SELECTIVE AFFINITIES AND POETIC APPROPRIATION:
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY AND WILLEM KLOOS

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I examine the reception and appropriation of Percy Bysshe Shelley's works in the Low Countries during the period 1880-1940. This period roughly coincides with the writing career of Willem Kloos (1859-1938), the Dutch poet-critic who monopolised his admiration for Shelley and proclaimed himself to be his only poetical heir. I demonstrate how Kloos's own poetics and political beliefs made him misrepresent and manipulate key facts in Shelley's life and literary output during his never-ending promotion of the artistic, as well as spiritual, bond between himself and the English writer. More particularly, Kloos showed great determination in advancing Shelley's works as a comprehensive endorsement of his own artistic tenets. However, Kloos was not the only Shelley devotee and when the 'school' of De Beweging began to claim Shelley for themselves, Kloos, in his periodical De Nieuwe Gids, attacked what he considered to be their illegitimate annexation attempts. This is most noticeable, I argue, in the translation battle between the two literary camps: Willem Kloos, Karel Herman de Raaf (1871-1948), and Hein Boeken (1861-1933) on the one hand, and Albert Verwey (1865-1937), Alex(ander) Gutteling (1884-1910), and Pieter Nicolaas van Eyck (1887-1954) on the other.

The first chapter shows Kloos's interpretation of Shelley's work to be firmly rooted in high-Victorian scholarship. The starting-point for this contextualisation is a number of unpublished notes which Kloos made in his early twenties and which have never been examined before. The second chapter demonstrates how a number of dissident voices in the Netherlands took issue with Kloos's depoliticisation which glossed over an integral part of Shelley's art. The third and fourth chapters are devoted to Alastor and Prometheus Unbound respectively, and interpret the highly critical and partisan reviews triggered by the rivalling translations of each camp. The fifth chapter examines a series of twelve sonnets in which Kloos describes a visitation of Shelley's ghost confirming the Dutch poet's self-proclaimed status as Holland's principal bard. The ideological assumptions underlying the sonnet cycle are typical of Kloos's appropriation tactics. The final chapter deals with Shelley's drama The Cenci, De Raaf's translation of it, and the first performance in the Low Countries, which has been completely ignored so far by Shelley specialists.
Each nation strung for him her own sweet lyre,
And every poet smiled upon his love.

JOHN ALFRED LANGFORD
'Shelley' (stanza 15, ll. 1-2)

O, Percy Bysshe Shelley, langvergane, nooit gezien,
Noch ooit toen nog gelezen, 'k zag u, toen 'k als lange schrale
Gelaten jonge mijnraar liep een raam langs: zonder falen
Herwist 'k u als 't Zielsdiepste van al 't vroegere geschiën.

Ik leefde als mensch in veel gedaanten: onbewust steeds vliën
Bleef 'k in en buiten mij 't lege Eendre, want bij dieper dalen
'k Doorvoel 't Eene Eeuwge wat bezielt me. Een nooit verbrokne stalen
Voeler en denker blijf ik, en schoon 'k, Percy, niet u dien,

Van jongen man toch voel ik, dat ge óók streng naar 't ideale
Durend en sterk gestreefd hebt, juist als ik, in 't vlakke, vale
Maar mooie Holland, kalm steeds deed. Nooit valsichtig of meskien

Werkte ik diep ziende, lijk ook thans: hartstochtlijk-wijd bepalen
Blijf 'k aller Dichtren Diepte en leef dies als gedwee-fatale
Dienaar en heerscher hoog nog, naar wien velen avrechtsch rïên.

WILLEM KLOOS
'Binnengedachten' mxv
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Abbreviations


Introduction

In 1944, more than one hundred and fifty years after Percy Bysshe Shelley’s birth, J. Keunen published the first Dutch Shelley biography to appear in book form. To this date, it remains the only one and, by default, occupies a special position. Facing the title page is a black-and-white reproduction of a Shelley portrait, or rather of what the reader is expected to recognize as such. In reality, the painting shows the likeness of Leigh Hunt, Shelley’s close personal friend and fellow-poet. In 1980, Johan Jansen issued his Onkruid Vergaat Niet, a collection of ‘vier kringloopgedichten van Shelley in het engels [sic]’ accompanied by ‘de vrije nederlandse [sic] vertaling’ and ‘illustraties in vierkleuren van Adriana Goedhart’.

The blurb further boasts the book’s ‘zorgvuldige vormgeving’ which makes it ‘een kunstzinnige belevenis’. These words are printed next to a black-and-white reproduction of a Shelley portrait, or rather of what the reader is expected to recognize as such. This time, Lord Byron’s features look out from the page.

In many respects, Shelley proved an elusive figure for writers in the Netherlands. This is not to say that Shelley’s works were ignored by Dutch critics. In his doctoral dissertation, published in 1926, the South-African scholar G. Dekker has shown convincingly that there was in fact a great deal of interest in Shelley’s character and writings in the Netherlands from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards.

Dekker managed to trace an impressive number of references to the English poet, albeit that many of these paint a distorted or incomplete picture, hence my use of the phrase ‘elusive figure’ above. When Dekker came to discuss the writers of the so-called ‘Eighties Movements’, he mainly focused on Shelleyan echoes in the poetry of Willem Kloos, Albert Verwey, Frederik van Eden, and Herman

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1 J. Keunen, P. B. Shelley: Bij de honderd vijftigste verjaring van zijn geboorte 1792-1942, Keurreeks No. 31 (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1942).
Gorter. Such a procedure was not one I wished to repeat in the present study. What I wanted to do instead was not only to extend the field of research by including essayistic works and translations, but also to find the answer to the question which, for Dekker, was sometimes as elusive as Shelley had been for the critics he mentions in his overview: why did the English Romantic feature so prominently in the works of, say, Willem Kloos? His claim that there was a certain affinity between Shelley and the writers of Eighties Movement remains valid by all accounts, but it is not the whole answer. By concentrating on the poetry, Dekker tends to lose sight of the larger framework and especially of the dialectic relationship that exists between these echoes of and references to Shelley. I have tried to lay bare and examine critically the ideological and poetological context of this attraction to all things Shelleyan during this period, and especially during the first two and a half decades of the twentieth century. In order to do so, it was crucial to take into account the partisan culture and intense rivalry that existed between what is usually referred to as the circle around Kloos (De Nieuwe Gids) and that around Verwey (De Beweging). Many minor figures, not included in Dekker’s overview, also largely contributed to the Shelley debate in that their literary activities (notably Shelley translations) very often elicited responses, be it approbation, reproach, or telltale indifference, from the more established writers. Here they have been given their proper place.

Following on from the main research question above, I will attempt to formulate answers to a number of specific, closely related sub-questions. The most important of these are: through which channels was Shelley introduced in the Netherlands; in which context did the Shelley references occur; how were these references perceived and understood by the contemporary reader; how are we to interpret the sudden boom of Dutch Shelley translations starting in the first decade of the twentieth century; which works by Shelley attracted the most attention and why; and what did Shelley come to represent exactly for the Dutch writers involved?

For one poet-critic, Shelley was particularly important. In the literature, the connection between Willem Kloos (1859-1938) and Shelley is often made, though the
problematic nature of the link is not always appreciated. Even if some critics show an awareness of the complexities of the issue, they appear to remain blind to the underlying motives of Kloos’s almost obsessive fascination for the English poet. I will argue that Kloos’s interest in Shelley went beyond mere literary concerns. Since his release from the asylum after his serious mental collapse in the 1890s, it was Kloos’s never-ending ambition to carve out a niche for himself as Holland’s most knowledgeable and respectable man of letters. His Shelley worship proved essential in the reinvention of himself after his iconoclastic years as young literary rebel, even if, in the process, Shelley had to undergo a radical reinvention too. For Kloos, it was the political purport of Shelley’s oeuvre in particular which most eluded him. In some instances, we may even speak of a conscious effort on his part to rewrite literary history: personal elusion then turns into wilful and public delusion of his readership.

Kloos’s physical collapse and psycho-pathological crises which so clearly marked the disintegration of the Eighties Movement as a collective force in the 1890s, have led to an equally conspicuous fault line in Kloosian scholarship. Many burden Willem Kloos with having outlived himself for almost half a century. As a consequence, a wealth of material is left unexplored in the numerous issues of De Nieuwe Gids published after the demise of the so-called ‘Eerste Reeks’ in 1894. Indeed, the periodical ran for a further fifty years, even if the number of individual subscribers at the end did not reach this figure by half. Yet these later issues, which continued to provide Kloos with a platform for his (increasingly) idiosyncratic outpourings, cannot be ignored if we want to gain a fuller understanding of one of Holland’s most intriguing literary figures. A document humain recording the descent of the artist as a young man into conformist complacency and sterile self-absorption, De Nieuwe Gids of the twentieth century is almost unique in its tragic eloquence. Even if Kloos, at that

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4 The critic most conscious of the marked difference between Shelley’s and Kloos’s poetics seems to be J.C. Brandt Corstius, Het Poëtisch Programma van Tachtig: Een Vergelijkingen Studie, Utrechtse Publikaties voor Algemene Literatuurwetenschap (Amsterdam: Athenaeum, Polak & Van Gennep, 1968).

5 The periodical, founded in 1885 ceased to exist in 1943. In September 1937, the publishing firm Luctor et Emergo sent a confidential letter to P.H. Ritter, informing him that the number of individuals with a subscription of De Nieuwe Gids was as low as 18; the periodical was also sent to 120 booksellers. See Jan J. van Herpen, ed., De Oude Heer in Den Haag: De Briefwisseling Dr. P.H.
stage, was only a shadow of his former self, much of what he wrote warrants closer attention, if not for its critical or literary merit, then for the great tenacity with which he tried to realise his vision.

Apart from the published work, there is also a vast archive of manuscript material waiting to be made public and analysed. Compared to his contemporaries Lodewijk van Deyssel, Albert Verwey, Herman Gorter, and Frederik van Eeden, Willem Kloos has not been served particularly well by literary scholars. Though Garmt Stuiveling and G.H. 's-Gravesande have brought important Kloos letters into print, no systematic edition is yet available. Moreover, only five years ago did the first properly edited and annotated edition of Kloos's *Verzen* of 1894 roll off the press. Worse still, not even all of the critical prose written during what is commonly believed to be the pinnacle of Kloos’s career has been disclosed. I have reproduced in a separate appendix some of the early manuscript material that deals specifically with Shelley. Many letters exchanged between Kloos and his correspondents (including K.H. de Raaf, David Spanjaard, and Jacob Reyneke van Stuwe), and dating from the early 1880s up to the 1930s, are also reproduced and examined here for the first time.

The attacks on the quality of Kloos’s literary production post-1894 and on his inflated sense of self-importance are by no means a recent phenomenon. The process started within Kloos’s own lifetime, and even on the most joyful occasions, including the conferment of an Honorary Doctorate in 1935, the emphasis was put exclusively on the poet’s youthful achievements. Kloos’s position as literary helmsman for twentieth-century Dutch literature
was thus far from secure. Such was the nature of the charges that Jeanne Kloos-Reyneke van Stuwe felt compelled to take up arms against those she saw as conspiring to besmear her husband’s reputation. In her extraordinarily defiant *De Waarheid*, she ended her defence with the following plea:

> Een dringende bede wil ik tot het publiek richten: Neem persoonlijk kennis van de boeken over Kloos, en vorm U een zelfstandig oordeel. De boeken spreken zelf met een duidelijker stem, dan het mij mogelijk is. In Godsnaam, overtuig U en lees zelf, zelf, zelf de boeken.  

I have endeavoured to take into account not only the books on Kloos but also the books owned by him. Shelley understood very well that as much as writers are a product of their age, they are also shaped by their reading. In his preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, for instance, he acknowledges that it ‘is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself, that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects’ (*SPP*, p. 134). As Kloos’s Shelley library has been preserved more or less intact, it is possible to approach some of his writings from a hitherto unfamiliar but highly revealing angle. Indeed, with their marginal annotations, these volumes afford a privileged glimpse into the nature and extent of the poet’s reading. More importantly, looking at the way in which he assimilated this material in his own Shelley pieces uncovers some of the censoring that happened between the reading and writing stages. It also allows us to filter out Kloos’s voice proper from what often appears to be a typically Victorian discourse of Shelley scholarship in his essays. Appendix 2 consists of a reconstruction of the Shelleyana collection which became a crucial tool in the self-promotion of one of Holland’s best known poet-critics.

A case study of Kloos’s struggles to achieve critical recognition, this thesis focuses on the discourse used when writers consider the fundamental question of what constitutes good poetry. This immediately raises another key question: who is entitled — or allowed —

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to make judgements in the debate and who validates them? It is not sufficient to discuss the respective contribution of, for instance, 'ethics' and 'aesthetics' to the literary excellence of a piece of poetry (something of an obsession for Kloos). We must also recognise the dynamics of bestowing and stripping away literary authority that underpin any pronouncements on the issue. Another situation in which the partiality of reading can manifest itself with such potency is difficult to imagine. It is self-evident that discussions about quality, be it artistic or other, cannot happen without concrete points of reference, a set of parameters that enable comparison to take place. In the case of literature, these points of reference are, of course, the works of particular writers that are taken to represent particular degrees of literary merit. The works in question may be poetry or prose, they may be canonical or marginal, easily accessible or esoteric, traditional or avant-garde, written in a foreign language or read in translation. The final result, therefore, may consist of a corpus of texts that seems at first disparate, but that gradually, because of their conjoint 'application' in a specific debate, will come to be seen as interdependent and mutually inclusive. Works written decades ago by a deceased poet can thus suddenly appear to have great relevance for a modern writer in another country, writing in another language and in another literary tradition. This dissertation will furnish ample proof that it is not so much the texts in themselves as the context that makes this kind of appropriation possible.

Another objective of this study is to examine how it is possible to steer the application of texts mentioned above and create a climate conducive to their 'legitimate' consumption. Texts imported from an era and culture alien to the culture that receives them must become infused with a new set of values indigenous to that host culture so that assimilation may take place. Yet, the displacement can only be successful if people recognise the authority of both the appropriated and the appropriator. For the latter, then, the task to undertake is threefold: ensure that the eminence of the writer you rely on is (widely) acknowledged, provide sufficient reasons why you advance your chosen author as the model to aspire to, and convince others of your own abilities to discern artistic quality. As Kloos knew, this is not a one-way process. If you seek authority you also have the power to grant or refuse it to the participants in the debate. Whom you exclude is at least as important as whom you admit in the literary arena. Centring on one particular episode in Dutch literature, I will demonstrate how, like all value judgements, defining good poetry is an exercise in
empowerment; it is a battle for supremacy fought with the weapons of reference and citation, translation and counter-translation, silence and suppression, review and rebuttal.

As far as the main textual body of this study is concerned, I have grouped the extensive amount of material around specific themes or particular literary compositions. This allowed for a diachronic analysis necessary to make Kloos's change (or lack of it) in his attitude towards certain aspects of Shelley's works as clear as possible. Inconsistencies in opinion as well as persistent patterns can thus be juxtaposed and interpreted. They will demonstrate how Kloos's increasing search for a polite respectability runs parallel with the depoliticisation process to which he subjected the Romantic poet. Chapters One and Two provide the indispensable framework in which the more detailed analyses of this process can become fully effective: they form the backdrop against which the (inter)action between text, reader, translator, and commentator is allowed to unwind as a coherent chain of events. However, the specific context and circumstances in which Kloos published his pieces are not ignored. As such, it will soon become clear that his Shelley contributions hardly ever appeared in isolation: they were either the immediate response to translations and other articles, or were part of a larger scheme to advance a particular (revisionist) agenda.

Part of this agenda, and a recurring feature in Kloos's oeuvre, is his relentless dismissal of other authors showing a more than cursory interest in the character and writings of the English Romantic. Not alone did he continually claim to have introduced Shelley in the Netherlands — a claim which does not hold when set against the findings of Dekker's study — but in the face of dissidence by his contemporaries, Kloos strove to monopolise his admiration by incapacitating his rivals. This he did through vitriolic attacks. Seemingly about Shelley, these critiques very often turn out to be ultimate acts of self-preservation. This becomes especially manifest in Kloos's reviews of (rivaling) Shelley translations. His pronouncements about the textual integrity of the original and the translation, can often be read as a vindication of the integrity of Shelley's, and indeed his own, character and artistic make-up. Kloos literally claimed that the text of Shelley's poems was holy writ so that they could be approached by the worthiest of poets only. Hence, source text and target text become pretexts for aggressive gestures of self-affirmation. The chapters on Alastor and Prometheus Unbound will provide abundant proof of this particular strategy.
Incongruous as it may sound, the fact that certain aspects of Shelley's poethood remained elusive for Kloos did not prevent him from keeping a firm grasp on his idol’s public persona. One of the most impressive literary constructs Kloos ever engineered — a matchless Shelley ‘translation’ — was designed to do just that. As I have already suggested, translations played a crucial role in the Shelley debate between the rivalling factions on the Dutch literary scene. Apart from a fragmentary rendition of ‘Mont Blanc’ begun and abandoned as a twenty-five-year old, Kloos failed to contribute to the boom in Dutch Shelley translations between 1904 and 1922. Whatever the reasons for this apparent failure, and linguistic insecurity is certainly one of them, Chapter Five demonstrates how Kloos managed to circumvent the usual restrictions imposed by any source text and proffer with confidence his ultimate Shelley translation to the Dutch reader.

Shelley translations were not always enjoyed — or loathed — in the privacy of the reading room. Chapter Six deals with Shelley’s play The Cenci, the controversial work which Kloos referred to in his equally controversial critical debut of 1879. In 1929, it was put on the Antwerp stage and thereby brought into a very public domain that proved impossible to regulate in Shelley’s favour. Kloos’s crafty sanitisation process in reverse, the agitated response to the play’s Dutch premiere is remarkably effective in exposing the political subtext of some of Kloos’s delusive pronouncements on Shelley.

I have mentioned Kloos’s penchant for manipulating the truth. That Kloos was a shrewd mythomaniac is now a well-established fact. However, this has led more than once to a vilification by later critics, a reaction which is distinctly unhelpful if we want to arrive at an informed appreciation of a very complex personality. His was a life and a vocation which are sure to evoke, as they have done in the past, a passionate response from the reader. In a review of ‘s-Gravesande seminal publication in 1955 (and the 1960 supplement) about the history of De Nieuwe Gids which exposed many of Kloos’s machinations, W.J.M.A. Asselbergs, better known under his pen-name Anton van Duinkerken, maintained:

De figuur van Kloos moge gehavend te voorschijn komen uit het boek: toch zal iedere lezer door deze figuur, zoals hij hier geschilderd is, worden gefascineerd. Wij kennen de

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10 Kloos’s partial ‘Mont Blanc’ translation is reproduced in modern spelling in WKJL, pp. 271-74. See Appendix 3 for a bibliographical overview of Dutch Shelley translations.
The present study is an attempt to get closer to ‘de ware Kloos’ by scrutinising one of these dominant forces which steered his extraordinary career, i.e. his interest in and identification with Percy Bysshe Shelley. True enough, this passion could bring out the worst in him, and the following pages too will reveal some of Kloos’s less pleasant character traits. Yet I hope that these same pages, like ’s-Gravesande’s before, will go some way towards explaining why this deeply flawed character still holds such power to fascinate.

With its examination of the literary climate and the critical exchange between a whole range of writers who were active in the Netherlands during the period 1880-1930, this thesis aims to make a significant contribution to Dutch Studies. Introducing and analysing material which has never been studied before, I argue for the modification and reassessment of a number of perceived notions about some of the most canonical writers in modern Dutch literature. At the same time, by focusing on the channels through which Shelley entered into this literature, my analysis provides a clearer picture of the specific mechanics involved in the transfer of literary works from one culture into another.

When it comes to Romantic Studies and the afterlife of English Romantic texts in other languages, the Low Countries have been ignored by modern Anglo-American scholars. As the case of the De Cenci performance in Antwerp will attest, this neglect has resulted in too simplistic a view about Shelley’s posthumous reputation on the Continent. The present study offers a corrective to this limited perception. Likewise, it has not been sufficiently appreciated how instrumental English literary societies have been in the promotion of English writers abroad, and in particular in the Netherlands. Victorian literary scholarship, of which the Shelley Society was a typical exponent, has itself been the subject of critical appraisal, but no-one has investigated yet the osmosis of certain Victorian conceptions into Dutch (Shelley) criticism. This thesis, therefore, is also relevant to the domain of comparative literary studies.

