

'The Ineffectual Angel': Arnold's Misrepresentation of Shelley

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Writing on Shelley's posthumous reputation, Newman Ivey White noted the 'general acclaim' which marked the poet's critical reception in the mid- and late Victorian period. ¹ Inevitably there were eminent detractors who, to the extent that they reacted against an idealization of Shelley, may well have usefully offset elements of an unwholesome semi-religious cult, particularly that surrounding Jane, Lady Shelley (who, together with her husband, Sir Percy Florence - the poet's son - guarded with tenacity the poet's reputation, and most surviving manuscripts).² But, as White reminds us, admiration for Shelley was grounded in genuine scholarship and literary interest. In the period in question, 'students of Shelley produced more than a dozen biographies, scores of editions, and hundreds of critical essays, many of them from the most distinguished critics of the age'. ³ None could deny the serious interest in Shelley, unless they chose to ignore it.

White went on to observe that Arnold, Bagehot, and Stephen were among those who, owing to their stature, gave credence to a motley of critical voices in the opposition camp. They did so 'in some of the most important and fully considered critical essays of the age'.⁴ Arnold's assessment of Shelley mainly appeared in two essays, one on Byron and the second on Shelley, published successively in his *Essays in Criticism, Second Series* (1888). The essays on Byron and Shelley were themselves published earlier: the former in March 1881 in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 43 (pp. 367-77) and then in the same year as the Preface to a selection of Byron's poetry (Macmillan & Co.); and the latter in January 1888 as a review article on Dowden's life of Shelley, in *Nineteenth Century*, 23 (pp. 23-39). Taken together these two essays represent Arnold's final public estimate of Shelley, one which in overall

1. Newman Ivey White, *Shelley*, 2 vols (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), II, 412 (rpt, first pub. 1940).

2. According to Donald Reiman, the 'hyper-reverential protection of the family's manuscripts at Boscombe Manor [...] irritated such friends of Shelley as Edward John Trelawny'. He adds that 'To gain access to the letters and literary documents, scholars were required to pass through what almost amounted to rites of initiation and tests of doctrinal purity', 'Shelley's Manuscripts and the Web of Circumstance', in *Romantic Revisions*, ed. by Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 229.

3. White, *Shelley*, II, 411.

4. White, *Shelley*, II, 413. See Sir Leslie Stephen, 'Godwin and Shelley' (1879), in *Hours in A Library*, 3 vols (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1892), III, 64-100; Walter Bagehot, 'Percy Bysshe Shelley' (1856) in *Literary Studies*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1891), I, 75-125.

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'THE INEFFECTUAL ANGEL'

emphasis is unfavourable. Given that Arnold usually balances praise and dispraise in his essays on English poets (specifically Milton, Wordsworth, Gray, Keats, Byron, Shelley), being concerned to identify what is lasting and what transient in a poet's output, it is notable that he finds little that is of ultimate worth in Shelley's original poetry, preferring the prose and translations.

Certainly Arnold's disparagement of Shelley has represented the cornerstone of negativity towards the poet, and is encapsulated in his famous dictum about Shelley, that he is a 'beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain', cited in both essays on Byron and Shelley.⁵ The dictum has been very influential, as White already observed more than half a century ago.⁶ It has set the tone for an adolescent and sometimes emasculated image of Shelley that found currency among the 'New Critics' ⁷ and even persists in more recent discussion.⁸ All the while, appreciative late Victorian readings of Shelley - some detailed, meticulous, and extensive - have tended to fade into obscurity.

The point in question, which the present essay seeks to address, concerns the substance of Arnold's judgement. On close examination (as will be shown), his argument is grossly superficial and unreliable. What has tended to carry weight is the authority of Arnold's position as eminent critic of his age (while this had currency) and the persuasiveness of his dictum which has connected with an ongoing antipathy or ambivalence towards Shelley. In the course of time, the dictum has become disentangled from the original argument and has acquired a life of its own. The grounds for Arnold's assertion have been lost sight of, and a deeply prejudicial notion has done its rounds in the literary establishment. My concern, therefore, is to put the record straight: to re-examine Arnold's commentary on Shelley, and to indicate its serious failings, both in itself and within the context of Victorian criticism of Shelley. Arnold was taken to task by fellow critics for his ill-considered disparagement of Shelley; now, well over a century later, it is time to put the 'ineffectual angel' finally to rest. This being said, it must be noted that Arnold was in a good position to appraise Shelley's cosmopolitan outlook, since he was more widely read - more responsive to European traditions - than most of his English contemporaries. His cultural perspective has much to commend itself, and reflects an interest in Shelley that is broader than most and is not simply dismissive. In much of his discussion, he maintains a curious juggling act of admiration and censure (eventually crystallized in the figure of the unavailing angel). If his assessment of Shelley's achievement is, in the last analysis, unsympathetic and unjust, his viewpoint is not without ambiguities

5. 'Byron', 'Shelley', *Essays in Criticism*, 2nd series (London and New York: Macmillan & Co., 1888), pp. 203-04, 252.

6. White, *Shelley*, II, 413.

7. Timothy Morton remarks that 'Leavis kicks an emasculated, demonized figure when he's already down' (*The Cambridge Companion to Shelley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 39). Leavis's catchphrase '[Shelley's] weak grasp upon the actual' is a modernist derivative of the Victorian 'ineffectual angel'. See *Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936), p. 206.

8. Regarding the persistence of the 'old view of Shelley', see Introduction, *The Unfamiliar Shelley*, ed. by Alan M. Weinberg and Timothy Webb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 2; for more specific reference to Arnold's continued influence, see John Rieder, 'Description of a Struggle: Shelley's Radicalism on Wordsworth's Terrain', in *On Humanism and the University II*, *Boundary 2*, 13. 2-3 (1985), 267; Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (eds), *Shelley's Poetry and Prose* (New York: Norton, 2002), p. 540.

ALAN WEINBERG

reflective of the idealism that, contrary to Arnold's avowed position, tended to sentimentalize and exalt Shelley.

