회 제도와 권위에 도전한다. 프로메테우스는 독재자인 주피터에 의해서 탄압과 고통을 당하는 인물로서 처음에는 주피터에 대하여 미움과 저주를 갖는다. 그러나 그 같은 부정적인 감정들이 자신에게 좌절과 절망만을 남겨준다는 사실을 서서히 인식하면서 프로메테우스는 마음속에서 내적 변화를 경험하게 된다. 자신과 인류를 주피터의 독재와 탄압으로부터 해방시키고자 노력하는 프로메테우스에게서 그와 같은 마음의 변화는 혁명과 해방을 위해서 근본적인 역할을 한다는 사실을 셸리는 보여준다. 주피터에게 폭력과 위협을 가하기보다는 사랑과 동정에 기초한 프로메테우스 자신의 내적 각성이 혁명의 필수조건임을 셸리는 강조하는 것이다. 프로메테우스의 혁명 의지를 좌절시키기 위해서 주피터는 계속 고통을 가하지만 프로메테우스는 폭압과 독재의 세력인 주피터에게 굴복하지 않는다. 지속적인 고통을 감내하면서 인류의 희망과 자유, 그리고 개인주의를 꿈꾸는 프로메테우스는 아시아와의 만남을 통하여 진정한 혁명의 의미와 방향을 깨닫게 된다. 셸리는 혁명과 이상적인 유토피아를 이루는데 있어서 폭력이 아닌 타인에 대한 사랑과 동정심이 중요함을 프로메테우스와 아시아의 재결합을 통해 그리고 있다.

주제어 : 『해방된 프로메테우스』, 혁명, 개인주의, 자유, 사랑

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