Ultimately, the following chapters are an investigation into how literary reputations are constructed. On a practical level, they analyse how a writer, forced by necessity, may

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come to rely on the status of another writer in order to consolidate his own literary persona. In its most extreme manifestation, this dependence is shown to develop into a parasitical relationship in which the aggressor has taken complete control over the 'host' who sustains him. It is these radical dynamics of literary appropriation which lie at the heart of my analysis. Various other mechanisms involved in the making and breaking of reputations are also explored. The polemical role of translations is a special instance in point. In what follows, I illustrate how translations can turn into successful acts of arrogation and self-promotion as translators annex the original text by stamping their own set of poetics on it. The end result of such an assimilation is that, at times, aesthetic considerations become of subordinate importance. This is certainly true for what can only be described as a real battle of artistic and poetological territoriality raging in the Netherlands in the first quarter of the twentieth century.12

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12 In this thesis, I will quote regularly from unpublished documents that are part of the Willem Kloos Collections and the K.H. de Raaf Collections held at the Literary Museum and Documentation Centre in The Hague. Both Collections will be referred to by their signature numbers: K533 for material from the Kloos archives, and R105 B1 for letters preserved in the De Raaf Collections.
Chapter One: Zastrozzi, Queen Mab, Laon & Cythna, and the political pamphlets

1. Introduction

In 1870, the influential man of letters William Michael Rossetti published his Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley: Edited with a Critical Memoir, and saw it immediately welcomed as an important contribution to Shelleyan scholarship. Its success was largely due to the ‘Memoir’, which was presented and perceived as one of the first truly reliable Shelley biographies. When a second slightly revised edition was issued separately in 1886, Rossetti reminded his readers in the preface that his study was written at a time ‘when the materials for constructing a Life of Shelley were sparse, slender and confused, in no small degree’ (Rossetti, p. i). A bibliographical list of ‘Authorities’ at the back of the volume makes it possible to verify this far from exaggerated claim. To emphasise even further the significance of his labours, Rossetti appended a final paragraph to the list. It contains the following remark:

I should have felt any slurring-over of dubious or censurable particulars to be so much derogation from my reverence for Shelley. The meaning of slurring-over (apart from motives of obligation and delicacy) is unmistakeable [sic]: it must imply that the person who adopts that course feels a little ashamed of his hero, and, to justify his professed admiration in the eyes of others, presents that hero to them as something slightly other than he really was (Rossetti, pp. 153-54).

It is not difficult to notice how the apparent frankness of this statement does not completely manage to mask the author’s underlying discomfort and anxiety. Whilst advancing his own broad-mindedness as the only legitimate approach to Shelley’s character and works, Rossetti is inevitably forced to concede the existence of ‘dubious or censurable particulars’ which are very much capable of putting Shelley admirers to

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1 For Kloos’s own copy of the first edition, see Appendix 2, item 32.
shame. The presence of this passage in a work purporting to paint an honest portrait of the poet without brushing out some less attractive details suggests that the issue of Shelley’s respectability as an artist was not an open-and-shut case. Since Shelley’s death in 1822, responses to his poetry had shifted dramatically from initial bewilderment and condemnation to swank enthusiasm. The image of Shelley as an ethereal angel was duly substituted for that of the seditious libertine. However, Shelley’s whilom reputation of political and religious radicalist was still capable of casting a long shadow over the fashionable admiration with which the Victorians approached the divine poet of ‘The Cloud’ and the ‘Ode to a Sky-Lark’. The obvious feeling of unease in Rossetti’s postscript is an unambiguous manifestation of this.

In this chapter I intend to highlight the ‘motives of obligation and delicacy’ which led late nineteenth-century critics, both in England and in the Netherlands, to ignore and misinterpret, as well as suppress and misrepresent, a number of important facts regarding the radical inclinations of their hero Shelley. The main focus of my attention will be on the Dutch poet-critic Willem Kloos. Though Kloos’s high esteem for Shelley is a well-established fact in Dutch literary history, the nature and context of his veneration have hitherto not been analysed in any real depth. I want to advance the idea that Kloos followed suit in reinterpreting Shelley not only to beatify the object of his reverence but also out of a sense of self-preservation.

In what follows, I will juxtapose Kloos’s pronouncements on Shelley’s politics with relevant statements taken from three influential works written by as many renowned Victorian scholars: John Addington Symonds’s Shelley (1878, revised 1887), Edward Dowden’s two-volume Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1886) and the aforementioned William Michael Rossetti’s A Memoir of Shelley (1870, revised 1878, newly revised 1886). These works have not been chosen at random: apart from representing the most seminal portion of Shelley scholarship at the time, it is beyond doubt that they were carefully read by Kloos and that he was thoroughly familiar with their content. To this corpus, I have added one more publication, namely Francis Thompson’s Shelley, written in 1889 but published posthumously in The Dublin Review in July 1908, and as a book

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2 See Appendix 2, items 54 and 42 for Kloos’s personal copies.
3 The publication of Dowden’s biography was deemed an important event in the Netherlands as well. A fairly long review appeared in De Nederlandsche Spectator of 1887, pp. 12-14. In her piece ‘Dowden’s Leven van Shelley’, E.J. Irving also mentions the ‘Shelleyisten’ W.M. Rossetti and Symonds (p. 13).
proper in 1909 to wide acclaim. This short critical sketch epitomises, perhaps as none other, some striking but common Victorian attitudes towards Shelley's character and work. Like the three titles mentioned above, it was also in the possession of Kloos. From this comparison, I will establish in what way Kloos's opinions were influenced by the English commentators and whether his beliefs differed from those held by his contemporaries in Britain. In other words, the English studies will serve as a reliable touchstone to determine to what extent Kloos's views on Shelley were eccentric or commonplace. By examining the similarities and anomalies in Kloos's stance, whenever and wherever they occur, I wish to lay bare both the mechanism and purpose of Kloos's reinvention of Shelley.

Before looking at Kloos's views in some detail, I will first give a brief overview of how modern-day critics assess Shelley's involvement in contemporary radical movements. Only then will it be possible to appreciate the potential idiosyncrasies of earlier interpretations by the likes of Kloos and his Victorian peers. This more general introduction will then be followed by a more detailed analysis of a number of extracts taken from Kloos's critical work. These range from a number of hitherto unpublished notes which Kloos wrote down as a young man around 1880 and which have never been studied before, to pieces composed at the very end of his writing career. As such this chapter introduces a number of recurrent themes in Kloos's Shelley critiques which will be further developed and illustrated more systematically in the subsequent chapters.

2. Aesthetic-individualism versus poetry of persuasion

The complex osmosis of radical politics into Shelley's poetry has proved to be an anvil capable of breaking many a critic's hammer. One of the more fruitful approaches to come to grips with the issue seems to be the one adopted by scholars such as Michael Scrivener and P.M.S. Dawson. When discussing the political nature of Shelley's oeuvre, they make a distinction between two axes around which his writing revolves; i.e. actuality and potentiality. There is indeed a strong tension in Shelley's work which he never fully managed to overcome. On the one hand, he found himself faced with the misery and

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4 Numerous editions soon followed. See Appendix 2, item 73.
5 See Michael Henry Scrivener, Radical Shelley: The Philosophical Anarchism and Utopian Thought of Percy Bysshe Shelley (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982) and
exploitation of a large section of society which called for immediate action through promoting parliamentary reform. On the other, he knew that the necessary changes could only be brought about by a slow and gradual shift of mentality of oppressors and oppressed alike. Inevitably, this often led to a seemingly indefinite deferral of many of his radical ideals. Hence, Shelley constantly had to negotiate between the actual feasibility of his demands to improve the quality of life for many English workers there and then, and the potential of a future utopia which would involve the whole of mankind. The latter often seemed to him as far removed as ever and from time to time a note of disheartenment can be heard in his letters commenting on the sorry state of affairs. In his poetry, he tried to combat his own frustrations at the failure of any favourable development to materialise, and often directed his vision to an era of universal bliss beyond the confines of reality around him. His poetry nevertheless always contains a hortative undercurrent, trying to infuse new ideas in the reader's mind, shape opinions, transform consciousness, and thus work towards actual change.

This is quite different from the aesthetic-individualism as embraced by Kloos. It was Kloos's conviction that a poet's only appropriate answer to his calling was to explore the splendour of his inner soul, the originality of his conceptions and the uniqueness of his experiences. The artist has as his principal duty 'de meest karakteristieke en tegelijk meest blijvende uitingen zijner Ikheid [...] te bestendigen in de muziek zijner woorden [...] tot bewondering der menschen'. From this perspective, Kloos could therefore bestow no greater complement to his favourite writer than to declare that in his rolling periods and exquisite verse, impregnated 'met de fijnere essentie van [zijn] geestelijk wezen', Shelley forged 'schoonlijnige, zuiver-aaneengesloten, gekristalliseerde stukjes [zijner] ziel'. J. C. Brandt Corstius summarises the core of Kloos's poetics in these general terms:

De eigen ziel staat in het middelpunt van zijn [Kloos'] gedachten over poëzie. Het is de rijkbegaafde dichterlijke ziel — bron van verbeeldingskracht — die vatbaar is


voor een breed scala van indrukken en die haar aandoeningen, die zich zelf, verbeeldt.
De dichter moet zijn stemmingen nauwkeurig waarnemen, in zich zelf gaan.  

With such a strong solipsistic focus, it is inevitable that the hyper-individualist poet should develop a vexed relationship with his readers who are seen as lacking his own rarefied sensitivities and highly charged emotional self: ‘Menschen, ik weet, gij voelt geen liefde en haat, / Als Ik’ and ‘Menschen, ik weet, dat gij mij nooit verstaat, / Al zeg ’k mijzelf op duizenderlei trant’. Furthermore, he earnestly believed ‘dat kunstenaars eenvoudig beter [sic] mensen zijn dan anderen “beter, zoo gij wilt: edeler of verheven”’. There is no mistaking that from the very start of his long writing career, Kloos saw poetry as ‘Eene gave van weinigen voor weinigen’ (JPG1, p. 56). Kloos’s gradually intensifying contempt for his audience is indeed a very distinctive and notorious feature of his later poetry. Another consequence of such a misanthropic attitude is that it is very hard to believe in the human potential for perfectibility. Kloos cannot share Shelley’s inherent optimism which, despite having been severely tested through prosecution and the relentless suppression of the reformist agenda by the Government in his own life-time, kindled the hope that a Golden Age may once dawn and liberate all. The tenets of his elitist poetics prompted Kloos to reject such faith in any significant socio-political progress: ‘de groote oorlog van 1914 zoowel als de daarin voorgevallen revoluties in Rusland en elders hebben niets anders vermocht als de laatste trekken bijvoegen tot [mijn] levensvoorstelling […], nl. dat al aardsch staatkundig en maatschappelijk gebeuren een verheveling moet heeten, die geen bestand heeft, en dat die eeuwige wisseling van wereldtoestanden, die op elkander blijven volgen, maar zonder dat er iets beters, wat blijven kan, bereikt wordt, altijd in-zot zal dóòrduren, zoolang als de Aarde bestaat’. It is therefore no wonder that Kloos was unable to take Shelley’s political commitment seriously and that he did not or refused to recognise the ‘activity’ and inflammatory aspects of Shelley’s writings. As Moltzer already observed in 1896,

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9 *Verzen: Definitieve Tekst*, sonnet XLIX, ll. 1-2, 5, p. 49.
Kloos’s insistence on ‘[het] Allerindividueelste’ as the prerequisite of art ‘[ontneemt] aan de literaire kunst alle karakter van “sociabiliteit”’. In contrast to Kloos’s poetics, Shelley sincerely wished to enlighten his readers and leave them richer in their human sympathies after their reading of his works. He aims at communicating to them his own feelings of compassion and fellowship, and hopes to establish new bonds, something which the exclusionist forces of a non-egalitarian society had previously rendered impossible. That is why Shelley ‘liked poetry best when it could be described as reason’s servant, rather than when it seemed to be only passion’s outlet’.

At times, Shelley is very explicit in appealing to particular sentiments and in calling for concrete actions, yet eschewing demagogic immoderation. He was quick to condemn, for instance, the violent Luddite revolts in which labourers destroyed factory machines blamed for the sharp rise in unemployment. Nevertheless, he realised that things had to change, and this rather sooner than later. In view of the mental conflict described above, it is not impossible to find Shelley wavering uneasily, even within a single poem or pamphlet, between utilitarian revolution and anarchistic, socio-cultural evolution. Shelley’s stance towards universal suffrage is a good example of how he could simultaneously endorse two different positions. In his Proposals for Putting Reform to the Vote, he maintains that ‘Abstractedly it is the right of every human being to have a share in the government’. However, the same pamphlet contains the significant modification with regard to universal suffrage: ‘its adoption, in the present unprepared state of public knowledge and feeling [would be] a measure fraught with peril’. He goes on to explain: ‘I think that none but those who register their names as paying a certain small sum in direct taxes [Shelley’s italics], ought, at present [italics mine], to send Members to Parliament’. Scrivener has succinctly summarised this conflict within Shelley’s thoughts and actions:

He is at once a philosophical rebel, like Godwin, and a millenarian, impatient to drag heaven down to earth or pull earth up to heaven. He is both an enlightened

12 H. E. Moltzer, Het kunstbegrip der Nieuwe-Gids-school, p. 28.
13 Simon Haines, Shelley’s Poetry: The Divided Self (Houdmills and London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), p. 57. Haines argues that Shelley attempted to reconcile a utilitarian view of poetry with a view ‘that poetry was forced out from the frightening passional abysses of the self’ (p. 94). In other words, Kloos’s reading of Shelley is inaccurate because it is too reductive.
rationalist, sensitive to the particulars of historical evolution, and a Dionysian anarchist, whose world-view is Manichean.\footnote{14}

It is important to keep this dichotomy in mind when dealing with Kloos’s Shelley articles. Naturally, Kloos could only respond to the forceful thrust of Shelley’s visionary imagination, and this at the expense of the poet’s utilitarian intentions. Indeed, it is for the highly personal descriptions and literariness that Kloos marvelled at Shelley’s poetry and not for its deeply humane and philanthropic appeals, or its insight into the sources and subsequent stages of oppression which subverts natural harmony. Anyone who holds the idea that a true poet must not tolerate ‘drukking boven, noch om zich’, but instead should ‘de dingen dezer wereld langs zich voorbij [laten] gaan’, albeit it ‘met bewonderenden blik’, needs must be deaf to Shelley’s summons for mutual sympathy and fellowship among all of humankind. Likewise, anyone who defines the essence of the artistic process as the act ‘[van] over alle[s] den schijn zijner eigene schoonheid [te] doen spelen’ so that the artist ‘stormt en juict, en weent en mijmert, eenzaam met zijn ziel onder de blauwe oneindigheid’ may not be the most perspicacious of readers when it concerns poetry in which altruism and social inclusiveness are the guiding moral principles (JPQ1, p. 60, \textit{italics mine}). As I will demonstrate, on the rare occasions that Kloos discusses Shelley’s concrete involvement in politics, the active participation of the English poet in the reformists’ battle is dismissed as a superficial, insignificant and short-lived phase in his early adolescent years. For Kloos the attraction of Shelley’s chiliastic dreams was to be found instead in their pictorial grandeur and the stylistic sophistication with which these were expressed. Accordingly, Shelley’s redemption as an artist was the result of a wholesome interiorisation of his ideals, or in other words, of a triumph of aesthetics over ethics.

Kloos never stopped marvelling at the infinite and near-ecstatic imagination in which such grand poems as \textit{Laon and Cythna} and \textit{Prometheus Unbound} found their conception. There can be hardly any doubt that Kloos, who stated in his preface to Jacques Perk’s poems that ‘Fantasie’ is ‘de oorzaak en het middel en het wezen van alle poëzie,’ (JPQ1, p.55) fully endorsed Shelley’s premise in his \textit{Defence of Poetry} that ‘Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be “the expression of the Imagination”\footnote{14} Michael Henry Scrivener, \textit{Radical Shelley}, p. 36.
It is questionable, however, whether Kloos would have happily repeated after Shelley that ‘the imagination’ is also ‘The great instrument of moral good’ (SPP, p. 488). From this second statement it follows that Shelley created his imaginative visions not merely to gratify an aesthetic appetite, but above all to instruct. Though Shelley was acutely aware that the utopia in his poetic tableaux may never materialise, he conceived, what he dubbed in the preface to Prometheus Unbound, his ‘beautiful idealisms of moral excellence’ as useful guidelines by which to regulate concrete, political action (SPP, p. 135). As P.M.S. Dawson put it: ‘Shelley came to consider that the opinions and moral condition of a person depend ultimately on his total experiential vision of the world — and this on imagination rather than reason’. Through appealing to the reader’s imagination, Shelley hopes to impress the mind with novel experiences and ideas in favour of his own political programme. This is a crucial difference with Kloos’s conception of the ontological nature of poetry and one which accounts for much of his misreadings, deliberate or not, of Shelley’s writings.

Sometimes, it is virtually impossible to determine whether Kloos’s misreadings resulted from intellectual insincerity or from a stubborn, compulsive unwillingness and even sheer inability to appreciate a constitutive part of the life and writings of the poet he revered so much. All are likely to have played their part. Nonetheless, I will demonstrate that there is abundant proof to support the idea that Kloos often acted according to a specific agenda. Just as Jacques Perk was often seen as the Dutch incarnation of John Keats, so Kloos, at the turn of the century, started propagating the idea that he himself was very much Shelley’s spiritual heir in the Netherlands. He therefore needed to excise from his idol everything that might have been perceived as objectionable. Only then could the almost metempsychotic identification with Shelley be conducive to the much needed re-establishment of himself as the foremost man of letters in the Low Countries. Standing on the shoulders of the English literary giant, Kloos wanted to be taken seriously again as a critic and poet after virtually everyone had come to the conclusion that his creative period as a true artist lay long since behind him. Towards the end of his life, he

15 In his preface, Kloos also quotes with approval from ‘de fijne Leigh Hunt’: “Poetry is imaginative passion”, JPGI, p. 54.
17 Especially Kloos’s ‘Binnengedachten’, the collective title given to his sonnets published in De Nieuwe Gids since 1924, were much ridiculed in the press. In his article following Kloos’s death, August Heyting, for instance, referred to ‘de geestelijke slaapwandeling zijner jammerlijke Binnengedachten’. Quoted from ‘Willem Kloos, in de lijst van zijn tijd’; Offprint by the
composed the following lines, which more than hint at his anguish and fundamental loneliness. Yet, he found comfort in the belief that he was pressing the footsteps of a glorious predecessor:

Bysshe, die wijd-subtiele, [stierf] [...], als ware
Dit hem en mij steeds vreemd-gebleven, dwaze leven rare
Droom die wreed-zalig eindelijk eindigt in oneindbren Dood.
[...]
Och, ‘k leef, van kind, lijk gij, staeg in alzwaarsten zielenood.
[...] Dies steun mij. Gij waart groot.18

Here Kloos managed to kill two birds with one stone: he detaches Shelley from the mundane foolishness of humanity which only led the English poet to pursue immature ideals which clouded his otherwise resplendent poetic visions, and at the same time, he renders the spiritual bond between Shelley and himself in very explicit terms indeed. Both writers are presented as sharing the same beliefs and as being marked by the same kind of psychological suffering, with Shelley even presiding over Kloos as a benign, and above all approving, guardian angel: ‘Voel ‘k pure, eenvoudige, in ‘t Diepst, naar àl mijn daên, U droomend staren?’ (l. 14). In the sonnet’s companion piece, entitled ‘Aan Shelley Denkend. II’, Kloos wrote:

Dies ziet Gij, trouw steeds bleef ‘k aan ‘t betere ik, dat altijd leeft
Sterk in mij voort, ofschoon gehoond, als Gij, door lieden, vlakke

Genootschap Willem Bilderdijk from *Dietbrand*, June-July 1938, p. 25. Just over 1200 of them appeared in print whilst many more (about 1500) are kept as manuscripts in the Kloos collections at the Literary Museum in The Hague. In March 1935, *De Groene Amsterdammer* poked fun at this phenomenal but second-rate production. Though no name is mentioned, it was as all too clear, as other papers reporting on the joke obligingly pointed out, that it was Kloos and his wife, the novelist Jeanne Reyneke-van Stuwe, who were on the receiving end in the ‘letter’ written by (or addressed to?) ‘P.L. te D.’: ‘Het was niet op 11 Augustus doch op 13 September dat hij z’n DMCXLIste sonnet maakte. Gij zijt in de war met de LCMXIIste roman van zijn vrouw die daar de laatste hand aan legde op 9 Nov. d.a.v. En de fabriek werkt nog altijd op volle kracht ondanks de malaise.’ *Brievenbus* in: *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 30 March 1935.