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While his comments on Shelley were generally sparing, it is clear that earlier in his career Arnold did take a less jaundiced view of Shelley's contribution to English letters. Significantly, this was in the period when Arnold is said to have reached his height as a critic - that is, in the 1860s, during his tenure as Professor of Poetry at Oxford (1857-67). In his essay on Heinrich Heine, published in *Essays on Criticism, First Series*,⁹ Byron and Shelley are identified as the only two English poets since the Elizabethan era who were fully engaged with the great contemporary ideas circulating in Europe, and who had by implication positioned themselves as prominent international figures. Such praise was highly significant for Arnold since he decries English 'philistinism' - his term for arrogant complacency and parochialism in the home culture - comparing England unfavourably with France and Germany in this regard. However, in Arnold's view, the achievement of Byron and Shelley is compromised less by their own inherent shortcomings than by those of England itself which, typically, did not provide the poets with an intellectual climate that was conducive to their own aspirations. There was, accordingly, in the Romantic period in England 'no manifestation of the modern spirit'. The result, in Arnold's view, was that the poets' attempts to embrace the 'modern spirit' necessarily failed:

the resistance to baffle them, the want of intelligent sympathy to guide and uphold them, were too great. Their literary creation, compared with the literary creation of Shakespeare and Spenser, compared with the literary creation of Goethe and Heine, is a failure. ¹⁰

Although Arnold underplays the years of adventure, elopement, travel, and self-exile which served to infuse Byron and Shelley's works with lived experience of European currents, his disclaimer does point to a chauvinistic resistance to these poets that barred them from full integration in the national culture, forcing them to turn to the continent for inspiration. Yet resistance only strengthened their alignment with the movement for reform at home, undoubtedly European in origin, and capable of transforming the English political scene in the years to come. If Arnold underestimates the Europeanness of the counterculture in England (which not for nothing acquired the label of Jacobinism), he does acknowledge the 'Titanic effort' of Byron and Shelley to 'flow in the main stream of modern literature', adding that 'their names will be greater than their writings; *stat magni nominis umbra*'. ¹¹ That Arnold's reservations were likely to hold out in the end is shown elsewhere in sporadic observations that point repeatedly to Shelley's 'incoherence', ¹² reflecting (one imagines) the lack

9. (London and Cambridge: Macmillan & Co., 1865), pp. 151-86. First published in *Cornhill Magazine*, 8 (August 1863), pp. 233-49.

10. *First Series*, pp. 170-71.

II. Page 171.

12. For references to 'incoherence' (twice considered 'extreme'), see *Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold: Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, ed. by R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), III, 34, 262, 403.

'THE INEFFECTUAL ANGEL'

of a unified cultural perspective or standpoint, grounded in a welcoming national environment.

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To Arnold's credit, his later poetic rendering of Shelley's averred weakness is rhetorically impressive, especially in the way it uncannily registers an unease in readers hostile to Shelley's poetry. An implied allusion to the failure of Icarus is irresistible in its vivid depiction of high-minded youthfulness in over-adventurous flight. At the same time, in Arnold's reinscription of this submerged image, the mythical youth, nobly attempting the impossible in his 'desire for the heavens' (as Ovid puts it),¹³ is silently displaced by an impotent angel, more sentimentally scriptural than soberly classical, and painfully self-absorbed. This refiguring attenuates the underlying image and emphasises futility and debility, rather than strength of purpose ('beating [...] his luminous wings in vain') and has an air of comic deflation in imitation of Pope's 'while clog'd he beats his silken Wings in vain'.¹⁴ It defuses Shelley's aversion to religion and oppressive governance - his alliance with the Enlightenment - recovering him as a denatured, defeated figure. But, given the proverbial nature of Arnold's comment and its wide circulation in literary histories, dictionaries of quotations and the like, notably on the Internet, its eloquent persuasiveness makes an appeal to biased assumption, whilst belying its source and the *raison d'être* which gave it its life in the first place. In what follows, I consider how Arnold arrived at his assessment and why his reading fails to convince on its own terms and with regard to informed contemporary opinion.

Arnold comes to Shelley quite early in his essay on Byron, seemingly by chance. His first concern (as preparation for a discussion of his selection of Byron's poems) is to identify Byron and Wordsworth as the two outstanding Romantic poets.¹⁵ Given their high status, based on the fair number of 'good' poems both of them wrote (notwithstanding a very uneven production in both cases), Arnold qualifies his assertion by referring to the lesser status of Coleridge, Keats, and Scott, all of whom produced 'good' poetry, but not enough of it to warrant a separate anthology devoted to each. Arnold concedes that Keats and Coleridge may have written even better poems than either Byron or Wordsworth, but their achievement was not sustained. At this point Shelley is introduced, but instead of passing him over quickly (as happens with the other three 'lesser' poets), Arnold engages in a brief but more extended discussion. The point at issue is that, just the year before (in 1880), a selection of Shelley's poetry had been anthologized by Stopford Brooke. Yet, in Arnold's view, there is little in the volume (aside from a few 'snatches and fragments') to match the poetry of Wordsworth and Byron, and thus he disputes Brooke's

13. See Anthony S. Kline, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Bk VIII: 183-235.

14. *Rape of the Lock*, II, 130; 'luminous wings' might imply a radiant source of inspiration, but they are unavailing. For an account of the immediate sources of Arnold's conception of Shelley as 'ineffectual angel', see Charles T. Wilkins, 'Matthew Arnold's "Ineffectual Angel"', *Notes and Queries*, NS, 9.3 (March 1962), 92-94; and George Mathewson, 'Matthew Arnold's "Ineffectual Angel"', *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin*, 21 (1970), 3-6.

15. This later elevation of Byron contrasts with Arnold's demotion of Shelley in the ranks of poets.

ALAN WEINBERG

wisdom in making a selection. What apparently is lacking in Shelley is 'real substance, power, and worth.'¹⁶

The key term here is 'real substance', and while it is not specifically defined (Arnold's hazy abstractions seldom are),¹⁷ it is allowed to determine the issue in question, developed in the succeeding paragraph which concludes this brief digression from a discussion of Byron's poems. What is 'incurably' missing in Shelley is 'sound subject-matter', the 'incurable' result of which is 'unsubstantiality'.¹⁸ Once again there is no explanation of what is meant by the terms of reference. They are assumed to be self-evident. Nor does Arnold provide any account of the subject matter except to indicate that 'clouds and sunsets' are not appropriate for poetry, as if these phenomena were Shelley's trademark;¹⁹ and that 'charm of soul and spirit' and musicality do not make up for the deficiency. These qualities refer back to an earlier remark that Shelley is 'a beautiful and enchanting spirit' whose vision is lovelier than Byron's. But it is Byron who has 'real substance' and Shelley's 'loveliness' loses its appeal. If one grants Arnold his terms of reference, his argument is, at least, consistent, and appears to be logical. However, there is neither evidence nor clear definition to support it, failing immediately on that account.²⁰ We will see later that a similar problem besets the full essay on Shelley, invalidating Arnold's claims.