It is rather ironic that Kloos should equate the ‘hoon’ experienced by Shelley during his lifetime with the criticism he himself had to stomach as the quality of his creative output from the 1890s onwards was very much being questioned by the Dutch literary establishment. Shelley suffered many slights from his contemporaries exactly because he was such a radical, producing verse in which he disseminated his seditious views. His was the poetry of a ‘licentious reformer’ (Barcus, p. 250), familiar with ‘accursed contemplations’, and spawning libel after ‘libel upon humanity’ (Barcus, p. 164). So great was the critics’ moral outrage and so vehement their attacks, that Countess Mountcashell, one of Shelley’s friends in Italy, composed her hilarious ‘Twelve Cogent Reasons for Supposing P. B. Sh-I-I-y to be the D-v-I Inc-rn-t-t’ to lift his spirits. This anecdote is an eloquent reminder of the incredible hostility Shelley encountered mainly because of his political convictions. This was not how Kloos assessed the situation, though. The initially troublesome reception of Shelley’s work had nothing to do with the putative political candour with which it was written. For him, Shelley was the archetype of the scorned genius whose bold, literary innovations were too advanced to be appreciated at once. Only after his death were Shelley’s poems recognised and praised as the seminal works of art they were. Had Shelley not himself expressed the idea in his Defence that ‘Even in modern times, no living poet ever arrived at the fulness of his fame’ (SPP, p. 486)? Likewise, only after his death was Shelley admitted to the canon of literary greats. Kloos more than once intimated that a similar fate may very well be lying in store for him. The extraordinary identification with Shelley in which the English poet is turned into an authoritative vindicator of his Dutch devotee, is a recurrent pattern in Kloos’s writings and one which I will focus on in considerable detail in Chapter Five.

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3. Kloos's early 'Aanteekeningen'

a. Content and date of composition

There is sufficient evidence which suggests that Kloos was — at least partly — aware of Shelley's less innocent streaks which surfaced especially in the political pamphlets. The Willem Kloos collections in the Literary Museum in The Hague hold a number of personal 'Aanteekeningen' made by Kloos in his early twenties. They are unique in that they establish beyond doubt that someone in the Netherlands actually read Shelley's political treatises. Indeed, apart from the *Defence of Poetry*, Shelley's prose was largely untrodden domain. This inevitably led to a distorted, or at least, incomplete, view on his art. As Kloos observed in one of these notes, though he did not act on his findings: 'Vooral zijn prozawerken zijn weinig bestudeerd, terwijl zij toch onmisbaar zijn om zijn verzen te begrijpen' (see Appendix 1, No. 3). Similarly, Kloos's notes have not received any critical attention so far, whereas they are invaluable to come to grips with his later Shelley pieces and his appropriation mechanisms.

As a matter of course, of all Shelley's prose works, the *Defence of Poetry* was by far the most popular. Though translated into Dutch by Albert Verwey in 1891, it has only been superficially touched upon by scholars who tried to map and analyse the relationship between the 'Eighties Movement' and the works of Shelley. For instance, it is typical that G. Dekker and Hubert Michaël suggest that the following lines from *Prometheus Unbound* may have inspired Kloos to write his famous, sententious lines 'Ik ben een God in 't diepst van mijn gedachten / En zit op 't binnenst van mijn Ziel ten troon': 'Yet am I king over myself, and rule / The torturing and conflicting throngs within' (I, ll. 493-94).

I believe that a more obvious source, especially for the sonnet's second line, can be found in the *Defence* where the concluding paragraph contains the phrase: '[Poets] are yet compelled to serve, the Power which is seated upon the throne of their own soul'. The fact that Kloos marked this phrase in the third volume of his Buxton Forman edition of *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1880) seems to support this suggestion (see Appendix 2, item 95). However, to find such literary antecedents is not the reason I want

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21 The notes are catalogued under K533 H3. I have reproduced the most informative and interesting of the 'Aanteekeningen' in Appendix 1.
22 *WKJL*, p. 152, and *Dekker*, p. 133.
to concentrate on Shelley's prose works and the response they evoked in the Netherlands, especially in someone like Willem Kloos. I believe it is more rewarding to examine how they help the modern reader to appreciate, modify and appraise a number of statements Kloos made in his critical pieces on Shelley in general. They also allow us to take Kloos's early notes into account which will complement our understanding of their author's development as an aspiring, young critic. It is my belief that the 'Aanteekeningen' are illuminating material which make a valuable addition to the corpus of texts written by a seminal Dutch literary figure.

The hand-written notes, twenty-seven pages in all, are mainly the record of Kloos's reading of Shelley's prose alongside studies by J. A. Symonds, D. F. MacCarthy and editorial comments by W.M. Rossetti, R.H. Shepherd, and especially H. Buxton Forman. Rather than personal comments jotted down as he went through Buxton Forman's four-volume edition of the prose works, the notes consist in essence of quotations from both the primary and secondary materials, partial translations of particular sentences and bibliographical details and compilations which in themselves give away little of Kloos's appreciation of or dislike for the works in question. These are *The Necessity of Atheism*, the extensive notes to *Queen Mab, A Refutation of Deism*, the two gothic novels *Zastrozzi* and *St Irvyne, An Address to the Irish People* and what is commonly referred to as the *Essay on Christianity*. There are, however, a number of pages which suggest that Kloos contemplated writing a lengthy, original piece on his favourite writer. Especially a two thousand three hundred-word passage on *Zastrozzi* and *Laon and Cythna*, as well as a critique of *Queen Mab* and the *Address* look like drafts of what would have become fairly extensive articles or essays and are therefore of particular interest. It is mainly on these three more creative fragments (Appendix 1, Nos 2, 4, and 6) within the whole of the 'Aanteekeningen' that the present chapter will focus.

These remarkable pieces are physical proof that Kloos's devotion to the study of Shelley was not a pose, and that he tried in earnest to comprehend the source and nature

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of Shelley's ideologies. What surprises perhaps the most is their date of composition. There are several reasons to believe that they go back as early as 1880. Firstly, it is known that in August 1880, Kloos planned to compose an article on Shelley for *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, induced by the recent publication of John Todhunter's *A Study of Shelley*. He wrote to Carel Vosmaer, the editor of the Dutch periodical: 'Het aantal kolommen laat ik aan uw oordeel over, maar minder dan 8 in 't geheel zou toch wel niet gaan, of u moet volstrekt geen plaats hebben. Ik tracht dan mijn reeds verzamelde bouwstoffen wat dichter in elkander te persen of ga alleen de voornaamste punten behandelen'. One page of the 'Aanteekeningen' indeed bears the title 'Bouwstoffen en citaten'. Secondly, the majority of the works referred to and quoted from in the notes were issued in the 1870s, with H. B. Forman's eight-volume edition and Todhunter's study both published in 1880. Furthermore, the Shepherd edition (1875) from which Kloos lifted a few passages for his notes on *Zastrozzi* contains two illuminating inscriptions, one in ink and written in Perk's hand ('Jacques Perk. Sept. 80'), and one in pencil by Kloos ('teruggekregen 12.1.1882'). Either Kloos excerpted the book before he gave it as a present in September 1880, or he consulted it when Reverend M. A. Perk returned the work after Jacques's death on 1 November 1881. Finally, the style of handwriting in the notes also points to the early 1880s as the most likely date of composition, though it is impossible to pinpoint the exact date of every individual item.

Kloos was encouraged by several people, and certainly not the least, to write a much anticipated article on his favourite author. On 21 December 1880, Jacques Perk vowed to Carel Vosmaer: 'Ik zal [Kloos] echter porren, net zoo lang tot hij eens over Shelley loskomt. Dat moet een goed stuk worden, te meer omdat het door liefde en niet — als sommige vroegere opstellen — door haat, wordt ingegeven'. One year later, on Christmas 1881, Conrad Busken Huet informed H. J. Schimmel, then co-editor of *Nederland*: 'Ik zelf heb W. Kloos aangespoord eene studie over Shelley te schrijven; en ik geef u vrijheid hem te herinneren aan mijn briefkaart'. After having received the first

25 I am very grateful to P. Kralt who obligingly examined Kloos's notes on my request and confirmed my assumptions about their date of composition.
issue of *De Nieuwe Gids*, Willem Doorenbos wrote to Albert Verwey on 5 October 1885: ‘Ik hoop van hem [i.e. Kloos] eens een uitvoerige niet geconcentreerde kritiek of een stuk over shelly [sic] te lezen’.  

Five years later, Kloos had still not made any progress. Frederik van Eeden, acting as Kloos’s physician and trying to persuade his friend to take up work as a therapeutic means in order to overcome a severe alcohol addiction, wrote to his patient on 1 June 1890:

> Ik geloof vast dat je meer kunt doen dan je doet, zonder dat je kunst of je hoofd of je artisticiteit er onder zouden lijden. Je hebt genoeg, die voltooid zouden worden, tot voordeel van ons allen en van jezelf, wanneer je maar eens in beweging kwam. Denk eens aan het stuk over Shelley, waarvoor zooveel boeken zijn gekocht en uitgaven gedaan [...]  

Van Eeden’s plea, however, remained unanswered, and the notes were never completed, let alone reworked into an essay or article.

The long essay on Shelley’s gothic novels and *Laon and Cythna* (Appendix 1, No. 6) was written a few years later than the ‘verzamelde bouwstoffen’ mentioned in Kloos’s letter to Vosmaer, but certainly before the foundation of *De Nieuwe Gids* in 1885. In a letter to Jacobus van Looy, dated November 1884, Kloos informed his friend about his present literary occupations in Brussels:

> Ik doe tegenwoordig niets anders, dan hem [Shelley] lezen en bestudeeren, meteen met het praktische plan, om een groot stuk over hem te schrijven voor ‘Nederland’. Ik heb reeds bouwstoffen voor 2 à 3 vel en ben toch niet verder dan zijn twee- en twintigste jaar, toen hij nog niets dan prullen had gegeven. Ik geloof, dat ik veel nieuws gevonden heb, waar ze ook in Engeland nog niet om hebben gedacht.  

It is my opinion that this relates to the long fragment on *Zastrozzi*. The ‘prullen’ can only refer to the youthful novels for which Kloos had a very low esteem indeed — he called

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them 'jeugdi[g] gestamel' and deemed them 'waardeloos' as literature —, and the collections of *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, as well as *The Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* which Kloos characterises as 'vruchten niet van de beste [soort]' (Appendix 1, No. 6). The phrase 'twee- en twintigste jaar' is more puzzling though, for the long, unfinished article mainly covers Shelley's literary production up to 1810, when he was eighteen years old. However, Kloos does make a casual allusion to the *Refutation of Deism* which was written and published in 1814, the year Shelley turned twenty-two. Why Kloos never brought himself to finish the fragments can only be a matter of conjecture. The period 1880-1900 was certainly one of the most turbulent in Kloos's life. It witnessed Perk's untimely death of consumption shortly after the two young poets had broken off their intense friendship, the foundation of *De Nieuwe Gids* and subsequent disintegration of the editorial board in an atmosphere of acrimony and mutual distrust in 1894, the growing hostility between Verwey and Kloos after the former's engagement and marriage, Kloos's dependence on alcohol which led to his admittance to a psychiatric asylum in Utrecht and several suicide attempts. As time progressed and a new century announced itself, Kloos's views of Shelley became more and more idealised, so much so perhaps, that he deemed it futile to dwell on Shelley's juvenile productions which did nothing to enhance his literary reputation. What is certain is that the notes were never taken up again.

*b. Zastrozzi*

What do these 'Aanteekeningen' tell us about Kloos's appreciation of Shelley? It can be inferred from the young poet's remarks on *Zastrozzi* that he did not really perceive the subtlety with which Shelley attempted to get his subversive message across. The plot involves Matilda, also know as the Contessa di Laurentini, who conspires with the mysterious and manipulative Zastrozzi to seduce Verezzi. When her evil schemes end in failure, she decides to bring about Verezzi's ruin and stabs his beloved and faithful Julia to death. As the frenzied plot unfolds, Zastrozzi indulges in some disturbing and subversive soliloquies. Kloos comments: 'Het werkje zelve is zedelijk en godsdien[stig z]oo orthodox mogelijk' as 'de atheist Zastrozzi met veel zalving door [den rechtgeaarden schrijver' wordt] terechtgezet' (Appendix 1, No. 6). Rossetti may have supplied the original for Kloos's observation: 'The wicked Zastrozzi, we find, is in one passage an unbeliever in immortality, for which he is distinctly reprobated by the correct-
minded author’ (Rossetti, p. 13). However, Shelley did often try to manipulate his readers and trick them into reading a work of whose moral and political purport they are initially left unaware. For instance, by choosing *Queen Mab* as the title of his most nakedly political poem, Shelley exploited the popularity of numerous collections of fairy-tales and innocent children’s stories in the eighteenth century which bore the same name (SPP, p. 14). Shelley devised, as he wrote in a letter, for well-to do parents to buy his book as a seemingly harmless present for ‘their sons & daughters’ whose less dogmatic minds were likely to be more responsive to the seditious contents hidden within the attractive packaging (Letters, I, p. 361). Similarly, he took advantage of the gothic mode of writing to formulate ideas which could not be expressed elsewhere without the threat of governmental and judicial retaliation. Stephen Behrendt has explicated this procedure in the following terms:

In a particularly nasty scene in *Zastrozzi* in which the pact is arranged to murder Matilda’s rival Julia, Zastrozzi delivers a heretical argument against the orthodox Christian notion of the soul’s immortality. Lest the reader be tempted to blame Shelley for Zastrozzi’s heresy [...], Shelley’s narrator brackets Zastrozzi’s opinions with properly censorious language that satisfies the immediate need to counsel the reader and distance the narrator (and presumably the author) from those opinions. But Shelley is employing a propagandizing technique here that is not unlike that used by the courtroom lawyer who makes inflammatory and damning remarks knowing full well that the judge will instruct the jury to ‘disregard’ them. Once out, though, they are not easily obliterated: the mind cannot simply be erased.31

However, such a sophisticated understanding of Shelley’s iconoclasm, as Behrendt himself appreciates, has only been emerging during the last twenty years of Shelleyan scholarship. It should therefore not be expected from a young Dutch writer in the 1880s when many experts in England propagated an incomplete, sanitised picture of the poet Shelley. For instance, Kloos’s conclusion ‘Nog geen spoor dus van eigenlijk ongeloof [in *Zastrozzi*]’ (Appendix 1, No. 6) is again remarkably similar in spirit to Rossetti’s ‘Thus nothing but orthodoxy’ (Rossetti, p. 13).

Kloos nonetheless suspects that Shelley left the straight path of righteousness in the brief period between the completion of the novel and its publication. He deduces this from the motto attached to *Zastrozzi* and taken from *Paradise Lost*, which ‘de rechtzinnige strekking van het boekje geheel omver[werpt]’. Having quoted Milton’s lines (‘That their God / May prove their foe, and with repenting hand / Abolish his own works. This would surpass / Common revenge’ [*Paradise Lost*, II, ll. 368-71]), Kloos develops his argument as follows: ‘Uit haar verband gerukt, zooals deze plaats daar staat, kan zij naar mij voorkomt, tot niets anders dienen, dan om al die “slechte menschen”, die de schrijver ten toonele brengt, te verontschuldigen, en alle schuld terug te werpen op God zelf, die hen geschapen heeft. Zoo zou de titel bestemd zijn, al van te voren een clementie te geven, aan al de theoriën [sic], die in het boek zelf beleden werden’. I believe that Kloos had this particular section in mind when he wrote to Van Looy about the new observations he had made ‘waar ze ook in Engeland nog niet om hebben gedacht’. It is indeed the only passage in his piece which shows some critical originality; all the rest being a mere enumeration of biographical facts. It is certainly to Kloos’s credit that he recognised in this particular detail how Shelley, from his early adulthood onwards, did not shy away from rubbing the establishment up the wrong way. He concludes his argumentation thus: ‘Wij kunnen dus met eenige zekerheid besluiten, dat Shelley reeds voor hij zijn achttiende jaar intrad, begonnen was het smalle pad der rechtzinnigheid te verlaten voor den breeden weg eener vrijere levenbeschouwing [sic]’. Kloos, who was himself a fierce opponent of Christianity and religion in general, though this would veer into a non-descript mysticism with spiritist overtones in his later years (see Chapter Five), could initially affirm Shelley’s atheism without any misgivings or reservations. Yet, soon Shelley’s religious dissent which was concomitant with his political heterodoxy was also to be glossed over in accordance with Kloos’s own apostasy: ‘[Shelley’s] ideeën toch waren in het godsdienstige, die van een pantheist, en in het staatkundige, die van een wezenlijk-christelijk zachtmoedig, ultra-idealistisch anarchist’.

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32 Willem Kloos, ‘Literaire Kroniek’ in *De Nieuwe Gids*, May 1909, pp. 657-64 (p. 658). What Kloos meant by the phrase ‘panthéisme’ can be deduced from one of his rare longer poems, entitled ‘Mystisch Panthéisme’. In it he posits that the Self is ‘t Ééne in allen, / Dat mateloos in
c. Queen Mab and rhetoric

Generally speaking the notes are fairly consistent with Kloos’s views expressed on several occasions in the ‘Literaire Kroniek’ in *De Nieuwe Gids*. They indicate that when he wrote down his commentaries in the early 1880s, his opinion about Shelley’s artistic make-up was more or less fully formed. They also teach us that one of his literary obsessions, i.e. (hollow) rhetoric in literature, was already much on his mind. In the case of Shelley, he will identify such rhetoric as the major objectionable quality of the pamphlets. Kloos’s not always convincing attempts to extenuate them later on as the products of an immature naïveté will become a recurring feature in his own critical essays in *De Nieuwe Gids*.

*Queen Mab*, which according to Kloos was the first work by Shelley he read, proved to him something of a disappointment, exactly because of the obstinate political vocabulary. This is what he wrote in one of his ‘Aanteekeningen’ (Appendix 1, No. 2) which I believe to be the onset of an article which was never completed:

Queen Mab is een “bewildering” product. ‘t Is onleesbaar: men wordt op die lange rollende perioden, vol uitroeptekens, rhetorische figuren en adjectiven en Kraftwörter meegesleurd, totdat men op ‘t laatst bij de monotonie dier rhetorische passie in slaap valt. Men moet zich een draad verschaffen door dit labirynth waarmen telkens op dezelfde plaatsen terugkomt, elkander kruisend of geheel diametral tegen overgestelde richtingen ingaat, en de pen in de hand bij het eind van iedere alinéa, uit die overladene en langwijlige declamatie, dadelijk in korte woorden den zin opschrijven, of men raakt het spoor bijster en blijft eindelijk steken. De poëzie er van is, op enkele beschrijvingen na, execrable: die eentonige donder der verontwaardiging is een tooneeldonder. [...] Voor gevoel geeft [Shelley] rhetoriek, voor verbeelding conventie, [en] er [zit] ook niet veel logica in.

‘[Shelleys] geest moge mij vergeven dat ik zoo begin,’ Kloos goes on, ‘daar het toch dient, om een juister inzicht te geven in hem en zijn werk’. As part of this set agenda, Kloos points out about the much disliked *Queen Mab*: ‘Shelley zelf keurde het af’. Kloos thus feels himself justified to condemn this thoroughly political poem in straightforward terms. Yet, his statement is a very partial and reductive reading of Shelley’s alleged retraction of the work. Since it was so seditious in nature, Shelley had been forced to

issue it privately in 1813. Four years later, he still spoke with passionate fervour of the beauty of the doctrines as developed in the poem, though he was not blind to its imperfections which lay in the ‘arrangement of imagery and language’ (Letters, I, p. 566). It is obvious that Shelley still fully endorsed the content of his poem at that stage. Another four years later in time, and the first of numerous pirated editions of Queen Mab was published in London. Shelley confided to his close friend Gisborne how much the incident ‘amused’ him, and how ‘For the sake of a dignified appearance,’ he had ‘to protest against all the bad poetry in it’ (Letters, II, p. 301). A far more unequivocal retraction was sent to Leigh Hunt to be published in The Examiner: ‘I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this [pirated] publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure then to serve the cause of freedom’ (Letters, II, p. 305). However, Timothy Webb has well stated his case that this ‘public disclaimer’ was in all likelihood an attempt by Shelley ‘to cover himself against possible prosecution’ and that the poet ‘was still basically in sympathy with the general thrust of Queen Mab’. Indeed, Shelley could not resist to end his piece for The Examiner on a confrontational note: ‘it is scarcely necessary for me to protest against this system of inculcating the truth of Christianity and the excellence of Monarchy however true or however excellent they may be, by such equivocal arguments as confiscation, and imprisonment, and invective, and slander, and the insolent violation of the most sacred ties of nature and society’ (Letters, II, p. 305). This seems to corroborate the assumption that the recantation was induced by fear of legal charges which could be levelled against him. Since the first publication of Queen Mab, the ruling classes had become increasingly nervous and as a consequence ever stricter rules of censorship — the notorious ‘Six Acts’ of 1819 — were imposed on writers and publishers. If Kloos can be pardoned for not possessing Webb’s acute insight, Shelley’s letters should have made Kloos realise that his remarks are a serious simplification of the matter.

The issue of rhetoric in Shelley’s works is something which many writers have commented on, though each time with a different emphasis. The result is a confusing multiplicity of interpretations, with critics contradicting themselves and each other. For example, J. A. Symonds claims that ‘We cannot include Queen Mab, in spite of its

sonorous rhetoric and fervid declamation, in the canon of his masterpieces' (Symonds, p. 70, *italics mine*). Yet, at the end of his study, the initially positive assessment of Shelley’s ‘sonorous rhetoric’ has given way to plain disapprobation:

> As a satirist and humourist, I cannot place him [Shelley] so high as some of his admirers do; and the purely polemical portions of his poems, those in which he puts forth his antagonism to tyrants and religions and custom in all its myriad forms, seem to me to degenerate at intervals into poor rhetoric (Symonds, p. 184).

This was very much Kloos’s estimation too. As a matter of fact, the phrasing in the ‘Aanteekeningen’ may very well have been modelled on this and comparable passages in Symonds’s biography. W.M. Rossetti opined in turn:

> The fact is that *Queen Mab* is a juvenile production in the fullest sense of the term [...]; and furthermore (unless I am much mistaken) the *most* juvenile and unremarkable section of it is the ideal one. The part which has some considerable amount of promise, and even of positive merit at times, is the declamatory part — these passages of flexible and sonorous blank verse in which Shelley boils over against kings or priests, or the present misery of the world of man, and in acclaiming augury of an æra of regeneration. These passages, with all their obvious literary crudities and imperfections, are in their way of real mark, and not easily to be overmatched by other poetic writing of that least readable sort, the didactic-declamatory (Rossetti, p. 44).

When we equate Rossetti’s phrase ‘didactic-declamatory’ with Kloos’s appraisal of *Queen Mab* as a ‘product’ full of ‘rhetorische figuren’, marred by ‘langwijlige declamatie’, then it appears that the English critic is not as straightforwardly dismissive as his Dutch colleague. In its genre, the poem is not without merit, yet, the overall attitude is one of similar, slightly condescending tolerance.

That someone is reading *Queen Mab* in the Netherlands during the 1880s is not entirely exceptional. In 1875, there appeared a short article in *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, devoted to Shelley and the circumstances of his tragic death. In his contribution, Loffelt instigates: ‘Het zou een eigenaardige verdienste van onzen Vredebond zijn, indien hij kan bewerken, dat onder zijn auspices een uitstekende
vertolking van Shelley's *Queen Mab*, dien hemelschen vredezang, het licht zag'. With his appeal to the first Dutch *Vredebond*, which was founded four years earlier in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, Loffelt demonstrated that he recognised the pertinency of Shelley's poem for the present generations. Was it perhaps this and similar statements which made Kloos write down with what seems to verge on self-conscious embarrassment that *Queen Mab* 'algemeen bewonderd [is]'? As the case may be, Kloos was far from impressed, like the reviewer in *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, by the vigour and energy with which Shelley had managed to put his case forward. For instance, in the introduction to De Raaf's *Alastor* translation, Kloos argues that Shelley's *Queen Mab* 'telt als gedicht nagenoeg niet meê' as the poet had lapsed into 't geestdriftig spechen en 't abstract verzekeren'. This comes as no surprise since Shelley had not yet discovered 'zichzelf en zijn ware kunst'. Politics were in essence alien to Shelley's nature, so every attempt at political writing could only result in aesthetic defeat, he reasons. Later in 1922, when recalling the moment he first came into contact with Shelley's poetry, Kloos relates how he got rather bored during his reading of this curious work which was to him no more than a 'wijsdoend en nog al lang-ademig geredeneer over allerlei kwesties, godsdienstige en maatschappelijke, waarover ik reeds twee jaar vroeger in de Ideeën [sic] van Multatuli zóó veel had gelezen, dat het mij ten slotte te vervelen begon'. The reference to Multatuli is important and should be kept in mind. A more long-winded account of Kloos's first reading of the poem, which forms part of an essay in which Shelley is contrasted with Byron, contains the same elements:

I had then namely, in hoofdzaak, alleen Queen Mab bestudeerd, maar de iambische vertoogen, die ik daarin tegenkwam over allerlei theologische en wijsgeerige vraagpunten, strookten soms wel eenigermate want heel uit de verte, met wat ik zelf reeds als schoolknaap van 17 jaar over die kwesties was gaan voelen, of eigenlijk

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34 L. [A. C. Loffelt], 'Shelley's dood' in: *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, December 1875, p. 403.
35 Compare to the following claim by Geerten Gossaert, the pseudonym of F.C. Gerretson (1884-1958) who was a member of that ever widening circle around Verwey and *De Beweging*: 'niemand denkt er over om zich b.v. in volle ernst schrap te zetten tegen Queen Mab. Dit zou alleen dán zin hebben, indien zulk werk nog steeds als voorbeeldig of goed geprezen werd. Doch hiervan is geen sprake'. G. Puchinger, ed, *C. Gerretson: Verzamelde werken*, 6 vols (Baarn: Bosch & Keuning, 1973), vol. 1, p. 194.
The allusion to Shelley's 'Onbewustheid' is intriguing since Kloos appears to suggest that Shelley did only 'transmit' ideas without any personal involvement. Shelley is thus relieved of the responsibility for the presence of any extra-literary elements and denied any rational argumentation in his works. A profoundly political allegory such as *Prometheus Unbound*, could therefore be dealt with as a splendid dream whose value and significance lie only in its poetic and idiosyncratic beauty dictated to the poet by a Power beyond his control. It is useful here to quote K.H. de Raaf, Kloos's loyal associate and devotee whose ideas on literature perfectly mirrored those of his mentor. He once declared, in blatant disregard of all factual evidence, that Shelley's works were composed "'aus einem Guß,'" with the holographs hardly showing any variants: 'Dit komt, doordat hij een uitzonderingsmensch, een genie was, die zich kon laten gaan op zijn vervoeringen, zingend als een vogel. [...] Hij zwoegde niet op zijn gedichten, hij dacht niet aan kunst'.

For De Raaf and Kloos, Shelley's poetry-writing was a blissfully unconscious affair which, by its very origin, evaded all engagement with mundane concerns, let alone militant purposes. As we will see, Kloos's repetitive use of 'visionnair' to characterise Shelley's poetry is also far more problematic than it seems. In Kloos's writings, the phrase had acquired a fairly strict meaning and was used as a generic term to characterise the 'Eighties Movement' itself: 'De stemmingskunstenaars of visionnairen [zullen] de individueele realiteiten hunner sentimenten en fantasieën recht uit zeggen en met eigen

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expressie zingen'. Taking this connotation into account, it is clear that Shelley is put forward as an essentially individualist poet preoccupied with personal visions, personal sentiments, and personal diction only.

The unfinished article on Shelley's first major poem in the 'Aanteekeningen' indicates that Kloos was altogether more positive about the extensive prose notes appended to Queen Mab than about the verse itself. He asserts that it is 'een verademing om van het gedicht over te gaan op de aanteekeningen' (Appendix 1, No. 2). Before that, the poem's style and arguments had not only been dismissed as 'rhetorisch, duister, opgeschroefd, verward,' but openly denounced as 'onwaar'. Kloos harboured a real hostile antagonism towards the tenor of Queen Mab which, as we have seen, he concedes with what seems to be sincere regret, 'is algemeen bewonderd'. It was probably his goal to deprecate the poem's qualities and change its status, for he continues his critique ‘t is dus misschien niet geheel nutteloos eens na te gaan wat [Queen Mab] eigenlijk is'. The fragment breaks off before he comes to elaborate further on the issue, but the preceding remarks are sufficient to surmise what would have followed. By contrast, the prose notes are recognised as a different matter altogether. With their many allusions to and untranslated quotations from Greek and Latin authors, including Homer, Lucretius, Pliny, Claudian and Horace, it is likely that Kloos, who was preparing for his 'candidaats klassieke letteren' when he wrote his commentaries, felt more at home with Shelley's salient classical erudition in these notes. He must have liked to know himself pursuing an interest similar to Shelley's, and one which was in his eyes far more honourable and worthy of serious study than the latter's political radicalism.

4. Literature, ethics, and socialism

Having established his ambivalent position towards Shelley's political engagement, I will now examine in more detail how Kloos really interpreted the non-conformism of his

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42 Around 22 January 1884, before taking his examinations, Kloos gave a Latin speech for a literary society on E. Baehrens's Lectiones Horatianae. In her good-natured satirical poem 'Twelve Cogent Reasons for Supposing P. B. Sh-ll-y to be the D-v-l Inc-r-m-t-', mentioned above, Countess Mountcashell remarked on Shelley's amazing linguistic talents thus: 'All unknown tongues he speaks at will; / And this another proof is still, / For Satan ever has been known / To strange outlandish lingos prone: / And when exorcised by a Priest, / Has always talked Latin at least' (ll. 77-82). Cited from Mary Shelley: Maurice or the Fisher's Cot, p. 139.
favourite poet. What exactly was the context of his objections to politics in poetry? In order to answer this question, we must make a leap forward in time and turn to the ‘Literaire Kroniek’ of April 1910 in which Kloos sets out his views on the relationship between art and ethics.\(^6\) Responding to a lecture which van Eeden had recently delivered in Antwerp on the subject of ethics being the cornerstone of every literary construct, Kloos postulates that art and moral issues seldom agree. Those who attempt to reconcile both are doomed to ‘halfheid’ (p. 519), as Van Eeden most forcibly demonstrates in his rambling speech and dubious writings. In truth, ‘het komt er [...] volstrekt niet op aan, wát de dichter gaat zeggen, [...] maar wel of [...] blijkt aan den lezer, dat een [...] machtig-muzikale [...] geest tot hem spreekt’ (p. 523). Any ‘toegift van ethische leering’ in poetry needs must result in an ‘ontsierd’ whole (p. 524). Only the ‘dichters van den nieuwere tijd [...], die ronduit, in hun werk, den brui gaven aan [...] eentonige ethische leerlingen’ are ensured of a fixed place in the pantheon of illustrious artists; ‘zoo Keats’. (p. 525). The semantic narrowing-down of ethics as synonymous with socialism, which is so typical of Kloos, is much in evidence here: he warns contemporary socialists, ‘die zich de menschen de[r] toekomst wanen’, about the relativity of their ‘ethisch-doen’, as it holds no guarantees of escaping oblivion within the grand scheme of world history. Moreover, soon their ethics will be replaced by ‘een andere wereldmacht’, who will impose ‘een nog nieuwere ethica’ (pp. 525-26).

Because ethics are always in flux, an artist has to be true to himself and paint in vivid colours how the ‘eerste instantie’, i.e. the unique, individual soul which is ‘den mensch-zelf [aan]geboren’, generates aesthetic visions, undulled by ‘het ethische element’ which, as something inauthentic, ‘ons door opvoeding of leering later [wordt] bijgebracht’ (p. 518). Before him, Shelley, following in Godwin’s footsteps, had come to the conclusion that morals were indeed not innate, but this led him to recognise the possibilities of educating man towards moral improvement.\(^7\) For Kloos, however, it is preposterous to deploy art as a medium for ethical instruction since art and ethics are concerned with ‘twee verschillende levenssferen’ (p. 520). In other words, ‘Kunst moet dienen, niet om de menschen direct-weg wijzer of beter te maken, zooals de filosofie en de moraal trachten te doen: kunst dient in de eerste plaats om de lezers geestlijk-ruimer’

\(^7\) See P.M.S. Dawson, The Unacknowledged Legislator, pp. 82-83.
en rijker en dus gelukkiger te doen zijn’ (p. 527, *italics mine*). In his youthful ‘Aanteekeningen’ Kloos was less doctrinaire as he owned to literature’s potential of improving its readers morally: ‘[Shelley] heeft een werk voortgebracht, de Prometheus, dat voor velen geen onbelangrijk stuk van hun leven is geworden, en hen *beter en wiser* heeft gemaakt’ (Appendix 1, No. 4, *italics mine*). This ethical-didactic quality of *Prometheus Unbound* is thus presented as a major virtue. When we compare this statement made in the early 1880s to his later pronouncements, it appears that Kloos’s stance towards didacticism in Shelley’s poetry was to harden considerably. This will become particularly clear in Chapter Four.

In his refutation of Van Eeden’s public lecture, Kloos infers that, only after having become a fully integrated part of the artist’s personality, thereby completely coinciding with the creative spark itself, will ethics be transformed into a constructive component within the artistic process. He illustrates his point with references to Aeschylus and Sophocles whose works he considers happy examples of literary artefacts in which vision and morals are inseparable. Shelley’s name, however, remains strangely absent from Kloos’s discourse. This is indeed remarkable given the fact that Kloos does mention Cowper, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats, albeit that only Wordsworth is termed an ‘ethical’ poet. It is difficult not to see the omission as significant, an omission which becomes all the more glaring when we keep the early remark in the ‘Aanteekeningen’ on *Prometheus Unbound* in mind which did represent Shelley as a poet concerned with ethics. Of course, Shelley’s own position was diametrically opposed to Kloos’s later intolerance. For instance, in a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, he wrote: ‘my opinion is that all poetical beauty ought to be subordinate to the inculcated moral — that metaphorical language ought to be a pleasing vehicle for useful & momentous instruction’ (*Letters*, I, p. 98). His entire *Defence of Poetry* is based on the presupposition that ‘poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man’ (*SPP*, p. 487). Not enough has been made in the past of the very selective, and therefore one-sided, nature of Kloos’s borrowings from Shelley’s essay.\(^4^5\)

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\(^4^5\) Gerben Colmjon is so eager to prove that Kloos was little more than a pillager of Shelley’s works and thoughts that he loses sight of the fundamental differences in their poetics. See his *De Beweging van Tachtig*, pp. 258-60. Brian W. Downs is also guilty of overstating his case: ‘Kloos’s general critical position is virtually conditioned by *The Defence of Poetry*’. Cf. his article ‘Anglo-Dutch Literary Relations 1867-1900’ in: *Modern Language Review*, 31 No. 3, July 1936, pp. 299-346 (p. 302). A much more balanced approach is taken by J. C. Brandt Corstius in his *Het poëtisch programma van Tachtig*, especially on pp. 50-53.
On another occasion, Kloos expounded on the related issue of the disparity between art and socialism when in 1902 he reviewed several of Carel Steven Adama van Scheltema’s collections of poetry. In his opinion, Adama van Scheltema, despite being a ‘sociaal-democraat’, was a truthful ‘ziener, van de inwendige schoonheid der ziel’ (pp. 124, 120). With a direct reference to *Epipsychidion*, Kloos calls his verse ‘hoogvisionnaire [kunst]’ (p. 122) in which ‘de ziel-zijner-ziel zich heeft losgewikkeld’ (p. 121). It is Kloos’s sincere wish that the author’s ‘diepste ziel’ will grant him the force ‘zich niet te laten aansteken en verschrompelen door den scherp-kollen drijversgeest van den tegenwoordigen stand zijner partij’ (pp. 122-23). Real poets should not be concerned about ‘tractaatjes [...] van strekking doordrenkt’, which appellation, incidentally, may well bespeak Kloos’s estimation of Shelley’s prose pamphlets. Instead, ‘Wil een der socialisten [...] iets wezenlijk-waardevols doen voor zijn leer, laat hij of zij dan zijn diepste Zelf, dat zij nú inkerkren achter speechjes [...] laten uitbreken liever tot [...] creatie’s van kunst’ (pp. 124-25). In other words, they should become inward-looking individualists and abandon all ‘extra-literary’ preoccupations. Kloos proposes enthusiastically: ‘zij zouden dan moeten optreden, niet als vluchtige en vlakke tendentie-uitspinners, maar als een Dante, een Dostojevski, een Shelley, of [...] een Rabelais’ (p. 125). By now it is practically impossible to ascertain whether these four artists are seen by Kloos as sound ‘socialist’ writers beyond critical reproach, or as supreme examples of literary visionaries to whom socialist poets ought to aspire. Since Kloos judges as respectable only those literary socialists who adopt a hyperindividualist position, thereby abrogating their political convictions, the previously perceived antagonism between art and politics simply ceases to exist. Consequently, his claim that ‘het socialisme [...] evengoed haar poëzie [kan] hebben’ (p. 124) becomes a mere non-statement, as the only artistic manifestation of socialism has to conform completely to Kloos’s personal poetics which are antisocial. This is a good example of how Kloos seems to tolerate critical, aesthetic, and ideological heterogeneity, whilst at the same time forcibly imposing his own values and crushing all opposition. It is a technique he used to perfection when he came to discuss Shelley’s political writings.

46 Willem Kloos, ‘Literaire Kroniek’ in: *De Nieuwe Gids*, 1902, pp. 119-28. I preferred to concentrate on this review rather than on Kloos’s more famous contribution (‘Verleden, heden en toekomst’) to the Van Deysel-Van der Goes polemic in *De Nieuwe Gids* (December 1890-June 1891) on socialist ethics/aesthetics because of Adama van Scheltema’s importance in generating two significant Shelley critiques by Kloos. These will be discussed later in this chapter.
Instinctively adverse to any expression of political engagement in literature, Kloos hardly ever allowed Shelley’s reformist rebellion to come to the fore. Thus, Shelley never appears to transgress Kloos’s own boundaries of political decorum: Shelley had been an idealist, not a radical socialist. After all, socialism, by its very nature, needs must be hostile to all art, Kloos explained. In Van Eeden’s picture of true (i.e. ethical) Literature, Kloos also saw looming up the grim spectre of the versifying clergymen against whom he had waged such a fierce war in earlier years. He could not condone a relapse into their poetics, nor could he allow to see their major vice being turned into a virtue. This vice, of course, was rhetorical superficiality, which, as we have seen in abundance, Kloos discredited as the major irredeemable defect of Queen Mab.

When we return once more to the ‘Aanteekeningen’, we find Kloos making the same charges with regard to another of Shelley’s works. This elucidating passage, albeit in an indirect way, tells us much about Kloos’s interpretation of Shelley’s artistic calling and about his views on the significance of politics in Shelley’s output as a writer. Kloos’s judgement of the Address to the Irish People (Appendix 1, No. 4) has a very familiar ring to it, written, as it happens, in a similar vein as his criticism of Queen Mab: ‘Als litterair product heeft het niet te veel waarde. De naïve, eenvoudige toon, die echter wel eens verlaten wordt voor rhetoriek, zooals Shelley’s verheven stijl toen was, is op den duur vermoeiend, omdat men voelt, dat hij aangenomen is’. Bearing these lines in mind, it is somewhat of a surprise to find Kloos observing three decades later, whilst commenting on Alex. Gutteling’s translation of Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound: ‘rhetoriek toch wordt in Shelley’s werken, behalve in diens jongensproduct “Queen Mab”, volstrekt niet aangetroffen’. At first sight, this totally contradicts Kloos’s own observations with regard to Shelley’s political prose. Either Kloos conveniently ‘forgot’ all about the Irish pamphlets and their rhetoric which had annoyed him during his reading, or he thought the pieces just irrelevant. I would suggest that Kloos saw Shelley’s poetry and prose as two distinct, independent and perhaps even incompatible manifestations of his artistic calling. That, for Kloos, the scales tilted in favour of Shelley’s lyricism, rather than the militant, socially engaged prose, goes without saying. After all, so Kloos seems to reason, the pamphlets were merely some well-meant, but completely harmless trifles, written before

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47 Incidentally, the word ‘socialism’, according to the OED only came into being thirteen to fourteen years after Shelley’s death.
Shelley took his poetic vocation more seriously. Decades after he made his personal 'Aanteekeningen', Kloos was still convinced about the accuracy of his original appraisal, and explained in *De Nieuwe Gids* of November 1921:

> Shelley, die in zijn eerste jeugdjaren zelf revolutionair was, al bedoelde die revolutiezucht iets geheel anders als de tegenwoordige, iets meer redelijks en oirbaars, Shelley, zeg ik, tot bewustzijn gekomen en de mensheid in haar waren aard, in de excessen van haar onverstand gezien hebbende, trok zich al spoedig terug uit de politiek en wijdde zich sinds zijn 23e aan de studie en de kunst. [...] En dus beeldde hij voortaan zijn binnenste, de heerlijkheid van zijn onsterfelijke scheppingen en werd een der grootste dichters, ja voor talloos velen de allergrootste der 19e eeuw.49

This, however, is a serious misrepresentation of biographical facts. No matter how much Kloos would like to have it otherwise, it is beyond dispute that 'Politics were [...] the dominating concern in Shelley's intellectual life' and 'that he was always responsive to the exigencies of the political element'.50 A cursory glance at a bibliographical list of Shelley's works, chronologically arranged, is enough to contest Kloos's outrageous claims. At the age of twenty-five, Shelley issued his *Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote Throughout the Kingdom* as well as the *Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte* in which the poet actually mourns for the demise of Liberty in his country, exemplified by the recent execution of three radical members of the working class. Two year later, in 1819, he wrote his most accomplished of political pamphlets: the *Philosophical View of Reform*. 'Literary' projects included the revision of *Laon and Cythna*, published as *The Revolt of Islam* in 1818, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, or *Swellfoot the Tyrant* printed in 1820, and *Hellas*, written in support of the Greeks' struggle for independence, published in 1822. Here, Kloos did suffer from convenient 'forgetfulness'. It is true that the *Philosophical View* was printed, for the first time, as late as 1920, one year before Kloos's article, leaving open the possibility that Kloos was unaware of its existence.51 Yet, then again, the discovery of this prose pamphlet by Dowden in 1886 was

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51 A copy of the book is present in the Kloos library, but he may have acquired it at a later stage (Appendix 2, item 28).
amply covered in the *Note-Book of the Shelley Society*. As a Society member, Kloos may very well have read about the find, which was originally envisaged by its author as a 'standard book for the philosophical reformers, politically considered, like Jeremy Bentham's something, but different & perhaps more systematic' (*Letters*, II, p. 201).