At this point, one must wonder why Arnold so readily adopted the notion of an ethereal Shelley, thus allowing it to condition, as well as inhibit his response to Shelley's poetry. From the first, a spiritualized, unearthly poet figure appears inscribed in legendary accounts of Shelley by his contemporaries. Emilia Viviani, Leigh and Marianne Hunt, Mary Shelley, Claire Clairmont, Edward Trelawny all allude, in one form or another, to his otherworldliness in a manner that might suggest 'semireligious apostleship'.²¹ Victorian admirers, among them W. M. Rossetti, were happy to exalt Shelley further.²² Following Mary Shelley's uplifting appraisal, both Swinburne and Todhunter envisioned Shelley as a very effectual angel or even archangel (Miltonic or Botticellian), a fearless champion in the defence of the noblest

¹⁶ Arnold, *Second Series*, p. 164.

¹⁷ On this score, Swinburne (very astutely, I feel) charges that Arnold's 'excursive studies in theology have somewhat infected him with the theologian's habit of using words and phrases in a special and extra natural sense which renders their message impervious, their meaning impenetrable, to all but the esoteric adept' (*The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne*, ed. by Sir Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise (New York: Russell & Russell, 1925, rpt. 1968), IV, 158. The phrase 'real substance', with its trace of liturgical discourse, is a pertinent example of Arnold's habit since 'real' is, strictly speaking, tautological.

¹⁸ Arnold, *Second Series*, p. 165.

¹⁹ Arnold, *Second Series*, p. 165.

²⁰ Arnold asserts, with magisterial certainty and a rhetorical flourish, that Shelley 'never, or hardly ever, did [...] lay hold upon the poet's right subject-matter' (*Second Series*, p. 165).

²¹ White, *Shelley*, II, 399-400. Richard Holmes claims that Mary herself launched this view, writing immediately after Shelley's death. In reviewing the 'unearthly legend', as he calls it, Holmes cites Arnold's 'notorious summation' as if it encapsulated the myth, despite its emphasis on failed endeavour. This emphasizes the persistence of Arnold's assessment in literary circles, and the manner in which it has been conflated with idealized views. ('Death and destiny', *The Guardian*, 24 January 2004, p. 4 (Features and Reviews). Earlier Henry S. Salt found no real distinction between Arnold's view and that of the cult he was evidently disparaging (*Percy Bysshe Shelley Poet and Pioneer: A Biographical Study* (London: William Reeves, 1896), pp. 143-52).

²² '[...] history records no more beautiful nature [...] we find him [...] to be one of the ultimate glories of our race and planet' (*A Memoir of Shelley (with a fresh Preface)*, The Shelley Society's Publications, 4th series, No.2, 2nd edn (London: Richard Clay & Sons, 1888), p. 153-4 (first pub. 1870).

'THE INEFFECTUAL ANGEL'

ideals.²³ Angelic, etherealized, feminine-looking portraits of Shelley proliferated in posthumous editions of his writings. Given the persisting influence of Lady Shelley and her circle of acolytes, the unearthly Shelley seems to reflect Arnold's own imaginary rendition of the Victorian idealization of the poet, current in the 1880s, itself indebted to the Shelley legend.²⁴ Arnold's personal reading of the poems is clearly a decisive factor since he speaks authoritatively about their 'unsubstantiality', yet by what account does Arnold imagine that, in Shelley's poetry, there is nothing other to extol than 'clouds' and 'sunsets'? Can there be a more absurd reduction of this poet's output, even if we allow for Shelley's predilection for depicting intangible or evanescent phenomena? Swinburne took Arnold to task on this very point for his implied censure, finding it simplistic and misleading. He reverses Arnold's jibe by remarking that the critic's 'judgment on Shelley and Byron might be symbolically described as a sunset of critical judgment in a cloud of hazy paradox'.²⁵ But even before Swinburne we find a complex and rounded figure of Shelley in Stopford Brooke's introductory essay to his anthology (1880)²⁶ and for that reason, one should pause to consider both Brooke's account and the nature of his selection. It is not obvious that Arnold either read the essay or really perused the selection, even though he felt obliged to refer to Brooke's anthology, which was in a sense a competitor of his own editions of Wordsworth (1879) and Byron (1881)), and therefore, perhaps required acknowledgement.

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Although Arnold provides a much briefer and more leisurely account of Shelley (in the essay on Byron) than does Brooke in his extensive review, still, even within its constraints, Arnold's account is over-generalized, whereas Brooke attends to specifics, taking trouble over detail. Like many others who have succeeded him, Brooke recognizes first of all that there are two diverse streams in Shelley's writing: one expressive of the public revolutionary, and the other of the private inward-looking solitary. By no means is the poetry solely of a visionary nature. Moreover, unlike Arnold, Brooke considers the whole of Shelley's career, taking care to observe its gradations and high points, while reflecting an intimate knowledge of individual works: the ardent rebelliousness of *Queen Mab*, the inwardly sceptical self-questioning in *Alastor*, the enthusiastic (if overly-idealistic) prospectus of *The Revolt of Islam*, which (for Brooke) fails to awaken 'practical emotion',²⁷ the restrained and dispassionate representations of 'Julian and Maddalo' and *The Cenci* following the move to Italy (again showing

23. See Swinburne, *Notes on the text of Shelley* (1869) (Gosse and Wise, 1925), v, 377, and John Todhunter, *A Study of Shelley* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1880), p. 6.

24. One should be careful not to overstate Lady Shelley's influence, important though it clearly was. Bruce BarkerBenfield reminds us that 'the idea that she had a cold-blooded plan to rewrite Shelley's story and create a legend goes too far' (*Shelley's Guitar* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1992), p. xx).

25. Wordsworth and Byron (1884), (Gosse and Wise), 1925: IV, 193.

26. By contrast, Arnold's otherworldly image finds an echo in Francis Thompson's popular vision of Shelley as an innocent childlike spirit, written in 1889 and published in 1908.

27. *Poems from Shelley*, selected and arranged by Stopford A. Brooke (London: Macmillan & Co., 1880), p. xv. The poem is nevertheless anchored in contemporary debates concerning emancipation and reform. It was in response to *The Revolt of Islam* that Keats advised Shelley to "'load every rift" of your subject with ore' (16 August 1820, Frederick Page *Letters of John Keats* (London: Oxford University Press, London, 1965), p. 424.

ALAN WEINBERG

a private-public axis), the reconstitution of 'all the subjects of *Revolt of Islam*' in *Prometheus Unbound*, described as 'the marriage of Shelley's double nature, the fusion for creative work of the lover of man and the poet'.²⁸ And so Brooke continues, in like vein, admiring the 'range of power' expressed in such unlike dramas as *The Cenci* and *Prometheus Unbound* produced 'within twelve months', and the 'force' uniting 'idea and its form' in *Ode to the West Wind*.²⁹ He sees in later poems (those of 1820-1821) largely a retreat into privacy (far away from humanity) that is only again partially countered in *Hellas*. Comments on *Adonais* are especially illuminating in the light of Arnold's strictures regarding Shelley. Brooke recognizes that the abstract realm of the poem is so closely imagined that 'we believe in the reality of this world as we believe in our dreams while we dream'.³⁰ The aesthetic standard here - one which recalls Coleridge's 'poetic faith',³¹ or Theseus's celebration of the imagination in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (v, i, 12-22) - seems far distant from Arnold's literal-minded insistence on 'substantial' subject matter (whatever that may mean). In this poem, Shelley's 'power' is attributed not only to 'imagination at its height', but also to 'keenness of abstract intellect',³² an observation well in advance of Brooke's time, since 'abstractness' is precisely what has harmed Shelley's reputation in England (such that his subtle intelligence has been undervalued).³³

Towards the end of his introductory essay, Brooke rounds out his full overview of Shelley's works with a lengthy comment on the 'The Triumph of Life', one of the first detailed discussions on record - as if Brooke wished especially to introduce it to his readers, one of whom was potentially Arnold.³⁴ Explaining its exclusion from his Selection (on the grounds that it is a fragment and 'difficult to comprehend'), Brooke notes (as have many since) that 'The Triumph of Life' is a 'remarkable poem' and 'the gravest thing Shelley ever wrote'.³⁵ Brooke's understanding of Shelley's allegorical vision, presented in an explication of the contents, shows the critic's underlying respect for Shelley's conception of life - the imaginative form in which the poet chose to represent it, the degree to which it remained consistent with his youthful ideas, and the degree to which it altered, and became increasingly sceptical of attaining the ideal.

Brooke's comments are buttressed by fine points of discrimination, appreciative of Shelley's diversity: *Queen Mab* is too polemical and yet 'possesses [...] didactic

28. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. xvi.

29. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. xvii.

30. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. xx.

31. A 'faith' constituted by a 'willing suspension of disbelief', *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 7, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), II, 6.

32. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. xx.

33. Walter Bagehot sets the trend in his essay (1865).

34. His idea is that a selection should lead one to explore the whole of a poet's oeuvre, rather than a handful of apparently 'good' poems.

35. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. li. Swinburne had earlier noted: 'even in its unfinished and fragmentary condition, ["The Triumph of Life"] is worthy of a place among the crowning works of its author, and the crowning glories of English poetry' *Percy Bysshe Shelley* (Gosse and Wise, 1925: V, 346.). Later, T. S. Eliot marked out 'The Triumph' for special praise, in this regard departing from his general displeasure with Shelley's writing, which he found mainly 'adolescent' ('What Dante Means To Me', in *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965), pp. 130-32.

'THE INEFFECTUAL ANGEL'

force'; *Alastor*, for all its subjective intensity has 'unity of conception' and 'steadiness of expression and form' even greater than *Adonais*; *The Cenci* reflects 'a vivid interest in humanity'; in *The Witch of Atlas*, nothing 'spoil[s] the natural wildness of the Imagination's play'; and in *Epipsychidion*, Shelley's 'ideal passion [...] hid him in the light of thought'.³⁶ Such attention to detail and to distinguishing trademarks is carried through in balanced comments on Shelley's strengths and weaknesses, eschewing adulation. In a thorough overall assessment, Brooke identifies the nature of Shelley's poetic temperament, one that he says expresses 'love of indefiniteness and [...] love of changefulness'.³⁷ While this leads, in his view, to a degree of impersonality and lessening of human presence, by comparison, for example, with Wordsworth, and consequently to a certain lack of power, it does, however, have a positive aspect. Shelley could describe changeability with admirable empathy and precision, more strikingly than any other author. Furthermore Brooke recognizes that this talent is bound up with Shelley's metaphysics - his reluctance to impose a human standard on cosmic events, or to identify an overriding stable presence in Nature (Pantheism) or a single creative source of Nature (Theology) or energy (Science). In *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley's Utopia is decentred and rests less on positive assertion of belief than on negations of misguided belief and error.³⁸ Later critics have noted that Shelley was freeing his vision from the self-enclosure that threatens all creeds, religious or otherwise.³⁹ Brooke might not have quite appreciated the poet's intellectual positioning and alertness to the danger of mental entrapment, but he certainly points the reader in the right direction. Similarly he struggles against Shelley's imputed atheism, which does not capture his protean nature (that on occasion adopts the position of an ideal pantheist) but finds much to praise in Shelley's challenge to religious orthodoxy: 'But if a veteran theology is to be disarmed and slain, it needs to be brought not only into the arena of thought and argument, but into the arena of poetic emotion. A great part of that latter work was done in England by Shelley'.⁴⁰

It appears then, from Brooke's account, that Shelley was consistent with regard to his fluid, undogmatic conception of the world, and by implication, was not lost in the clouds. In fact Brooke, again in advance of his time, recognizes that Shelley's poetry might well be more accurate and factual than Wordsworth's, in that he is faithful to the volatility and impermanence of natural phenomena - to their intrinsic, endlessly diverse, transformational character, indifferent to human affairs - notable in descriptions of ephemeral clouds or the effect of wind and storm. In *The Cloud*, Shelley 'describes the life of the Cloud as it might have been a million years before man came on earth'.⁴¹ Arnold's lament about Shelley's obsession with cloud and sky

36. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, pp. xii, xiii, xvi, xviii, xix.

37. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. xxxiv.

38. He 'describes the Golden Age chiefly by negatives of wrong' (Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. xliii). This observation anticipates Timothy Webb's landmark study of Shelley's idiosyncratic use of negatives. See 'The Unascended Heaven: Negatives in *Prometheus Unbound*', in *Shelley Revalued: Essays from the Gregynog Conference*, ed. by Kelvin Everest (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983), pp. 37-62 (rpt. in slightly shortened form in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (New York: Norton, 2002), pp. 694-711).

39. See, e.g., Webb, 'The Unascended Heaven'.

40. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. xxvii.

41. Brooke, *Poems from Shelley*, p. xl.

ALAN WEINBERG

is implicitly anticipated but then turned to Shelley's advantage.⁴² If Arnold had, in fact, given Brooke's essay due attention, he could not have identified any weakness in Shelley without at least argument or qualification, some recognition that poetry has to be read on its own terms - that there is a dynamic that accounts for an author's predilections and idiosyncracies.

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Not surprisingly, in his inaugural address for the first meeting of the Shelley Society, Wednesday 10 March 1886, Stopford Brooke directly confronted Arnold's criticism of Shelley. In view of Arnold's high reputation, his dismissal of Shelley's poetry could not go unchallenged. After all it questioned the very establishment of the Society, as Brooke lightheartedly indicated: 'He will tell us we are about to study the unsubstantial and that no good can come of it'.⁴³ What is perhaps not appreciated is that the whole lecture is implicitly devoted to a refutation of Arnold's position, as stated in the essay on Byron (the fuller comment on Shelley was still to come, two years after the address).⁴⁴ Brooke takes up key points in Arnold's argument and finds them seriously wanting. A most interesting aspect of his treatment is that Brooke takes Arnold at his word: he accepts that Arnold's aesthetic terms of reference are valid. This is more than some might allow, but at least it gives Arnold his due. For Brooke, the most crucial point at issue is that Arnold's claims are injudicious, and unbecoming of his critical stature.

Arnold's hobby horse - Shelley's 'unsubstantiality' - which Brooke takes some trouble to defend (as he does in his introduction to *Selections*) - became an obstacle to discerning judgement. As Brooke astutely remarks:

Mr Arnold [...] has allowed his dislike to Shelley's unsubstantiality to prejudice him against the whole of Shelley's poetry. His judgment has been victimised by his personal fancy, and we have proof of it from his own lips: [Arnold's astonishing claim that Shelley's] 'original poetry is less satisfactory than his translations for in these the subject matter was found for him'.⁴⁵

What is disconcerting for Brooke is that prejudice could be allowed such sway under pretence of measured judgement. But critics, no matter how highly regarded, are not immune to thoughtless predisposition, and, as Brooke continues: 'when once a man gets on the horse of prejudice it runs away with him, and he loses his sanity of criticism in some wild and galloping assertion'.⁴⁶

42. It is possible that Arnold was alluding to Brooke as one who 'extols' the poet's supposed 'obsession'. Arnold, *Second Series*, p. 165. In his Primer, *English Literature from AD 670 to AD 1832* (London: Macmillan 1876), Brooke had paid tribute to Shelley's truth to nature and did not heed Arnold's later advice to abridge the compliment.

43. *Inaugural Address to the Shelley Society* by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A. at University College, London, in *The Shelley Society's Papers*, First Series pt 1 (London: Reeves and Turner, 1888), p. 3 (rpt. 1891).

44. Possibly Brooke was influenced by Swinburne, who, just two years earlier had likewise refuted Arnold's claims, in his long essay, 'Wordsworth and Byron' (*Nineteenth Century*, April, May 1884).

45. Brooke, *Inaugural Address*, p. 12.

46. Brooke, *Inaugural Address*, p. 12. 'Sanity' is thoughtfully chosen: it is precisely for his sanity that Arnold is praised by the reviewer of *Essays in Criticism* (1888). See Melville B. Anderson, 'Matthew Arnold as a Critic', Review of *Essays in Criticism Second Series*. *Modern Language Notes*, 4.5 (May 1889), 150, col. 299

'THE INEFFECTUAL ANGEL'

While agreeing that in 'form', in the 'impersonal part of his work', Shelley's poetry can be described as 'unsubstantial' - 'too methodically idealized in a world of woven dreams' (peopled as it often is by mythical, imaginary forms), Brooke argues that it is certainly not so in purpose: it has that 'lofty impulse to mankind' that (it is implied) the high-minded Arnold might well have admired, impelling its readers to 'noble thinking and noble action'. If Shelley was 'often the poet of clouds and sunsets' - politely conceding as much to Arnold - 'he also seized on substantial truth as his subject matter when he preached deliverance to the captive, and to let the oppressed go free'.⁴⁷ This scriptural elevation is perhaps overly grand and pious yet, in its accurate reflection of Shelley's defiance of oppression, it impressively offsets Arnold's qualms about Shelley's irrelevance, making Arnold seem squeamish and conservative, indifferent to lofty principle and social emancipation. Ironically, though not noted by Brooke, Arnold appears in very different guise when praising Byron for his great liberal enterprise. Referring to the pandering of Byron's own class to the Philistinism (cant) of the middle class, Arnold says eloquently: 'The falsehood, cynicism, insolence, misgovernment, oppression, with their consequent unending crop of human misery, which were produced by this state of things, roused Byron to irreconcilable revolt and battle'.⁴⁸ It is remarkable that Arnold can lavish praise on Byron's heroic resistance and yet ignore Shelley's active and sustained rebellion against society's ills. The evidence of prejudice on the part of Arnold against a writer's choice of subject is hardly in doubt. Brooke drives home Shelley's 'gravity of substance and matter which the critic [Arnold] desires' ⁴⁹ when he says:

Few in poetry have done more than [Shelley] to overthrow false conceptions of God, to shake the foundations of injustice, superstition, of tyranny, of caste, of slavery of mind and body [...] He not only opposed injustice, he loved justice, not vague justice, but justice made universal in act. ⁵⁰

Such views might err on the side of adulation. Yet they are hard to contest even if Shelley's methods in his poetry are not evenly successful. We are reminded that prominent members of the Shelley Society present at the inaugural lecture were not averse to the poet's politics. If anything they tended to advance them. Succeeding lectures were devoted to *Queen Mab* (Forman), *Prometheus Unbound* (Rossetti), *The Triumph of Life* (Todhunter), *The Mask of Anarchy* (Forman), *The Hermit of Marlow and Reform* (Forman), Shelley and Disraeli's politics (Garnett) - all of which point positively or constructively to Shelley's radical sentiments. ⁵¹

In refuting the claim of 'unsubstantiality', Brooke finally dismisses Arnold's reduction of Shelley to an 'ineffectual angel', showing it to be inaccurate and foolish.