One might raise the objection that Kloos may not have read these later prose works, or have been aware of their radical candour, and that he should therefore be pardoned for his incomplete account. However, as the last quotation shows, Shelley's letters, with which Kloos was certainly familiar, leave no doubt about the poet's continued interest in politics after his twenty-third birthday. In them, Kloos will have read that Shelley, when in his twenty-seventh year, contemplated a volume of political poems which would probably have included 'The Mask of Anarchy', 'Lines Written During the Castlereagh Administration', 'Song to the Men of England', 'Similes for Two Political Characters', 'What Men Gain Fairly', 'A New National Anthem', 'Sonnet: England 1819', 'Ballad of the Starving Mother', 'Ode to Liberty' and 'Ode to the West Wind'. In connexion with these, Shelley contacted Leigh Hunt and made the following enquiry: 'I wish to ask if you know of any bookseller who would like to publish a little volume of *popular songs* wholly political, & destined to awaken & direct the imagination of the reformers' (*Letters*, II, p. 191). This is hardly the parlance of someone '[die zich terug]trok uit de politiek'. The quotation from his correspondence also provides more proof that Shelley was always bent on drawing on the imagination as the 'great instrument of moral good'. The imagination was a tool in his reform strategies, a means, and not an end in itself as Kloos understood it.

It was to C.S. Adama van Scheltema, the 'sociaal-democraat' whose poetry was favourably reviewed in *De Nieuwe Gids* in 1902, that we owe Kloos's most outspoken statements on the nature of Shelley's politics. Indeed, Adama van Scheltema's *Grondslagen Eener Nieuwe Poëzie* induced Kloos to defend a crucial aspect of Shelley's poethood and character to which he was not sympathetic himself. In his study, which is in its author's own words a 'grondige afrekening met de "tachtigers"' (p. 7), Adama van Scheltema advances Shelley as the lyrical poet who had served as the supreme example

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53 C.S. Adama van Scheltema, *De grondslagen eener nieuwe poëzie: Proeve tot een maatschappelijke kunstleer tegenover het naturalisme en anarchisme, de Tachtigers en hun decadenten* (Rotterdam: W.L. & J. Brusse, 190[8]).
for people like Kloos, Van Eeden, Gorter and Verwey. His characterisation of the English writer is therefore also applicable to his later Dutch counterparts: ‘Shelley was het rijk van schoone woorden en beelden, van muzikale feërieën [sic], maar zonder werkelijke inhoud, zonder waarachtig ideaal, zonder eenige vaste levensbeschouwing: — zijn “Prometheus”, zijn “Epipsychidion” gaan ons voorbij als rijkgemonteerde operetten waarvan niets overblijft, als de naïeve opgetogenheid waarmee wij het aanzagen voorbij is’ (p. 11).^44 Kloos was incensed, especially since he had once welcomed Adama van Scheltema as someone holding the promise of consolidating the aesthetic-individualist tradition, and wrote a rebuttal on two separate occasions. Though Adama van Scheltema had phrased his views on Shelley in extreme terms, Kloos’s conception of the poet, and especially of his writings, was actually not all that different. The result was a reply which is fairly thin in substance. The awkward generalities to which he resorts hardly conceal the uneasy position he found himself in. The distinction between the ‘schoone woorden en beelden’ and the ‘muzikale feërieën’ with which Adama van Scheltema typifies Shelley’s poetry, and Kloos’s defence that Shelley ‘de muzikale voeler’ who produced ‘diep-gevoelde en gedachte verbeeldingen’ in ‘breed-visionnaire kunst’, in its phrasing, is not as great as he would wish.^^ In his attempts to substantiate his claims, Kloos backslides into another, inadequate statement, this time on Laon and Cythna in which poem ‘de heele moderne wereld met haar kapitalisme en pauperisme, haar monarchisme en militairisme [sic], in muzikalen haat en innigen weemoed en diep-smartelijken hartstocht heeft opbezworen voor onze stilverrukte oogen’ (p. 779). The impropriety of the word ‘haat’ in this context is obvious since Shelley had warned time and again against hatred as the main cause of tyranny as well as of violent retribution which leads to the old regime being replaced by an equally insalubrious one. Arguably, Laon and Cythna had even been written precisely to prove this point. The most revealing phrase, though, is ‘stilverrukte’ which is the typical state of mind of the asocial, hyper-individualist reader who remains insensitive to the didactic message of a grand, political allegory.

^44 Thompson gave an altogether more positive spin to the same idea: ‘up the filmiest insubstantiality Shelley runs with agile ease. [...] The coldest moon of an idea rises haloed through his vaporous imagination’ (Thompson, p. 54). Also: ‘imagery was to [Shelley] not a mere means of expression, not even a mere means of adornment; it was a delight for its own sake’ (Thompson, p. 50).


^56 If Kloos implies that he deplored the existence of all these ‘isms’, his seeming apprehension did not prevent him, on 27 August 1924, from gratefully accepting the title of ‘Ridder in de Orde van de Nederlandse Leeuw’ and three years later of ‘Commandeur in de Kroonorde van Belgie’. 
This attitude is also discernible in Kloos's second piece on Adama van Scheltema's study. Here he retorts: 'men heeft Shelley's werken maar op te slaan, men heeft slechts zijn Laon and Cythna, zijn Rosalind and Helen, zijn Prometheus Unbound, zijn Triumph of Life zeer oppervlakkig door te kijken, om te merken hoe hij [...] heeft geweend met de armen, [hoe] hij heeft gevloekt tegen de machthebbers' (pp. 661-62).

Did Kloos realise that crying with the poor may very well eventuate in self-imposed resignation devoid of any constructive move towards bettering their fate? Similarly, Kloos's presentation of Shelley cursing the authorities carries overtones of someone whose protests are wasted by adopting a position of impotence which allows only verbal, ineffective gestures. Kloos continues his vindication with the claim that Shelley 'herhaalde malen, in diep-ontroerende tooneelen en verbeeldingen, een beeld heeft opgesteld van de mensheid der toekomst' (p. 662). This over-emphasis on the poet's visionary qualities has important implications, as I have already pointed out. In the first of his two reviews devoted to Adama van Scheltema and with a sneer to his political pedigree, Kloos opposes 'de Hollandsche literaire socialisten' and their 'kil-uitgereken, verstandelijk gedoe' to Shelley's passionate, 'meeslepend-geschreven' verse (p. 780). In other words, Kloos's imagines a profound conflict between intellect, reason, didacticism and even political conviction on the one hand, and Shelley's 'ideaal-revolutionnaire'


58 Compare to the following passage from Queen Mab: 'The man of ease, who, by his warm fireside, / To deeds of charitable intercourse / And bare fulfilment of the common laws / Of decency and prejudice, confines / The struggling nature of his human heart, / Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds / A passing tear perchance upon the wreck / Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door / The frightful waves are driven, — when his son / Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion / Drives his wife raving mad.' (Queen Mab, V, ll. 102-13).

59 In a letter to the composer Alphons Diepenbrock written on 20 December 1910, Kloos reiterates his point: 'Bij Shelley b.v. was [zijn] sociale waarachtigheid tot een deel van hem-zelf geworden, tot een stuk van zijn onbewustheid [...] , tot iets "psychisch gevoelds" [...] . Maar hoewel "sociale dichters" zijn er niet, bij wien dit geenszins het geval is, en wier sociale beweringen in hun werk u dus ergeren of vervelen door hun [...] vanbuiten-af er bijgehaaldzijn'. Eduard Reeser, ed., Alphons Diepenbrock: Briefen en documenten. [8 vols] (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962- ), vol. 7 (1995), p. 114. K.H. de Raaf felt it necessary to conclude his hagiographic study on Kloos with an estimation of the conflict between the latter's uncompromising individualism and 'gemeenschapsdichters' such as Adama van Scheltema. In borrowed phraseology he claims: 'Niet het quantum "maatschappij" in [de dichters] verzen beslist over zijn beteekenis, maar de mate, waarin hij ons lezers datgene vermag te doen voelen en te doen zien, wat uit zijn bezielde Onbewustheid als schoonheid geboren is'. This brings him to the subject of Shelley's poetry on which he has the following to say: 'Shelley in zijn epische en dramatische vizioenen [...] projecteer[de] in [zijn] kunst niet anders dan zich zelve', thereby claiming the English poet as a congenial partisan in Kloos's battle against '[het] reusachtig misverstand' that art must be firmly
visions and 'liefde voor de menschheid' which Kloos, ironically enough, identifies as 'een van de redenen, nog buiten zijn kunst om, waarom ik Hëm vereer' on the other (p. 780).^®

5. Kloos's views in a Victorian context

How does Kloos’s silence with regard to the overtly political poems, which may be interpreted as proof of his disapprobation towards Shelley’s political poems, compare to the opinions of the Victorian critics? W.M. Rossetti had the following to divulge on the subject:

*With great elevation of soul, and many splendid and unforgettable stanzas, *The Masque of Anarchy* is not, I think, exactly a masterpiece. One perceives that in it Shelley is writing something other than his own style; and the further he deviates from that, or the nearer he comes to the conditions he has chosen to prescribe for himself, so much the more faltering is his pace. There is a half-dozen of shorter poems, belonging to the same year, also denunciatory of the then political condition of England. These again, and on similar grounds, are among Shelley’s less successful compositions (Rossetti, p. 100).*

Here once more, there is a strong suggestion that Shelley was not entirely true to himself when he engaged in political writing. His ‘Mask’ is an error, a deviation which shows the poet misguided and faltering. It is therefore our duty as compassionate readers to draw the cloak of charity over such minor literary indiscretions. Francis Thompson, alluding to the same poem, urges his readers to discard the ‘wild’ Shelley in favour of the unspoilt poet-boy: ‘Coming to Shelley’s poetry, we peep over the wild mask of revolutionary metaphysics, and we see the winsome face of the child’ (*Thompson*, p. 45).


^® Adama van Scheltema was unimpressed by Kloos’s arguments and referred in a later study to Shelley as the poet ‘[die] een hang naar het buiten-maatschappelijke en de eenzaamheid toont’; *Kunstenaar en samenleving: De plaats van de kunstenaar in zijn volk en zijn tijd van 500 voor Christus tot op onze dagen* (Rotterdam: W.L. & J. Brusse, 1922), p. 516. Despite his protestations, this is de facto Kloos’s attitude as well.
with Mary Shelley, and more particularly with a remark she made on *Alastor* in the 1839 edition of the collected works: ‘Physical suffering had also considerable influence in causing him to turn his eyes inward; inclining him rather to brood over the thoughts and emotions of his own soul, than to glance abroad, and to make, as in “Queen Mab,” the whole universe the object and subject of his song’ (*PW*, p. 528). If this is only partially true for *Alastor*, it is hard to believe that Kloos wrote the extract quoted above with regard to *Prometheus Unbound*, one of Shelley’s most elaborate political allegories. It is clear from her remark that Mary Shelley objected to the more individualist strain in *Alastor*, whereas it was the poem’s main achievement in Kloos’s eyes. Surveying the first stages of her husband’s writing career, Mary Shelley, unlike Kloos, acknowledged that Shelley’s radicalism did not abate with time; it simply took on another guise: ‘Hitherto [until 1815], he had chiefly aimed at extending the political doctrines, and attempted so to do by appeals in prose essays to the people, exhorting them to claim their rights; but he had now begun to feel that the time for action was not ripe in England, and that the pen was the only instrument wherewith to prepare the way for better things’ (*PW*, p. 528). Far from retreating to the pastures and luscious pleasure grounds of the aesthetic-individualist in order to cultivate some succulent fruits as Kloos would have his readers believe, Shelley trod doggedly on on the hostile battlefields of politics.

Yet, Kloos was not alone in presenting Shelley as an individualist poet, sitting ‘in ‘t binnenst van [z]ijn ziel ten troon’. Rossetti’s biography contains this curious statement: ‘At one time, indeed, [Shelley] had considered the poetic faculty in himself to be hardly equal to the logical and metaphysical […] but he resolved, at an early stage of his career, to use poetry as his means of self-expression, and he directed his studies accordingly’ (*Rossetti*, p. 113, *italics* mine). Francis Thompson too discerned a clear ego-centric trait in Shelley’s writings. He likens Shelley’s mental disposition to the petulance of easily grieved children and concludes that ‘the child fled into the tower of his own soul, and raised the drawbridge’ (*Thompson*, pp. 33-34). By doing so, Shelley remained happily ‘unaffected by the intercourses that modify the maturity of others into the thing we call a man’. This ‘seclusion […] was peculiar to Shelley’ and in itself a supreme example of the notion that it is after all ‘the severed head that makes the seraph’ (*Thompson*, p. 34). Infantilised, angelicised, and imparadised in splendid isolation, Shelley can now become the idol of a cult without any deplorable stigmata attached to it.
Throughout Kloos's writings, Shelley is portrayed as an inspired visionary, conjuring up in magnificent images and sumptuous language an ideal society, where harmony and concordance reign supreme. The far from innocent radicalism which Shelley advocated to achieve this bounteous realm, this classless, egalitarian society, however, were always grossly neglected by Kloos. Filing off the sharp edges from his seditious appeals, Kloos defines Shelley's calls for reform as fully respectable, 'redelijk' and 'oirbaar', which of course they were, but Kloos had to garble them in order to bring himself near any recognition of their existence. It was even more profitable for his purposes to play down Shelley's political radicalism as a brief, insignificant phase in his entire writing career, something of which he first needed to purge himself before he could write his poetic masterpieces. For instance, Shelley's Dublin enterprise, which the poet undertook 'als jongmensch' is discarded as 'kinderlijk'. True enough, Shelley was only twenty years old when he embarked on his Irish expedition. Yet, instead of admiring such strong-mindedness and fresh-faced idealism, Kloos feels only vicarious embarrassment. W.M. Rossetti's opinion of the pamphlet which Shelley had written to educate and inspire the Irish during his campaign is not dissimilar:

Shelley pitched his diction in purposely low key, to suit his readers; the tone is juvenile as well as commonplace, but does not tend to advocating any forcible or illegal acts — on the contrary, there are the usual triteness about the violence which destroyed the French Revolution, and which should on no account be imitated by the Irish patriots, about a peaceful progress towards perfectibility, and the like (Rossetti, p. 35).

Dowden, in his two-volume biography, talks about the 'boyish pamphlets addressed to the Irish' (Dowden, II, p. 287). It appears that Shelley's Irish excursion did not exactly contribute to his later reputation as literary genius.

In the light of these pronouncements, Kloos's views can hardly be called eccentric. Kloos suggests that the pamphlets were a sympathetic exercise in idealist philanthropy as if Shelley had hardly hoped to achieve any immediate and practical results with them. Yet, it was exactly Shelley's insistence on factual revolution that brought him

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into conflict with his political mentor William Godwin. Shelley’s sporadic Painite appeals for revolt were largely at odds with the temperance of Godwin and his followers who shuddered with horror at the seditious language of enthusiasts like Shelley. Was passive resistance not the most suitable means to oppose tyranny and exploitation? The Reign of Terror, following the much cheered French Revolution, proved to be sufficient enough a deterrent and kept a check on many British revolutionaries. For the author of *Political Justice*, reform could only be propagated through individual discussion and congenial intercourse at the fireside. Revolution and even social insurrection were unacceptable. The critical difference between Shelley and Godwin,’ Scrivener observes, ‘is this: the former is much more activist than the latter, more eager to intervene socially with philosophical insights, and more willing to risk the dangers of revolution’.62 This discrepancy in temperament resulted in Godwin sending strongly disapproving letters to his pupil when he heard about Shelley’s attempts in Ireland to organise associations in which the young enthusiast hoped to concretise his philosophical ideals (potentiality) and through debate gesture towards the everyday realities (actuality) of the exploited poor. It was Godwin’s quietist belief that history followed a slow but unstoppable course during which man continued to improve morally and it was therefore irresponsible to interfere with or even try to precipitate this process. Another example which shows Shelley deviating quite sharply from Godwin’s principles is the collection of exoteric *popular songs* of 1819 which have been described as ‘battle cries’ and ‘calls not to mere contemplation but to action’.63

Godwin nonetheless remained a strong influence and his antipolitics and elitist bias towards the lower classes which he deemed were lacking the intellectual abilities to be guided by reason, were a legacy Shelley found not always easy to shrug off. When he arrived in Ireland in his attempts to actuate reform, for instance, he described Dublin labourers as ‘one mass of animated filth’ (*Letters*, I, p. 268). Like so many contemporary reformers, Shelley sometimes displayed a certain amount of uneasiness when he had to deal on a personal level with the populace whom he earnestly endeavoured to liberate. Yet, he proved himself capable of rising above these Godwinian prejudices and limitations, and allowed his empathy to make him assume a more radical and activist

63 Stephen C. Behrendt, *Shelley and His Audiences* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 192. P.M.S. Dawson is less convinced, however, and believes that Shelley was only ‘advocating a campaign of civil disobedience’; *The Unacknowledged Legislator*, p. 194.
stance. If it is true that Shelley did refrain from siding with the most extreme of reformers, he made sure to present his gradualist proposals in a much larger framework. As Hoagwood rightly asserts, ‘Shelley’s moderate program is merely provisional, a compromise with circumstances’. Even P.M.S. Dawson who is always prudent in his account of the poet’s agitational protests and insurrection, believes that ‘Shelley’s moderation was tactical’ and that it ‘did not imply that he had given up any of his theoretical extremism’. That Shelley did not always favour Godwin’s watered-down, armchair radicalism was something which Kloos ignored or misunderstood entirely:

[Shelley] bezat diep in zichzelf, een energische [sic] zielskracht, zooals iedere waarachtig-groote dichter die moet hebben, maar tevens borg hij in zijn Diepte, wat hem voor ons, Hollanders, vooral sympathiek kan maken, een zekere dosis gezond verstand, die hem de dingen vaak liet zien, zooals zij wezenlijk waren en die Hem ook deed begrijpen, dat hij met zijn hoog-psychische geaardheid wijzer deed, zich niet langer in het onredelijke gewoel der Menigte te mengen, waar hij met zijn hem altijd bijgeblevene jongensachtige eerlijkheid en eenvoud geen indruk op maakte, maar zich als kunstenaar alleen te bemoeien met zijn eigen Diepte, om zoodoende hoog-uit te kunnen werken voor de toekomst van ons voor verreweg haar grootste deel, in de Duisternis der Onwetendheid dwalend Menschenras.