47. Brooke, *Inaugural Address*, pp. 9-10, IS.

48. Arnold, *Second Series*, p. 194.

49. Brooke, *Inaugural Address*, p. 7.

50. Brooke, *Inaugural Address*, p. 8. Swinburne also draws attention to this glaring contradiction in Arnold's assessment of Byron and Shelley. See 'Byron and Wordsworth' (Gosse and Wise, 1925: v, 197).

51. Salt, who wrote and presented papers for the Shelley Society, highlighted Shelley's strong radical commitment, in a manner similar to Cameron (see *Poet and Pioneer* (1896); Kenneth Neill Cameron, *The Young Shelley: Genesis of a Radical* (New York: Macmillan, 1950). In Salt's view, Arnold was in character, and by temperament, unsympathetic to Shelley and became a victim of the very philistinism he so impressively opposed (Salt, 1896: 144-46).

ALAN WEINBERG

Brooke's Shelley is clearly actively engaged with ideas or with society and is an interventionist poet. Of particular note is the slant Brooke gives to his discussion as he concludes the address. Although he says more by innuendo than by direct statement, one can draw the inference that he is contesting the right of the 'educated classes' (which Arnold represents) to speak on behalf of poets. In showing up Arnold's superficiality and unreliability in matters of critical assessment, Brooke (with a decided socialistic or Fabian leaning) indicates that the friends of Shelley's poetry are to be drawn from those for whom Shelley speaks, in whom he strikes a nerve of sympathy: specifically 'the poor, the overworked, the oppressed' who find in Shelley 'the expression of their indignation, their ideal'.⁵² Without saying as much, Brooke registers the passion with which the Chartists earlier adopted Shelley's revolutionary cause.⁵³ Disclaiming the assured role of a 'formulated culture',⁵⁴ Brooke provides a humanitarian and socialist basis for the enjoyment of Shelley's writing, though the style at the conclusion of his peroration reinvoles the image of Shelley as a Christ-like high priest of the down-trodden, and thus (to a degree) might well have fuelled the hostility of the poet's critics.

* * *

Though some seven years separate Arnold's first from his second appraisal of Shelley (1888: 205-52) there is no change at all in his opinion of the Romantic (as poet), and no suggestion that he might have been influenced by Brooke's riposte, the studious appraisals of the Shelley Society, or the slightly earlier contestations of Swinburne. While it has been said that Arnold had further thoughts on Shelley (perhaps more positive ones), prevented from elaboration by his sudden death on 15 April 1888,⁵⁵ there is no record of them, and so they remain conjectural. The sameness of Arnold's general opinion is firmly established - and memorably captured - in the review article on 'Shelley' in his repetition (even more strongly marked) of the dictum describing the poet as an 'ineffectual angel'. In this instance, there is even less argument to support the claim - that is, as regards *the poet* - and so one wonders why, other than to elide the poet and person, or to indulge a fondness for self-quotation, Arnold felt the need to tag it on at the very end of the essay. The effect is striking, even memorable, and yet incongruous, since one expects to find a plausible account that might explain an emphatically compromising view that now embraces Shelley's life as well.⁵⁶ Reference to the earlier essay on Byron, by way of quotation marks, is

52. Brooke, *Inaugural Address*, p. 18, 170.

53. For commentary on Shelley's influence on Chartism, see, e.g., Bouthaina Shaaban 'Shelley in the Chartist Press', *Keats Shelley Memorial Bulletin*, 34 (1983), 41-60.

54. Brooke, *Inaugural Address*, p. 18.

55. See Preface to *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, p. vi: 'In Shelley's case, [Arnold] is known to have intended to write something more; not, indeed, to alter or to qualify what he said, but to say something else which he thought also true, and which needed saying'. The author of the Preface is Arnold's friend, Lord Coleridge (given as 'C'). In planning a Second Series of 'Essays in Criticism', Arnold mentions to George Lillie Craik (of Macmillan) the inclusion of 'two Shelley articles and one or two more literary articles which I hope to produce this year' (20 January 1888), (R. H. Super, ed. *Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold* 1977: XI, 503). It is fair to assume, with Super, that the second article would have focused on Shelley's poetry (p. 504).

56. As a contemporary reviewer remarked, the essay 'closes where, could but so much be written, it should have begun' (Anderson, Review of *Essays in Criticism*, p. 150, col. 299).

'THE INEFFECTUAL ANGEL'

unhelpful, as there is no footnote comment, or any indication of the extent of earlier discussion that might bear out Arnold's claim.