Obviously, the ‘jongensachtige eerlijkheid’ of Shelley’s constitution is seen as yet another manifestation of his ineffectiveness as practical reformer which had previously marred the ‘kinderlijke’ Dublin enterprise. When Kloos refers to Shelley’s politics in connexion with Prometheus Unbound, as is the case in the above passage, or Laon and Cythna, as we shall see later, he gives a most incomplete and limited picture of Shelley’s practical radicalism. Of course, in these poems of epic dimensions, Shelley drew the diaphanous veil of allegorical representation over the political message, clothed as it is in a highly-wrought diction and imagery. It made critics like Thompson honestly believe that Shelley, in such works, ‘plays truant from earth, slips through the wicket of fancy into heaven’s meadow, and goes gathering stars’ (Thompson, p. 65). Seen in isolation, they appear to corroborate Kloos’s understanding of the poet’s idealistic, escapist propensity which has

65 P.M.S. Dawson, The Unacknowledged Legislator, p. 196.
little bearing on bettering the actual fate of the suffering poor in the real world. In this respect, 'hoog-uit te kunnen werken voor de toekomst' is a key phrase in the extract given above. With its hint of unattainability, Kloos defers all Shelley’s political gestures and aspirations to an era far removed in the future, thus making them less topical. It is a characteristically Kloosian procedure: ‘En zoo heeft hij b.v. in zijn “Prometheus Unbound” den toestand der menschheid in nog ver vooruit van ons liggende eeuwen geschilderd’.\(^7\) This is true for the fourth and final act of the play, but the means through which such a blissful realm can be realised, which is the subject of the three previous acts, is of little concern to Kloos. It should be remembered, however, that Shelley originally intended to publish *Prometheus Unbound* without the fourth act which was added several months after the completion of the third and after the composition of *The Cenci*. By making Shelley’s attempts at fighting despotism less concrete, Kloos turns him into a rather harmless, otherworldly visionary.

It is perfectly in keeping with Kloos’s character that he hardly ever referred to William Godwin, not even in passing, when writing about Shelley. Godwin’s politics are ignored completely, though Kloos surely must have been aware of their profound influence on Shelley. Not only Shelley’s letters, but also the critical studies by Dowden, Rossetti and others, which Kloos had avidly read, will have told them of the substantial impact of Godwin’s politics and their crucial importance for the English poet. Dowden, for instance, quotes extensively from the correspondence between Godwin and Shelley, who was to become his son-in-law in December 1816. Even though the English biographer does not ‘find it difficult [...] to point out fallacies and inconsequence in the revolutionary theory and argument of William Godwin’, Shelley was not mistaken when he recognised in the writer of *Political Justice* a ‘great lawgiver and prophet’ (Dowden, 1, pp. 216, 217). In his biography, Rossetti wrote how Shelley, in January 1812 began his correspondence

with the eminent publicist and novelist William Godwin. Soon before leaving Eton he had read that author’s *Political Justice*; and he looked upon the book as having exercised an important influence on his character, rousing him from merely romantic notions, and showing that he had duties to perform (Rossetti, p. 34).

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\(^7\) Willem Kloos, ‘Percy Bysshe Shelley in Nederland’, p. 312.
Recognising the pivotal role of Godwin’s work in Shelley’s intellectual development, Rossetti even alludes to the poet’s newly found moral responsibilities in the world of ‘actuality’. Such avowals are completely absent from Kloos’s Shelley critiques, which places him in a league all of his own.

6. Laon and Cythna

If Kloos appears to admit in his article on Shelley’s ‘Geestelijken inhoud en beteekenis’ that Shelley prepares his readers mentally for a future Golden Age, he had already warned a few pages earlier against the poet’s unsound presuppositions: ‘[Shelley] stelde b.v., naar mijn overtuiging, nu ik in het aardsche Leven meer thuis raakte [sic], een veel te absoluut vertrouwen in de zedelijke goedheid en het begripsvermogen van de menselijke Natuur in het algemeen’ (pp. 138-39). Apart from his own experiences, Kloos may also have taken his cue from Dowden’s biography: in his study, the Victorian scholar had postulated that Shelley had ‘too-liberal faith in the innate virtue of all man’ (Dowden, II, p. 135). In this respect, Kloos probably appreciated how Shelley, despite his utopian inclinations, displayed more ‘gezond verstand’ in Laon and Cythna by accepting the impossibility of realising quixotic ideals. That is borne out, so he intimates, by the fact that the poem narrates a revolution which ultimately fails. Kloos’s conviction is that later, Shelley acted on this understanding and hence renounced his earlier political engagement. Yet, P.M.S. Dawson has argued forcefully that the revolution in Laon and Cythna was unsuccessful because ‘it is only sustained by the individual genius of the hero and heroine, not by the assimilation of their principles into “general knowledge”’. In other words, Shelley did not want to let his readers believe that it is useless to chase a beau idéal or nurture high hopes, but that it is necessary to prepare any political revolution by a preceding mental and moral transformation. This is the pedagogical task which Shelley set himself throughout his writing career and which culminated in the composition of Prometheus Unbound. The distinctive didactic undercurrent which is even present in Shelley’s most esoteric works, bears witness that the poet saw himself as a tutor and legislator. In Chapter Four, I will analyse in more detail how Kloos managed to obscure and even subvert the fact that Prometheus Unbound ‘directs itself to the French

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68 P.M.S. Dawson, The Unacknowledged Legislator, p. 69.
Revolution and its meaning’ and strives ‘to deliver Shelley’s contemporaries from [political] despair’. In 1922, Kloos provided his readers with a pronouncement on Laon and Cythna which is so idiosyncratic and revealing that it warrants to be quoted in full:

Shelley was niet zoozeer, gelijk ik zelf dat mag wezen, een abstrakt denkhoofd in den eigenijken zin dier uitdrukking, want alles wat hij dacht, moest krachtens zijn geestelijke constitutie, onmiddellijk beelding bij hem worden, en zoo heeft hij [...] onsterfelijke Kunst gemaakt in zijn Laon and Cythna, dat als een verbeeldingsvolle, maar waarheidsgetrouwe voorspelling van heel den tegenwoordigen wereldtoestand kan beschouwd worden, nu keizerrijken zijn gevallen en de beheerschers ervan vermoord of tot nietige verlatenheid gebracht, nu de aarde weergalmt van luide populaire leuzen, klinkend-fraaie, maar innerlijk-leêge, zoodat men in sombere oogenblikken, gelijk ieder ze wel eens heeft, zich soms af moet vragen, of die in alle standen heerschende beroering van moordlust en verdelging en roof, die van 1914 ons Europeesch werelddeel aan 't schokken en van-binnen-uit omwoelen is, niet het naderende einde onzer oude beschaving beteekent en of dus niet, van hun kant terecht, de Vereenigde Staten zich apart houden, om niet meegesleept te worden in onzen ondergang.

To promote Shelley’s longest poem as a prophesy of the political turmoil of the twentieth century is at least very dubious. The poem is instead a study of the French Revolution and the causes of its degeneration into bloodshed. Its subtitle makes clear that the work was not devised by Shelley as an adumbration of remote events but as an allegory of his own, post-1789, Napoleonic era: Laon and Cythna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City: A Vision of the Nineteenth Century.

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71 Gerald McNiece identified some of the more obvious parallels in Laon and Cythna to the French Revolution: ‘the terms in which Shelley outlined his poem were clearly suggested by the history of the French Revolution: “the faithlessness of tyrants” refers to the duplicity of Louis XVI; “the confederacy of the Rulers of the World” recalls the backing of the Brunswick Manifesto by European armies; the theme of the restoration of an expelled dynasty by foreign arms resembles the return of the Bourbons; and the reference to the judicial murder of the true patriots and advocates of liberty indicates Shelley’s sympathy for the proscribed Girondists who died on the guillotine’; Shelley and the Revolutionary Idea (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 192.
In another appraisal of the poem, which was part of a longer article in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, and written on the occasion of the centenary of Shelley’s death, Kloos makes an explicit link between *Laon and Cythna* and the French Revolution: ‘Shelley is begonnen met revolutionnair te wezen, zooals dat onder de geestelijke nauwerking der objektief en achterafbeschouwd, thans wel wat onredelijk zich voordoende Fransche revolutie, zooe vele naïeve jongelui-van-aanleg dat in zijn tijd zijn geweest’. A similar smugness of opinion is evident in Symond’s *Shelley*, written thirty-five years earlier:

The spirit of the French revolution, uncompromising, shattering, eager to build in a day the structure which long centuries of growth must fashion, was still fresh upon him. We who have survived the enthusiasms of that epoch, who are exhausted with its passions, and who have suffered form its reactive impulses, can scarcely comprehend the vivid faith and young-eyed joy of aspiration which sustained Shelley in his flight towards the region of impossible ideals. (*Symonds*, p. 41)

In his *NRC* article, Kloos argued that this misdirected enthusiasm must not be held against the poet. There was no vulgarity or indecency in Shelley’s juvenile political engagement: ‘Shelley was dus, in zijn opkomst, wat men noemt: een aristokratisch revolutionnair van inborst’. By conferring this seal of unadulterated social respectability, Kloos goes much further than Rossetti who introduced his biography with the qualified statement that Shelley had ‘the most transcendent beauty of character, — flecked, indeed, here and there by semi-endearing perversities, or by some manifest practical aberration’ (*Rossetti*, p. 1). Unlike his English colleague, Kloos, of course, had some very personal axes to grind in his Shelley commentaries. Given Kloos’s fanatic identification with the Romantic poet, any slur on Shelley’s character might have reflected badly on his own and could therefore not be condoned. The result on Kloos’s part was a consistent psychological gentrification of Shelley’s life and actions.

To return to his characterisation of *Laon and Cythna*, Kloos appears to have been unaware of the fact that the poem is held up as a warning to ensure that future revolutions will never again be abused to retaliate past wrongs through blind vengeance.

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or even murder. Kloos’s analysis in *De Nieuwe Gids* continues along the following lines: ‘[Ik heb] duidelijk aangetoond, waarom Shelley, met zijn vooruitziende genie, bij uitstek de dichter van onzen tijd heeten moet, daar al de wereld-tragiek, die hij zag met zijn verbeelding, thans half-lugubere, half sinester-komisch aandoende werkelijkheid geworden is’ (p. 20). Shelley is praised for the accuracy of his ‘prediction’, not for the poem’s intended moral, which consists in suggesting ways in which to prevent the kind of calamities Kloos is talking about. Kloos does not realise that Shelley is thus reduced to a poet of only limited, historical interest, dependent for his canonical place in literature on having ‘foreseen’ present warmongering. On a later occasion, he wrote about the poem: ‘in de twaalf zangen ervan, elke van 400 à 500 regels, brengt deze groote Dichter, voor wien wij allen, juist van heden, een dankbare eer bieder dienden te voelen, om zijn ver in de tijden vooruitzienden precies-juisten blik, ons een beeld van wat hij zelf, toen de pas vijf-en-twintigjarige, maar die als Denker en Profeet oneindig hoog stond, in zich zelf voelde als een ideale toekomst voor het Menschengeslacht’. How Shelley envisaged that an initially glorious revolution which runs out of control and ends with the execution of its two heralds, the poem’s title heroes, and the majority of people living as pitiable slaves, could constitute ‘een ideale toekomst voor het Menschengeslacht’ as Kloos apparently believed, is a perplexing issue indeed. I believe this demonstrates that Kloos approached Shelley’s poems as a series of loosely connected images, or visions, as he preferred to see them, with little narrative or logical development. Kloos was impressed by the poet’s ability in *Laon and Cythna* to reveal stupendous vistas on a perfect, anarchist society, whilst paying little heed to its violent annihilation in particular, and the poem’s subtext and overall cautionary note in general. His reading of Dowden would have helped little to open his eyes to the realities behind the *Revolution of the Golden City*: a ‘web of glittering abstractions’ is how the English biographer described Shelley’s poem (*Dowden*, II, p. 162). Rossetti refers to the poem as ‘an enchanted palace of the Arabian Nights’ (*Rossetti*, p. 77). In their opinion, *Laon and Cythna* indeed appeared to be the stuff our dreams are made of.

This inability to gauge the purport of the poet’s deeply disturbing and iconoclastic works is also evident in Kloos’s appraisal of Shelley’s satires which follows the assessment of *Laon and Cythna*: ‘En tot een andere orde van gedichten weer behooren Shelley’s satiren, waarin hij wat hij verkeerd vindt met zijn luchtige, maar overal rakende

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73 Willem Kloos, ‘Eenige opmerkingen over Shelley’s geestelijken inhoud en beteekenis’, p. 711.
elfen-spotzucht nazit’ [p. 21]. This refers to works like *Peter Bell the Third*, a squib on Wordsworth not published until 1839 with a very apologetic note by Mary Shelley because she still feared hostile reactions, and *Swellfoot the Tyrant* (*Oedipus Tyrannus*) (1820), the latter being so ‘luchtig’ in its attacks on George IV and his estranged wife Queen Caroline that its publisher was threatened with prosecution and forced to surrender the whole impression. With the harmless banter of ‘elfen-spotzucht’ we are back in the realm of fairy tales and whimsical, slightly irresponsible adolescence to which Shelley, after his death, was displaced for decades. The determining influence of the Victorian critics on Kloos’s opinions is once more in evidence: Dowden speaks of *Swellfoot* as a manifestation of Shelley’s ‘elvish espièglerie’ and ‘will-o’-the-wisp’ character (*Dowden, II*, p. 345). Yet, unlike Kloos in this particular instance, he also hints at something more sinister, claiming that the ‘theme of “Swellfoot” is ugly’ because Shelley was dabbling ‘in the gross stuff of life’.

From all this, a fairly consistent picture starts to emerge. Though Kloos’s views were not completely out of the ordinary, it is clear that in many instances, he was more reluctant than his English peers to recognise the political purport of Shelley’s writings. I have hinted that this resulted from Kloos’s overwhelming desire to attune Shelley’s artistic and ideological voices to his own. In doing so, Kloos was able to present himself as working in the same tradition as one of the greatest European writers of the nineteenth century. Shelley thus became the supreme embodiment of his own aesthetic-individualist principles. The anticipatory endorsement imposed on Shelley had become a necessity since, as Van Eeden’s and Adama van Scheltema’s actions confirmed, there were important developments taking place on the Dutch literary scene, and developments which Kloos looked upon with grave suspicion. With the authority of the English poet behind him, Kloos proceeded to advocate Shelley’s, and therefore his own, aesthetic tenets as the only way forward. That not everyone in the Netherlands took Kloos’s pronouncement with regard to Shelley at face value will be the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter Two: Dissident voices in the Netherlands

In the previous chapter I examined how different Shelley representations operate on specific ideological levels. For one group of critics in the Netherlands Shelley's name conjured up the image of an 'ineffectual angel', or a writer of 'feeëriën', as Adama van Scheltema dubbed it. In this view, Shelley is regarded as a writer of intoxicating, sensuous verse whose lexical density cannot hide a fundamental lack of depth and of intellectual maturity. Also highlighted in the overview was Kloos's more particularised perception of the English poet as an aestheticist and individualist. Kloos argued that the profundity of Shelley’s art lay in the artist’s exploration of the inner recesses of his soul, mining it for the precious gems which sparkled with the lustre of his unique personality. I have demonstrated that such a view was essentially a projection of Kloos's own artistic tenets; which explains his readiness to lash out at anyone trying to forward the idea of Shelley as this 'ineffectual angel'. Though the emphasis in the previous chapter has been put firmly on Kloos, it should not be forgotten that he was far from the only man of letters in the Netherlands with a profound interest in the English Romantic poet. It is among some of his fellow admirers that we encounter a third distinctive approach to Shelley.

This third Shelley image is best exemplified by the views expressed in 1892 by an articulate Irishman and Shelley enthusiast. When the English-speaking world was celebrating the centenary of Shelley’s birth, George Bernard Shaw reacted in an article against a number of persistent misconceptions about the poet’s character and work.1 His aim was to dispel once and for all the notion of Shelley as ‘nothing more than a word-jeweller’ (p. 245). The immediate cause for the article was a proposal made by a special committee to establish a Shelley Library and Museum at Horsham, Sussex where the poet-rebel was born. This project both bemused and alarmed Shaw as he suspected it would do Shelley’s reputation considerable disservice. His scepticism stemmed from the fact that Shelley’s native county had chosen as its parliamentary representatives a

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contingent of high Tories at the latest general elections. Shaw argued that this constituted no firm foundation for a commemorative gesture towards a poet who, all his life, sought to overthrow the conservative, even reactionary, establishment in Britain. As a result, he completely deflated the calls for the Shelley library made at a special meeting, pointing out that the speeches of the Horsham Committee were part of a 'conspiracy to keep an open secret of so scandalous a character [as Shelley's]' (p. 240). Dismissing Shelley's political radicalism and unorthodox behaviour in a 'general peroration on the theme of “boys will be boys”', the speaker Mr Hurst, Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant for Sussex, had disgusted Shaw with the condescending distortion of the facts. Hurst's reinvention of the English poet made Shaw raise the spectre of a Shelley library 'decorated with a relief representing Shelley in a tall hat, Bible in hand, leading his children on Sunday morning to the church of his native parish' (p. 243). Shaw wondered what would have happened if anyone had ventured to recite the seditious 'Men of England' at the pompous Horsham event: 'Possibly the police would have been sent for' (p. 244). Hence, he had no qualms in discarding this centenary 'offering' as 'a carnival of humbug' (p. 245).

What Shaw described in his article could easily be applied to what Willem Kloos never stopped doing during his long writing career: it was, to quote Shaw's words once more, 'to make Shelley a saint' (p. 241). The following pages will serve as a sounding board for a number of dissident voices in the Netherlands who tried to strip away the aureole of insubstantiality with which Shelley had been accoutred for so long. Some of them, in their reappraisal of the English poet as a political writer, even openly denounced Kloos's views. It remains a most intriguing fact that Kloos, on his part, refrained from any immediate attacks on his compatriots when they furthered this image of Shelley as a radical. I will suggest that this may be the inevitable result of his idiosyncratic stance towards Shelley's poethood. Also, the fact that Kloos could rely on some like-minded friends who were willing to take up the gauntlet on his behalf will undoubtedly have played its part. These friends too will feature in this chapter. It is not my intention, however, to compile an exhaustive corpus of Shelley criticism in Dutch. Instead I want to present a selection of relevant extracts which will clarify and expand on Kloos's own views and help to appreciate the context in which he promoted them. If, as a result, Kloos's writings on Shelley will be put in a very critical light and come across as distinctly idiosyncratic, his enthusiasm for the poet's works, no matter how deficient in its
one-sidedness and misapplication to grandiose schemes of self-promotion (see Chapter Five), will stand as one of these heart-felt passions which gained him the well-deserved appellation ‘hartstochtelijkste mensch van Nederland’. 2

1. Kloos’s depoliticisation under attack

Several scholars, most notably G. Dekker in his dissertation, have shown that Kloos, despite his later protestations, was by no means the first Dutch poet to read and write about the works of P.B. Shelley. Dekker of course did not limit his study to Shelley’s (and Keats’s) immediate influence on Kloos but also focused on the poetry of his contemporaries Albert Verwey, Herman Gorter, and Frederik van Eeden. However, these poets were not only influenced by Shelley, they also wrote about him, and sometimes very succinctly, both in their prose and poetry. As such, this chapter complements Dekker’s study in that it takes this secondary material into consideration as well as critical studies by the ‘Tachtigers’ and their associates written after the publication of his thesis in 1926. In addition, this chapter will feature a number of lesser known men of letters who engaged with Shelley’s poetry and prose, and whose accounts have received little or no attention in the past. In order to appreciate the full context of Kloos’s claims, it is essential that all these different voices be taken into account, even if Kloos tends to drown out the more dissident claims by his contemporaries.

In 1893, the reading public in the Low Countries was presented with an image of Shelley which Kloos, in his own written Shelley portraits, was to hide under layer upon layer of varnish. It was then that an eloquent voice suddenly called attention to certain traits in Shelley’s disposition which, it was claimed, many ‘brave menschen’ in their self-righteousness, would undoubtedly have liked to see glossed over. The voice belonged to B. Ruber, one of the editors of the short-lived De Sociale Gids, who proclaimed in his periodical that Shelley ‘gevoelde hoe er aan de inrichting der maatschappij iets haperde, en dat hij een hart had dat warm klopte voor de vrijheid en innig bewogen werd door het onverdiende lijden van het arbeidende volk’. 3 After a biographical sketch, he reiterates his conviction that Shelley ‘gestreden heeft voor het lijdende en verdrukte arbeidende volk’ (p. 25). This is borne out in particular, Ruber argues, by the composition in 1819 of three

poems, to wit ‘The Mask of Anarchy’, ‘Song to the Men of England’, and ‘A New National Anthem’. As I have explained already, these were meant for inclusion in the ‘little volume of popular songs wholly political, & destined to awaken & direct the imagination of the reformers’ (Letters, II, p. 191). Shelley never realised his plan though, and the poems were only published after his death.