Unlike the other essays on poets, which focus on their writings, that on 'Shelley' assesses his life, in response to Dowden's official biography of Shelley (the first account of its kind), which emerged in two volumes in 1886.⁵⁷ The indissoluble connection between life and poet emerges only at the end of the essay when Arnold rephrases his earlier dictum:

The Shelley of actual life is a vision of beauty and radiance, indeed, but availing nothing, effecting nothing. *And in poetry, no less than in life* [my italics], he is 'a beautiful *and ineffectual* angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain'.⁵⁸

What is striking, and perhaps insufficiently recognized, is how inclusive and absolute Arnold is here, underlined by the reiterated and unqualified 'nothing' and the equally emphatic 'no less than' which follows. His dismissal of Shelley is therefore intensified. Shelley is no exception as regards vocabulary as a totalizing discourse is manifest throughout the collection of essays, reflecting Arnold's leisurely assumption of eminence as critic.⁵⁹ In the present instance, Arnold insists that Shelley's idealism embraces everything about him. His paradisaic dreams which, it would appear, he inhabits (as might a child) are splendid but are entirely illusionary, they do not tally with the world and, more devastatingly, have no effect on the world. This says much. A poet might be unavailing (this might even be said of several philosophers, reformers, or prophets on the stage of world history) but to dissolve Shelley's life into the formula is, on surface at least, to reduce all his activities and relationships to nothing, and this on account of his 'angelic' nature. One might hardly claim this of the least distinguished person. Arnold attempts to sweep his reader into agreement by at once seeming to praise delightfully, and then (with the limiting 'but') to leave that praise stranded, empty, defeated. The glissando effect of the conjoining 'And' makes the alignment of poetry and life seamless, and it makes the poet Shelley the embodiment of his empty vision ('beautiful' harking back to 'vision of beauty'). The studied, epideictic phrasing is aimed at having a riveting effect, especially as these are the very last words of the essay. The careful timing, the sudden yoking together of the person and the poet, and the admixture of apparently genuine admiration and actual denigration all suggest Arnold's design to strike home with maximum impact, and to avoid any trace of bitter-sweetness, of suppressed longing for the attractive, but unattainable, ideal.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, paradoxically, Arnold accepts the idealization of those he would implicitly contest, the Shelleyans whose adulation drew strength from legend and the cult-like protectiveness of Lady Shelley. He grants and affirms that the person Shelley - not just the *poet* - is 'a beautiful [...] angel' (their view, one assumes, with

⁵⁷ Medwin and Hogg's 'Lives' (1847, 1858) benefit from personal acquaintance with the poet, but suffer from inaccuracy or incompleteness.

⁵⁸ Arnold, *Second Series*, pp. 251-22.

⁵⁹ Arnold repeatedly categorizes authors in terms of 'greatness', indicating an indefinable supremacy. Shelley belongs to a lower rank, even as he too manifests qualities of 'greatness'.

⁶⁰ In part, Arnold may have been deliberately undercutting or defusing the hyperbolic language of Shelleyans, such as Swinburne and Todhunter, who used the angel image admiringly.

ALAN WEINBERG

Dowden possibly as their latest representative), even though that viewpoint must not, of course, be taken literally. This serves Arnold's rhetorical purpose well enough, but it also undermines it, and it is strange that succeeding generations of readers have not seen this. By excessively admiring and yet finding irreparable fault with an 'incurably' otherworldly Shelley, Arnold arrived at an impossible conception of Shelley of his own making built up out of a received myth (the 'angelic' Shelley). Arnold's persistent Manicheism results in a schizoid Shelley, one who at the last (to cover himself, perhaps) Arnold himself calls 'partly insane'.⁶¹ In effect, Shelley is completely 'summed up', defined 'out of existence', all the while mirroring back the split embedded in the critic's reifying vocabulary. Ironically, Arnold's own assessment is 'insubstantial', a rationalization presenting a dislocated spirit rather than integrated living subject.⁶² Modern readers are disinclined to transubstantiate him, since otherwise there would be no 'real' basis for an accurate estimation of Shelley's character and worth. In short, the angelic Shelley is an embarrassment, and authoritative biographies of him, in particular those by Newman Ivey White,⁶³ Richard Holmes,⁶⁴ and James Bieri⁶⁵ are at pains to present a fallible flesh and blood figure of considerable dexterity, one who could be both idealistic and sceptical, theoretical and pragmatic, assertive and submissive in equal measure, as the case may be, and whose sense of the reality principle - even in the most Utopian moments of *Queen Mab*, *Laon and Cythna*, or *Prometheus Unbound*, or when personally swept up by enthusiasm for an immediate cause - was never too far in abeyance.⁶⁶

That Arnold was bent on preserving the image of the angelic Shelley, though at great cost to the poet himself - that he wished to present a schizoid Shelley who was cast adrift in a beautiful world of his own making - is reflected in his complex response to Dowden's biography. Arnold's major reservation is that Dowden was too determined to present Shelley in a simplistically positive light (the good angel), and fell to adulation. Arnold found this irritating and assumed it would have a similar effect on others:

Professor Dowden holds a brief for Shelley; he pleads for Shelley as an advocate pleads for his client, and this strain of pleading, united with an attitude of adoration which in Mrs. Shelley had its charm, but which Professor Dowden was not bound to adopt from her, is unserviceable to Shelley, nay, injurious to him, because it inevitably begets, in many readers of the story which Professor Dowden has to tell, impatience and revolt.⁶⁷

61. 'The man Shelley, in very truth, is not entirely sane, and Shelley's poetry is not entirely sane either (*Second Series*, p. 251).

62. Even the more measured treatment of the other authors in the collection of essays - Milton, Gray, Wordsworth, Keats, Tolstoy, and Amiens - suffers from splitting the subject into enduring or transient (expendable) achievement. This exclusivity was widely adopted by the New Critics.

63. *Shelley*, 2 vols (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1940, rpt. 1972).

64. *Shelley: The Pursuit* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974).

65. *Percy Bysshe Shelley A Biography: Youth's Unextinguished Fire 1792-1816* [vol. 1]; *Exile of Unfulfilled Renown 1816-1822*. [vol. 2] (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004; 2005).

66. For a noteworthy treatment of Shelley's dialectical personality, see Stuart M. Sperry, 'Optimism and Pessimism: the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul', in *The Most Unfailing Herald*, ed. by Alan M. Weinberg and Romaine Hill (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 1996), pp. 82-93.

67. *Second Series*, p. 208.