With his comments on ‘The Mask’, Ruber occupies a unique place in Dutch literary criticism, since no-one before him in the Netherlands had made any direct comments on this important poem. Including a translation of fifty-two lines from ‘The Mask’ and a complete rendition in Dutch of the ‘Song to the Men of England’, Ruber sets himself even more apart by acknowledging his allegiance to the poet’s rebellious inclination. Refusing to compromise the frank directness of Shelley’s lines, Ruber chooses to remain as closely as possible to the original, sacrificing rhyme in favour of semantic accuracy. In his evaluation, he stresses the fact that countering inequality and oppression was not a goal in itself for Shelley, but that he strove to offer a wholesome alternative to political and socio-economic injustice: ‘En als zoodanig kan Shelley nog altijd als voorbeeld gesteld worden aan vele “vrijdenkers” van onze dagen, die verzuimen, in plaats van den hemel na dit leven, dien zij den menschen ontnemen, hun een hemel op aarde te helpen tot stand brengen’ (p. 18). He concludes his piece with a snub to all ‘Slijmeringen en Droogstoppels’ who accuse him and his fellow socialists of being “oproermakers” en “opruiers” for these are ‘eeretitels, evenzeer als het Shelley, zoolang zijn taal gelezen wordt en zijn naam bekend is, tot eere zal strekken, dat hij, behalve een groot dichter, ook zulk een “opruier” was’ (p. 29).

Since Kloos, in his own writings, was to make virtually no direct references to the three poems which form the object of Ruber’s praise, we must look elsewhere to find proof of his familiarity with this important shoot in Shelley’s oeuvre. A number of

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4 It is not often acknowledged that E.J. Potgieter cites no less than ten stanzas (ll. 217-41, 246-61) from ‘The Mask’ in his ‘Herinneringen en Mijmeringen’ of 1872. Though Potgieter does not analyse the lines he quotes, the fact that he brings this particular poem to the attention of the Dutch reader (as well as the ‘Lines Written on Hearing the News of the Death of Napoleon’ which he quotes in full) does immense credit to his critical acumen. E.J Potgieter, ‘Herinneringen en mijmeringen’ in: Studiën en schetsen, 3 vols (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1879), vol. 1, pp. 179-284 (281-83). The uniqueness of Ruber’s article, however, lies in the fact that the English poet is (re)discovered and presented as a thoroughly political poet whose ideological insights can still appeal to the modern reader.