'THE INEFFECTUAL ANGEL'

Linked to this is Dowden's tendency to poeticize Shelley's life, instead of 'tell[ing] his story in a plain way', with the result that 'the sentiment runs over.⁶⁸ Both these criticisms are not without justification. Newman Ivey White, for example, writes that '[Dowden's] treatment of Shelley is apologetically and sentimentally protective'. Dowden kept his independence from Lady Shelley, despite being under some pressure to accord with her partisanship (she gave him access to original documents), but in White's view 'he could not be independent of the dominant tendency of the age,⁶⁹ and thus to a degree presents a sanitized Shelley, especially as regards the separation from Harriet Westbrook and her subsequent suicide.⁷⁰ Nevertheless Dowden does not, as a rule, indulge in glowing praise of his subject. Rather he casts over his account a romantic film that subtly elevates Shelley even as he is unable to appreciate Shelley's ideas.⁷¹ 'Adoration' may therefore be too harsh, while 'championing' which Arnold later uses may be nearer the mark. Yet, notwithstanding his stringent criticism, Arnold praises Dowden for presenting the facts 'so fairly and fully' that his 'pleadings for Shelley [...] produce no obscuring of the truth'.⁷² While this is in itself arguable (considering White's critical view above), Dowden is at pains to present all the facts about Shelley available to him, pleasant or unpleasant. Arnold's ambivalence with regard to Dowden's presentation allows him, therefore, to expose what he regards as 'ridiculous and odious' in Shelley, contrary to what Dowden might like us to believe. This in itself is not a little perverse, since Arnold largely ignores Shelley's maturer years and highlights just a few events in Shelley's life, most particularly Shelley's treatment of Harriet Westbrook which he finds deplorable, in reaction to Dowden's over-zealous justifications.

Having expressed his thorough disgust with what he calls Shelley's 'irregular relations' (which clearly tried Arnold's Victorian scruples to the limit), and lamenting the fact that Dowden had upset the received notion of Shelley's purity of soul (almost as if the biographer were to blame for spoiling the image), Arnold, by sleight of hand as it were, insists that the Shelley he most admires remains intact:

His misconduct to Harriet, his want of humour, his self-deception, are fully brought before us for the first time by Professor Dowden's book. Good morals and good criticism alike forbid that when all this is laid bare to us we should deny, or hide, or extenuate it. Nevertheless I go back after all to what I said at the beginning; still our ideal Shelley, the angelic Shelley subsists.⁷³

68. *Second Series*, pp. 210, 209.

69. White, *Shelley*, II, 417.

70. Dowden was the first to give a detailed factual account of the separation.

71. 'To him, Shelley was great and good not because of, but in spite of, his major beliefs' (White, *Shelley*, II, 417). Salt earlier noted and deplored this contradiction. Shelley's poetic sensibility is idealized and at the same time robbed of its motive force (*Poet and Pioneer*, p. 4.) It is notable that Arnold does not make this distinction.

72. *Second Series*, p. 211.

73. *Second Series*, p. 244. For Arnold, Shelley was too serious by far, Chaucer not serious enough. Shelley's playfulness, his satirical vein, as well as his urbane or vitriolic wit, as evidenced for example in *Letter to Maria Gisborne*, 'Julian and Maddalo', 'The Witch of Atlas', 'The Mask of Anarchy', 'Peter Bell the Third', or *Swellfoot the Tyrant* pass Arnold by, as they did later critics probably indebted to Arnold's misconception. See Timothy Webb, 'Shelley and the Ambivalence of Laughter', in *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Essays and Studies*, ed. by Kelvin Everest (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992), pp. 43-62.

ALAN WEINBERG

This comment - especially the use of the word 'subsists' - shows how readily Arnold was able to draw on a preconception that was merely implied by Dowden, not embellished by him. In fact Arnold adds: '... the data for this Shelley we had and knew long ago' as if the accounts of earlier biographers (who, aside from Mary Shelley, did not have access to many original documents, were not in Shelley's company for any length of time, and sometimes lacked fidelity) could be uncritically relied upon. The incidents that Arnold cites (drawn now from Dowden's biography), reflect Shelley's nobility of mind, a virtue to which the classical Arnold could warm. But they also indicate effective action as well as strength of character (not ineffectuality): Shelley, "'the friend of the unfriended poor'" which, for Arnold, 'sums up truly and perfectly this most attractive side of him', his 'forbearance to Godwin', his 'tact' 'as quick and sharp [...] as the most practised man of the world', his "'perfect gentleness of breeding and freedom from everything artificial'", to quote Captain Kennedy who, Arnold indicates, saw Shelley in 1813.⁷⁴ This sample of admirable qualities has been related often enough in biographical accounts. However, it is only by a leap of faith that one might be led on their account to describe Shelley as an 'angel', at the same time maintaining (as Arnold does) that he is self-deceived and morally degraded.

Thus we return to Arnold's paradoxical idealization of Shelley and general agreement with popular opinion about him. The best in Shelley (appreciated over many years) somehow survives the worst, and it does so unscathed. Regretting that he has no space to speak of Shelley's poetry,⁷⁵ Arnold in concluding his essay nevertheless points to the poetry as being, for many readers, the more notable manifestation of the 'angel'. This association allows him to yoke together life and poet in his final sally, one which manages to keep the angel intact and at the same time to demolish its worth. Shelley is great and good, he is saying, but it is of no use to anyone. Perhaps - one is inclined to reflect - it is the angel in him that also made him so bad. As Timothy Morton rightly points out, 'Matthew Arnold damned [Shelley] with faint praise: to be "beautiful" and "ineffectual" at once is a tough spot for an activist'.⁷⁶ It does seem as though Arnold wished to have his cake and eat it. His contradictory argument, his strange dependence on inflated myth, his absolutist terms, his failure to take serious account of informed contemporary opinion and scholarship, and inattentive reading of Shelley's poetry and prose provide, in sum, a shaky foundation for any critical analysis. Rather than discredit Arnold's assessment of Shelley as having failed to pass the test of inner coherence and good judgement, readers have tended to receive the final judgement at face value, failing to contextualize it and then weigh it in the balance. When we return to what Arnold actually wrote, we find that his hypercritical apothegm paradoxically endorses the angelic myth, and is therefore self-defeating, in the light of more discerning views of Shelley.

74. *Second Series*, pp. 244, 245, 247, 248, 251.

75. An admission that can only have defeated expectation. As the reviewer Melville B. Anderson remarked:

... if there was one thing needful in criticism, that thing was a patient, searching, lucid study of SHELLEY such as MATTHEW ARNOLD alone could have given us. So when, some three months before his death, the *Nineteenth Century* announced the long-desired essay, the disappointment was great when it turned out merely to be a review of DOWDEN'S biography of the poet. (*Review of Essays in Criticism*, p. 150, col. 299).

76. *The Cambridge Companion to Shelley*, p. 7