5 G. Dekker, however, calls it ‘n slappe vertaling, waarin die “Schwung” van die origineel ontbreek’. It is his contention that, whereas Shelley’s original is a real ‘strydkreet’, the effect of
annotations in one of his many editions of Shelley’s poetry allow us to reconstruct with a fair degree of plausibility Kloos’s personal judgement. Volume one of Koszul’s edition (see Appendix 2, item 6) groups Shelley’s lyrics and shorter poems around six themes called respectively: I. Romantic Period, II. Intellectual Period, III. The Poet’s Assertion, IV. Revolt and Despondency, V. Full Production, VI. Unrest and Gloom. The validity of such a presentation is not under investigation here. I wish to concentrate on the fourth section ‘Revolt and Despondency’ under which heading Koszul collected the poems which would have made up the ‘little volume of popular songs wholly political’. One of these is ‘The Mask of Anarchy’, which, as Ruber reminded his readers in *De Sociale Gids*, is Shelley’s eloquent reaction from Italy to the so-called Peterloo Massacre in Manchester on 16 August 1819, when a peaceful public meeting of labourers at St Peter’s Field was dispersed by force, leaving eleven civilians dead and hundreds injured. Written at the age of twenty-seven when Shelley was at the height of his poetic powers, the poem narrates in striking imagery with strong Biblical overtones the defeat of ‘the Skeleton, Anarchy’ (l. 74), revered by ‘Bishop, lawyers, peers’ (l. 29). ‘Anarchy’ thus is the personification of state-repression ‘Tearing up, and trampling down’ (l. 52) the country and its exploited inhabitants. In his Koszul edition Kloos drew a pencil mark against stanza eight which runs:

```plaintext
Last came Anarchy: he rode
On a white horse, splashed with blood;
He was pale even to the lips,
Like Death in the Apocalypse.
(ll. 30-33)
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In the margin, Kloos added: ‘daar willen de communisten heen’; a most singular comment indeed. It suggests that in some instances Kloos’s silence about or misrepresentations of Shelley’s political sedition simply sprouted from a mental inability to grasp the essence of Shelley’s ideals. However, at times there were also more sinister, ulterior motives at work.

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Ruber’s efforts is ‘of ‘n vriendelike, grys leraar, terwyl hy sy brilleglase opvryf, op die gemoed van ‘n paar moedswillige seuns perbeer werk’ (*Dekker*, p. 232).

In his contribution to *De Sociale Gids*, Ruber seems to imply that very few people in the Netherlands are aware of the iconoclastic nature of much of Shelley's writings. Could it be that those who are in the know are either smugly dismissive or apologetic or prefer to remain silent? Ruber expresses his surprise that 'nog niemand op het denkbeeld gekomen is in een boekje te “bewijzen” dat hij [Shelley] krankzinnig of ten minste dat hij een zenuwljder was' (p. 25). In 1888, however, E.J. Irving had already duly obliged in *Nederland*, implying that Shelley's radical ideals were fuelled by 'de abnormale toestand zijner zenuwen' which was 'grootendeels het gevolg van een vegetariaansch dieet, waar zijn gestel niet tegen kon'. Turning Shelley into a Puckish Ariel and displacing him to the irrational but harmless realm of fairy tales, she provides her readers with the following psychological profile: '[Shelley is] dit hartstochtelijk kind der revolutie, dit verbazingwekkend, onhandelbaar, uit het land der sprookjes afkomstig wezen' (p. 115).

Ruber’s piece in *De Sociale Gids* precedes Kloos’s later assertions about Shelley’s supposed non-involvement in worldly affairs by more than ten years. Moreover, his comment that he wanted ‘Shelley eens van een anderen kant te beschouwen dan gewoonlijk geschiedt’ strongly suggests that either critics and educated readers were reasonably well informed about Shelley criticism in Britain itself, or that there was already an established local context in which Shelley’s works were perceived and interpreted well before Kloos’s alleged introduction of the English poet in the Netherlands. Though Kloos’s Shelley pieces would not be published until the next century, as early as 1898 his perception of Shelley was exposed as fundamentally defective. Indeed, one of Kloos’s intimi soon recognised with penetrating insight Kloos’s failure to come to terms with the political Shelley. That person was Willem Anthony Paap who had played an indispensable role in the foundation of *De Nieuwe Gids*. Like Shelley, Paap was a political radical who advocated universal suffrage and who, as a lawyer, defended several radical leaders against charges of lese majesty. As a member of ‘Flanor’, the embryonic start of the circle around *De Nieuwe Gids*, Paap must have been well acquainted with Kloos’s Shelley

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infatuation, even before it took on a more public guise. Frans Erens later recalled in his *Vervlogen jaren* the enthusiasm of their gatherings at the time: ‘Als er op Flanor over iets wordt geredetwist, dan zegt Kloos: “Ja, zie je, je kunt wel gelijk hebben, maar Shelley ...!”’ Van der Goes zegt: “... maar Shakespeare ...!” Verwey zegt: “... maar Keats ...!”’

Karel Thijm [Lodewijk van Deyssel]: “... maar Zola ...!” Erens: “... maar Baudelaire ...!”" Paap’s name does not feature in this list, but it is beyond doubt that he was present during several of these literary debates.

In his masterly *roman à clef*, *Vincent Haman*, published when he had fallen from grace, Paap painted a startling picture of the mannerisms and artistic sterility to which some of this coterie had been reduced. One can easily recognise Lodewijk van Deyssel in the eponymous hero. Kloos appears in the novel as Moree, engaged in the following lucubrations:

‘s Avonds, ‘s nachts bij het lamplicht op zijn kamer las hij de grote engelse [sic] dichters. Maar bij zijn niet begrijpen van enige realiteit lieten de opstanden van een Shelley tegen de huichelarij der engelse mensentroep hem koud. Wat hij genoot was alleen wat in de schoolmeester-chrestomathieën heet: the high poetical diction; het was het beeld, de klank, het rythme; van het gevoel van Shelley klonk niet in hem na, dan het gevoel voor liefde.  

This was the first time that Kloos’s flawed perception of Shelley was openly attacked. Moree is explicitly set against Multatuli, Paap’s literary hero, whose ‘natuureis’ was ‘weer volkomen mens te worden, als noodzakelijke voorwaarde voor ware wetenschap, ware kunst’ (p. 59). In effect, Paap contrasts Multatuli’s, and by implication Shelley’s, altruism and humanity with Kloos’s egocentricity and aestheticism. Ruber too had conjured up Multatuli’s spirit in his piece in *De Sociale Gids*, castigating anyone who dismissed Shelley’s radical ideologies as ‘Slijmeringen en Droogstoppels’. It will also be

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8 Harry G.M. Prick, ed., *Frans Erens: Vervlogen jaren*. Met een woord vooraf door Sophie Erens-Bouvy. Privé-Domein 154 (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1989), p. 188-89. Also, it can be assumed that as a member of the editorial board of *De Nieuwe Gids*, Willem Paap was present at the board meeting on 6 January 1886 when Kloos’s proposal for the periodical to become a member of the Shelley Society in London was accepted ‘met algemeene stemmen’. The minutes of this meeting are reproduced in Garnt Stuiveling, *De Nieuwe Gids als geestelijk brandpunt*, Synopsis, 3rd edn (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1981), p. 125.

remembered that in his hostile commentary on Shelley's first major poem in his notes, Kloos had remarked on the similarity between *Queen Mab* and Multatuli's *Ideen*. Kloos's 'Losse aanteekeningen' on Shelley's so-called *Essay on Christianity* contain an analogous observation: 'De eenige Nederlander met wien men hem [i.e. Shelley] zou kunnen vergelijken is Multatuli' (Appendix 1, No. 1). Likewise, in the 'Verspreide aanteekeningen', Kloos cites from Shelley's letter to Peacock of 26 January 1819 where the poet declares that he considers 'poetry very subordinate to moral and political science'. This is followed by Kloos's note 'overeenkomst met Multatuli' (Appendix 1, No. 3). Hence, when Kloos later remarks, albeit in another context, that 'Wij, van dit Tijdschrift [i.e. *De Nieuwe Gids*], [...] geen Multatulianen [zijn], in denken, noch in voelen, in het Leven, noch in de Kunst', he reveals in a circuitous way the basic contrariety between his own artstic ideals and Shelley's. It is an antithesis which he would never be able to accept, let alone express, in a direct manner.

Should more proof be needed, a famous phrase in Kloos's preface to Perk's poems lends further substance to Paap's accusation about Moree's/Kloos's antisocial and self-centred inclinations: 'De poëzie is [...] eene vrouw, fier en geweldig, [...] die ons bindt aan haar blik, [...] opdat wij vrij zouden zijn van de wereldzorg' (*JPG1*, p. 59, *italics mine*). It was not only Paap's 'engelse mensentroep' but humanity as a whole above which Kloos's ideal poet ought to rise lest his vision become blurred and his expression tainted. If Paap possessed a first-hand knowledge of Kloos's Shelley veneration, it was in this preface to Perk's poems that the Dutch reading public could for the first time witness the all-important significance of the English poet for Kloos.\(^\text{10}\)


\(^{11}\) Some scholars believe that an article on 'Shelley en Byron', which appeared over the pseudonym 'N.Q.' in *De Portefeuille* on 17 July 1880, was written by Kloos. This would therefore make it his first published piece on Shelley. I am not entirely convinced though. It is true that Kloos was to publish in *De Nederlandsche Spectator* as 'Q N.', but the interpretation of Shelley's artistic legacy in the article from 1880 seems rather at odds with Kloos's later pronouncements on the English poet. Indeed, it contains a statement about Shelley's 'ethische-politieke evangelie, dat zijn werken nu sinds een halve eeuw aan de wereld verkondigd hebben', which is very atypical of Kloos. See N.Q., 'Shelley en Byron' in: *De Portefeuille: Letterkundig Weekblad*, 17 July 1880, pp. 153-54 (p. 154); reproduced in modern spelling in *WKJL*, pp. 276-79 (p. 278). Michâel does not divulge the conjectural nature of his attribution (see his comment on p. 90 of his study). In a private communication to me, Piet Kralt also expressed his doubts about the authorship of the article. It is not inconceivable that 'N.Q.' just summarised what he or she had read elsewhere, rather than giving his or her own analysis. It is therefore impossible to rule
first section of this seminal piece, often referred to as the Manifesto of the Eighties Movement, concludes with the words:

onze litteratuur [heeft] zich vastgeknoopt aan het liefelijkste en verhevenste van wat de verzonken geslachten hebben gezongen, [...] en aan de verrukkingen en adoraties van den schoonsten hymnus, dien ooit ons aller Moeder een sterveling heeft ingefluisterd, van die eeuwig-vloeiende wel van aandoening en zaligheid, den onvergelijkelijken Epipsychidion. (p. 72)

The aestheticising propensity in the statement is symptomatic of the poetry that would appear in the soon to be established De Nieuwe Gids. More than twenty years would pass, however, before Kloos would again publicly profess his worship for Shelley, in his preface to De Raaf’s Alastor translation (see next chapter). Once more, it was to one of Kloos’s (former) friends that we owe a frontal assault on the Dutch poet’s misleading Shelley characterisations.

Frederik van Eeden was very apprehensive of Kloos’s depoliticisation of Shelley. In the previous chapter I have quoted Van Eeden’s arguments about ethics in literature and Kloos’s condemnation of them. In an interview with E. d’Oliveira on 27 January 1909, Van Eeden, in turn, took the opportunity to challenge Kloos:

Hij [i.e. Shelley] was door-en-door een maatschappijmens in zijn streven. [...] [Shelley] maakte tendens-kunst in [de] zin [die Kloos daaraan geeft]. Hij verheerlijkt zonder ophouden ‘the beautiful’, ‘the honest’, alle goeie menselijke eigenschappen. Zij [i.e. Kloos and his associates] zeggen: moraal in de kunst is nonsens. Maar Shelley, die de grootste lyricus geweest is, is voortdurend vervuld van ethisch idealisme.13

out Kloos altogether as the author. Nevertheless, even if the piece were written by Kloos, it does not detract from my argument that readers in the Netherlands were first openly introduced to Kloos’s Shelley worship in the 1882 preface to Jacques Perk’s poems, as Kloos did not hide behind a pseudonym but signed the piece with his own name.

12 In some of his ‘Literaire Kroniek[en]’ of the 1880s and 1890s, Kloos made occasional references to Shelley, yet none was devoted exclusively to the English poet until later.

Four years earlier, in 1905, Van Eeden had already made what could be perceived as another confrontational gesture towards Kloos. In the very first number of *De Beweging*, set up by Albert Verwey in an attempt to counter Kloos’s sterile aestheticism which, he felt, had driven Dutch literature into an impasse, Frederik van Eeden published his ‘Shelley’s Epipsychidion’. This is more significant than it may seem. Van Eeden’s ‘hymn’ on *Epipsychidion* possesses a distinct programmatic quality, insofar as it demarcates the new artistic and intellectual territory of *De Beweging*. The opening line is in itself a new departure from the Eighties principles: ‘Een vuurstorm van vervoerende gedachten’ (l. 1). Thoughts, ideas, not mere imagery and ‘woordkunst’ matter now. Shelley’s poem is no longer a collection of lines whispered into the poet’s delicate ear by a cloying Muse.

Dit is geen teeder lied van liefde en leed,
dit is geen mijmerende klacht van minne,
het is een donderende vrijheidskreet
en houdt het helderst vuur van wijsheid inne
dat ziedend in der menschheid boezem lag
en losbreekt met verbijsterenden slag.
(ll. 7-12)

It is not unlikely that Van Eeden deliberately harked back to Kloos’s preface to Jacques Perk’s *Gedichten* (1882). There, the reference to Shelley’s ‘hymnus’ *Epipsychidion* was given pride of place and, in effect, used to ratify the poetic principles set out in the preface, thereby turning it into a manifesto of a new literary generation. Van Eeden emulated Kloos by enlisting Shelley in the ranks of the new Dutch avant-garde which found a more sympathetic platform in *De Beweging*. It may be a coincidence, but in 1906, a complete prose translation by K.H. de Raaf of *Epipsychidion* was published in *De Nieuwe Gids*, as if to reassert the periodical’s exclusive claims to the poet.

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14 Frederik van Eeden, ‘Shelley’s Epipsychidion’ in: *De Beweging*, 1905, pp. 207-209. This poem was given a central place in Van Eeden’s collection of poetry *Dante en Beatrice* (Amsterdam: W. Versluys, 1908), pp. 54-56.

15 K.H. de Raaf, trl., ‘Epipsychidion in proza overgezet’ in: *De Nieuwe Gids*, March 1906, pp. 321-35. The importance both periodicals attached to *Epipsychidion* is also borne out by their reaction to an article in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* of 4 March 1916 which comments on a new interpretation of the first lines of Shelley’s poem. Whereas De Raaf’s article gives various reasons which appear to invalidate this new reading, Verwey suggests a totally different
The sheer force and impetuosity of Van Eeden’s language and imagery characterising Epipsychidion is very much at variance with the notion of Shelley as the archetypal poet-dreamer.

Het is alsof een volk verworpen slaven
roerloos gekneveld ligt op donker land,
het lijf omschalmd, ’t gelaat in stof begraven,
terwijl een vaal gewolk de lucht bespant, —
maar één verrijst en doet door machtig wringen
met luiden klank de bloed’ge boeien springen.
(II. 37-42)

Van Eeden’s poem prognosticates how Shelley’s spirit was to prove a constitutive force for De Beweging. As such, it also anticipates the various Shelley translations which were to fill many of the journal’s pages in the coming years.

Kloos was not only attacked for his insensitivity to Shelley’s political radicalism. In the previous chapter, I drew on Francis Thompson’s Shelley as a supreme example of Victorian, mawkish Shelleyolatry. The critical sketch on the poet’s life and works was introduced by a plea to enthuse his (Catholic) readership for poetry again. Thompson’s own miniature ‘Defence of Poetry’ with its appeal to his fellow believers could not fail to attract the attention in the Netherlands of De Katholiek: Godsdienstig, Geschied- en Letterkundig Maandschrift. In an appraisal of the booklet, H. Wismans endorses Thompson’s vindication of poetry, displaying a keen understanding of Shelley’s works in the process. During the nine years which had passed since the publication of Thompson’s critical sketch in 1908, however, the Western world had changed beyond recognition. In his review, Wismans displayed a perfect awareness of this change. Written when the Great War was in full sway, the article poses the question: ‘Wie durft nog van dichterlijke idealen spreken in onze dagen van harden strijd?’ (p. 86). Yet, Wismans warns his readers against such ‘koud-verstandelijk’ reasoning and, instead, advances interpretation, a ‘persoonlijke uitlegging’ which again seems very much like an act of appropriation. See Albert Verwey, ‘Aanteekening: Shelley’s Epipsychidion’ in: De Beweging, April 1916, pp. 66-68 (p. 68); K.H. de Raaf, ‘De verklaring der eerste verzen van Shelley’s Epipsychidion’ in: De Nieuwe Gids, April 1916, pp. 587-90.

poetry as a useful antidote against unproductive disillusionment and dehumanisation, especially ‘nu de sociale nooden een beroep doen op onze breede menschelijkheid’. Trying to counter potential accusations of ill-founded naivété, Wismans makes the following observation:

De bewering, dat er tusschen dichtkunst en sociale werkzaamheid eenig verband bestaat, is [...] niet nieuw. Zij vormt de hoofdstelling van Shelley’s Defence of Poetry. In Shelley zelf, die naar zijn eigen meening evenzeer wereldhervormer als dichter was, zien wij een levend bewijs er van. (p. 87)

The invigorating powers of poetry should not be underestimated, nor should their ability, ‘in den strijd onzer dagen’, to furnish ‘hulp en bemoediging’ (p. 88). This was also Shelley’s understanding:

Hij [Shelley] tracht aan te toonen, dat zij [poëzie] meer dan een genotmiddel is, dat zij inderdaad nuttig, ja noodzakelijk is voor den zedelijken en maatschappelijken vooruitgang van het menschdom, omdat zij in ons het gevoel en de verbeelding, naar zijne opvatting de twee hoofdfactoren bij iedere sociale hervorming, sterkt en ontwikkelt. (p. 87)

Instead of Kloos’s conception of poetry as an inward looking gaze, Wismans acknowledges the centrifugal forces of poetry. Poetry, he claims very much in Shelley’s spirit, ‘doet ons uit onszelven treden, om mee te leven met de gedachten en gevoelens van anderen’ (p. 89). The imagination, which Kloos recognises in Shelley’s work as artistic, noncommittal creativity expressed in dreamlike visions, is here put in its proper context. However, Wismans warns against the very real risk to which poets like Kloos and, indeed Shelley, are particularly susceptible.

De poëzie kan misbruikt worden, niet alleen door haar te verlagen, maar ook door haar te verheffen. Voor velen, die het geloof verloren hebben, is de kunst het hoogste geworden en heeft zij de plaats van den godsdienst ingenomen. (p. 90)

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This was very much Shelley’s premiss in Prometheus Unbound; see Chapter Four.
Wismans is clearly thinking of the so-called ‘Schoonheidscultus’, so uncompromisingly put forward in Perk’s audacious sonnet ‘Δεινη Θεος’ in the Mathilde cycle with the lines: ‘Schoonheid, o gij, wier naam geheiligd zij, / Uw wil geschiede; kome uw heerschappij; / Naast u aanbidde de aard geen andren god!’; a creed heartily embraced by Willem Kloos (JPG1, p. 153). Wismans’s remark is nonetheless indicative of how intimate the link between Shelley’s poetry and the Kloos circle had become in the consciousness of many Dutch critics.

Critical of Kloos in another way was Anthonie Donker’s De episode van de vernieuwing onzer poëzie, which saw the light in 1929. Of course Shelley has pride of place in the section dealing with the ‘buitenlandsche invloeden’ on the Eighties Movement. Donker is perceptive enough a critic to recognise the basic difference between the Dutch writers and Shelley, who ‘muitte tegen de maatschappij, omdat hij een edeler en zuiverder gemeenschap verlangde. Hij trok zich niet in zichzelf en zijn kunst, in een “artistic monasticism” terug’ (p. 46). In this respect Donker echoes Van Eeden’s earlier estimate of Kloos’s approach to Shelley. Though Shelley’s name crops up regularly in Kloos’s articles in De Nieuwe Gids, few would contradict Donker’s claim that ‘Diepgaande studie hebben de tachtigers destijds van Shelley en Keats niet gemaakt’ (p. 46). His conclusion may be phrased somewhat awkwardly — ‘De Shelley-vereering der tachtigers was klaarblijkelijk meer hevig dan diep’ (p. 46) — but the underlying idea contains more than just a modicum of truth. What this representative body of critical commentaries demonstrates is that during his own lifetime, and despite his own convictions, Kloos’s authority as an expert on Shelley was anything but uncontested. No-one doubted the sincerity of his admiration for Shelley, but a significant number of writers, among them Frederik van Eeden, Willem Paap, Albert Verwey, and as we shall see next, Herman Gorter, tried to redress Kloos’s one-sided readings.

2. Towards a synthesis: radicalist and lyricist

Before we can focus on Herman Gorter’s Shelley criticism, we must first turn our attention to David Spanjaard, since he occupies somewhat of a middle position in between the ‘aesthetic-individualist’ and ‘ethical-political’ camps. In 1922, David

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18 Anthonie Donker, De episode van de vernieuwing onzer poëzie (1880-1894) (Utrecht: De Gemeenschap, 1929).
Spanjaard, translator of *Epipsychidion*, ‘The Cloud’, and Keats’s ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, contributed to four consecutive issues of *De Nieuwe Gids* with an elaborate study under the title ‘Shelley: De dichter der universeele liefde’. Some of the statements in his analysis are in alignment with Kloos’s views, though Spanjaard is inclined to attribute more significance to the political aspects of Shelley’s art. Spanjaard is particularly successful in outlining the profound influence of Godwin’s principles and philosophy on the poet. In this respect, he compensates for Kloos’s earlier silence on the subject. Occasionally, Kloos’s voice makes itself heard through Spanjaard’s prose, as in: “‘Queen Mab’ is de onrijpe vrucht dezer jonge liefde [van gevoelsidealisme]. In dien tijd was Shelley nog, als ik het op deze wijze voor ons Hollanders eens mag duidelijk maken, Multatulaan’ (p. 32). This qualification, as we have seen, is far from a straightforward approbation. Fortunately, this misguided, ‘Multatulian’ enthusiasm was only a brief spell in Shelley’s life, Spanjaard intimates. Also in harmony with Kloos’s ideas is the emphasis he places on Shelley’s art as orientated towards an indefinite future: ‘Shelley zag ergens aan den horizon — het doet er niet toe op welken afstand — het schoone, verre ideaal, hij zag het einddoel waarnaar de menschheid moet streven.’ (pp. 253-54).

Furthermore, Spanjaard, like Kloos, sees a dichotomy between Shelley the poet on the one hand, and Shelley the prose writer and reformer on the other. ‘[Soms] hooren wij [...] het geluid van de twee Shelley’s die wij kennen: de in Prometheaansche verrukking zingende, en de practische hervormer’ (p. 256). Whereas Kloos blatantly ignored the latter in his public pieces, Spanjaard recognised Shelley’s politics as a streak running through the entirety of his oeuvre, even if the combination with poetry became a rather ineffective affair. ‘Als dichter kon Shelley slechts de schildering eener ideale wereld, of van de wording dier wereld bevredigen; doch zijn geest werkte onophoudelijk aan de vraagstukken van actueele hervorming’ (p. 254). Spanjaard nevertheless refers more than once to ‘The Mask of Anarchy’ with considerable appreciation, and he quotes

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the sonnet 'England in 1819' in full. Still, Spanjaard seems to contradict himself when he claims:

Maar Shelley zelf heeft juist [...] een scherp onderscheid gemaakt tusschen idealen en onmiddellijk invoerbare hervormingen: uit alle porieën [sic] van zijn proza dringt de waarschuwing practijk niet te vereenzelvigen met schoone, nastreefbare, doch slechts in verre toekomst wellicht te verwezenlijken idealen. (p. 258, *italics mine*)

Such a statement sits rather uncomfortably in a study which had pertained a few paragraphs earlier that it did not matter to Shelley when his ideals would become reality ('het doet er niet toe op welken afstand [aan de horizon hij zijn idealen zag]'). The distinction between Shelley the pamphleteer of 'actuality' and the poet of 'potentiality' was one embraced by Kloos too, in whose case it implied a marked difference in aesthetic appreciation. Spanjaard, however, seems to deplore the apparent equivocality which he, implicitly, perpetuates in his critical piece.

The underestimation of Shelley the practical reformer as evident in his political prose has led to a distorted view of his poetry. Thus, it seems that Spanjaard wanted to redress the balance and see prose writer and poet reconciled as inseparable manifestations of Shelley's vocation:

De ontzaglijke zedelijke kracht, de wijding, de sanctie die de democratie aan de hulp van een dichter als Shelley zoude kunnen ontleenen, al deze factoren blijven ongebruikt, hijzelf beroofd van dien invloed, die hem het liefst zoude zijn geweest, — en zoo heet hij ook voor de groote menigte de onmaatschappelijke dichter! (p. 266)

If Kloos could find himself entirely in such pronouncements, at one moment in his essay, Spanjaard allowed himself a statement which may have put the Dutch poet-critic on the defence. Will the readers of the article not have detected a wedge driven between the English poet and the Eighties Movement as personified by Kloos when Spanjaard expounds on Shelley's greatness 'omdat Shelley nimmer een dichter uitsluitend om de kunst heeft willen zijn, het voortbrengen van schoone klanken en fraaie beelden in schoonen vorm hem betrekkelijk onverschillig is geweest' (p. 484)? Much closer to Kloos's views, however, is the next statement: 'Zichzelf verwezenlijken, zijn ideaal van zelf-volmaking en van de verbroedering der menschheid nastreven, en daarvan getuigen,
omdat zelf-uitdrukking voor den dichter levensvoorwaarde is, — ziedaar zijn
dichterschap’ (p. 485). The rest of Spanjaard’s article is a passionate rebuttal of a number
of charges levelled against Shelley as writer of *Epipsychidion*, a work about which the
Dutch critic felt very strongly. Five years later, this enthusiasm would culminate in the
publication of a Dutch translation of the complete poem. The introduction to the
translation is in fact a much condensed summary of the main ideas expressed in the
exhaustive article. Kloos must have appreciated his friend’s genuine admiration, for when
Spanjaard died on 3 April 1935, he published a commemorative sonnet in *De Nieuwe
Gids* the next month, writing how Spanjaard ‘zich geven / [Kon] met volle Ziel aan
Shelley, tot Wien diep gedreven / David, ge u voeldet, juist als ik, op eens’. In fact,
running to seventy-seven pages, Spanjaard’s study is the longest and most analytical piece
on Shelley ever to appear in *De Nieuwe Gids*. It was, however, purely by chance that the
article found its way into Kloos’s periodical. Spanjaard was honest enough to admit to
Kloos in a letter written on 30 March 1922:

> Ik heb mijn Shelley-artikel van “de Stem” terugontvangen, echter tegen betaling der
> zet-kosten, die méér bedragen dan het honorarium; een juiste waardemeter van
> intellectueelen tegen handenarbeid in onze maatschappij (ik beweer niet dat het in de
> “komende samenleving” in dit opzicht beter zal gesteld zijn!). Ik ben dus vrij, en hoop
> U binnenkort het eerste gedeelte van mijne studie te kunnen zenden. Ik begroot het
> geheel op ongeveer 60 bladzijden druk, doch het kan ook iets meer worden.

With its extensive quotations from Shelley’s prose works, Spanjaard’s piece demonstrates
how this side of Shelley’s artistic calling started to arouse more interest around 1920. Of
course, Shelley’s poetry was readily available in numerous (cheap) editions, whereas the

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21 David Spanjaard, trl., *P.B. Shelley: Epipsychidion. In Nederlandsche verzen overgebracht,
ingeleid en toegelicht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1927). That the poem had a particular appeal to
members of the ‘Eighties Movement’ is also borne out by the fact that the painter Jan Veth tried
his hand at an unrhymed translation. See J. Huizinga, *Leven en werk van Jan Veth* (Haarlem:
H.D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1927), p. 13. Also unpublished is Albert Verwey’s translation of
ll. 160-73, kept in the Albert Verwey Collections at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), AV
III.49.

22 Willem Kloos, ‘Nagedachte aan Mr. D. Spanjaard † 3 April 1935’, in: *De Nieuwe Gids*, May
ambities: Van oude Spanjaarden en de verslaving die genealogie heet XI’ in: *Mishpagazette*,

23 Unpublished letter from David Spanjaard to Willem Kloos, dated 30 March 1929, held in the
Literary Museum in The Hague (K533 B2).
prose writings were far more neglected by publishers and readers alike, even in Britain. The publication of Shelley’s accomplished *A Philosophical View of Reform*, for instance, coincided with the appearance of Spanjaard’s essay in *De Nieuwe Gids*, which is exactly one hundred and one years after its original composition. Even then it was issued only in a limited, bibliophile edition.

In 1898, the same year that Paap presented his *Vincent Homan* to the Dutch reading public, Herman Gorter published the first instalment of what was to become a substantial five-part series outlining his ‘Kritiek op de litteraire beweging van 1880 in Holland’. It filled many a page of *De Nieuwe Tijd*, the journal Gorter co-edited with Frank van der Goes and Henriëtte Roland Holst. In the second part, entitled ‘Veertien Jaar Litteratuur-Geschiedenis door Willem Kloos’ there is the occasional reference to Shelley’s verse which is characterised as ‘licht, schitterend, sterk persoonlijk, zonder sterk verband met andere menschen, zonder diepe kennis der wereld en de zedelijkheid die daaruit ontstaat’ (p. 38). Gorter probably felt that he had not done justice to the English poet, for when a greatly expanded version of his critique appeared in *De Nieuwe Tijd* of 1908-1909, he had included a major section on Shelley’s importance as seen from a historical-materialist point of view. This analysis was further enlarged with additional material to make up a complete chapter of his important study, *De groote dichters* which finally rolled off the presses in 1935, eight years after Gorter’s sudden death in Brussels. Gorter eulogises Shelley as one of the greatest poets of mankind, and quotes generously from *The Address*, *On Life*, *Speculations on Metaphysics*, and *A Philosophical View of Reform*. Gorter, of course, reads Shelley’s oeuvre in a firm political and socio-economic context. As such, he provides his readers with a more complete picture of the poet and his works.

Als ooit een dichterhart in maatschappijstormen is gegaan, waar het de heftigste gewaarwordingen, de ontroerendste ademen der maatschappelijke golven
sympathisch kon voelen, het felst en vurigst partij kon kiezen, de vreeselijkste visioenen kon zien en de heerlijkste, helste, of in neveling van verlangen bevangen dromen kon dromen, dan was dat Shelley’s hart. (p. 415)

These lines appear to be far removed from Gorter’s earlier statement that Shelley’s verse is ‘zonder sterk verband met andere menschen, zonder diepe kennis der wereld en de zedelijkheid, die daaruit ontstaat’ and which Hein Boeken felt compelled to refute in the strongest possible terms in his regular feature ‘Aanteekeningen over historie en literatuur’ in De Nieuwe Gids of 1899.26 The ‘heiligen dichter’, Boeken declares in his brief article, was ‘gemeenzaam [...] met de diepste geheimnissen der wereld’ (p. 63), and he attests to the poet’s ‘onbluschbaren hartstocht, dien hij had om de wereld te hervormen’ as borne out by Laon and Cythna and Prometheus Unbound ‘waarin hij niet meer philosopheert, maar beeldt’ (p. 64). This last comment is revealing as it implies that Shelley’s philosophy was almost a barrier to be overcome before the poet could arrive at painting his splendid visions.27

As explained, Gorter’s critical remark appeared in the first version of his ‘Kritiek op de litteraire beweging van 1880 in Holland’, but was scrapped in the later thoroughly revised editions. The critical note struck by Gorter can also be heard in a poem entitled ‘Shelley, Dichter van Laon and Cythna en van Prometheus Unbound, en Dante’.28 It is interesting that Gorter should focus on these two poems in which Shelley elaborated must fully on his political ideals. The lines in Gorter’s composition that are related to Shelley read:

26 Hein Boeken, ‘Aanteekeningen over historie en literatuur: Gorter over Shelley’ in: De Nieuwe Gids, July 1898, pp. 61-64.
27 To do justice to Hein Boeken, however, we should also turn to his short contribution to De Nieuwe Gids of November 1915 in which he points his readership to the relevance of Shelley’s art for modern mankind. A short discussion of Shelley’s drama Hellas, a work, Boeken claims, whose topicality for the present day with the tensions in the Balkan is all too evident, leads him to the following comment: ‘Is de konde, door de genieën ons gebracht, onbegrepen aan ons voorbijgegaan? Schoonheid meenden wij dat zij ons brachten — maar de geheime wijsheid, die in hun werken school, we hebben niet getraacht die te ontraadseien’ (p. 741). He concludes: ‘En de werkelijkheid hebben wij getracht te benaderen — door waarneming — om haar te beelden. [...] Had iemand het gedacht dat dit het doel was dat de menschheid in haar vooruitgangs-jacht, nastreefde — de wereldoorlog?’ (p. 741, italics mine). Hein Boeken, ‘Aanteekeningen over kunst en letteren: Shelley’s Hellas’ in: De Nieuwe Gids, November 1915, pp. 739-41.
Shelley, uw fantasmagorie van licht,
Chaotisch, moet verkeerd in heldren dag
Der arbeiders. —

[...] 
Niet door een wonder, Shelley, komt de vrijheid, niet
Door den wil van één man. De arbeid is ‘t,
De arbeiders, die liefde en vrijheid brengen.

[...] 
Maar uwe zoete droom, Shelley, is de onze.
Uw eedle, zachte, gouden droomlichtgeest
Omweve onze marmeren gedachten.

(ll. 1-3, 8-10, 14-16)

The charge laid down against Shelley of being a rather impractical dreamer sounds familiar indeed. Some years later, Gorter apparently changed his opinion. A possible explanation for the later adjustment of his original estimation may be found in Gorter’s initial unfamiliarity with the political pamphlets which leave so little room for misinterpreting Shelley’s ideological slant. Contributions by Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx to the Neue Zeit, labelling Shelley as a socialist poet, and referred to by Gorter in his revised study, must have been an additional incentive for him to study the poet’s writings more thoroughly.29 There was already a longer tradition in the German speaking world to treat Shelley’s writings as highly political works bearing witness of the social turmoil in early nineteenth-century Britain.30 It is not impossible that Gorter became aware of this through his reading of German studies and articles on the English poet. On one occasion, K.H de Raaf also pointed out the political fascination Shelley held over the Germans: ‘Wat hem [Shelley] in de kringen van het “Junge Deutschland” populair maakte, was [...] de sociale en politieke strekking van sommige gedichten. Men bewonderde den vrijdenker’.31

29 Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx-Aveling, ‘Shelley als Sozialist’ in: Die Neue Zeit: Revue des geistigen und öffentlichen Lebens, 6, 1888, pp. 540-50; the same authors published a companion piece ‘Shelley und der Sozialismus’ four years later in Die Neue Zeit, 10, 1892, pp. 581-88. See also footnote 45.
30 For details see Solomon Liptzin, Shelley in Germany (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924). A concise summary of Litzin’s doctoral dissertation can be found in Dekker, pp. 33-35.
Gorter took issue, however, with Aveling and Eleanor Marx who saw in Shelley a socialist writer of the first order. Shelley, Gorter objects, was not aware of any class struggle, nor does he mention communal labour in his writings, two essential components of the socialist doctrine. In his visions, Shelley sees people as possessors, which is proof that he is thoroughly steeped in bourgeois values. It is beyond doubt that Shelley was full of 'sociaal gevoel' (p. 445), but this does not turn him into a socialist. Nonetheless, and unlike Kloos, Gorter understood how politics constitute an all-pervasive element in Shelley's oeuvre:

If Shelley's 'revolutionary' poems and his 'individualistic' works are interdependent, then it is equally true that there exists an organic link between his political prose and his verse. His poetry is by no means less political than the pamphlets: 'Wij zien Shelley niets méér vereeren dan de Fransche revolutie, en in zijn verzen alles doen wat hij als dichter kon, opdat een dergelijke omwenteling, zij het op andere wijze, in Engeland kwam' (p. 440, italics mine). Even more straightforward is the following observation:

Rather than seeking a justification for two seemingly irreconcilable streaks in Shelley's temperament, thereby ascribing an almost schizophrenic personality to the poet, or discarding one crucial part of Shelley's poethood as was Kloos's tactics, Gorter was capable of seeing Shelley's oeuvre as one harmonious whole. Gorter also recognised the significance of Shelley's atheism as a liberating force. The ensuing atmosphere of freedom

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32 Before him, Frederik van Eeden had not shied away from using the appellation 'socialist' to refer to Shelley (as well as Heinrich Heine and Victor Hugo). See his article 'Over humaniteit' in:
and lightness which surrounds him intimates how he was a 'kind in de wereld'. In contrast to many before him, Gorter was not infantalising Shelley, for he added in a conscientious footnote: 'Kind slechts omdat zijn ziel zoo zuiver bleef. Want in zijn practische daden en zijn theoretisch denken was hij een man' (p. 456).

It is a telltale sign that it was Boeken who applied himself to the task of reacting to (the first version of) Gorter's critique and not Kloos. Did Kloos fear any direct confrontation on a matter about which he was perhaps not very confident himself? How to account for the fact that Kloos did not even respond when the greatly expanded 'Kritiek' was issued in 1908 and 1909? It may be argued that the absence of any reaction is in itself eloquent proof of Kloos's discomfort. In a way, Kloos left it to K.H. de Raaf to respond, albeit in the form of an afterthought hidden away in a footnote to an article devoted to Shelley criticism in more general terms. Significantly enough, it is not so much the political exposes on Shelley which are the subject of De Raaf's attacks, though it can be safely assumed that these fall under the 'allerlei plaatsen, hetzij door de voorstelling, hetzij door de oorzakelijke verbinding der feiten [die] tot tegenspraak prikkel[en]'. Rather, De Raaf is unhappy about Gorter's exaggerated claim that 'Shelley als een toren boven Goethe staat'. That is all. De Raaf concludes his footnote rather haughtily, that he wishes to say about Gorter's study; and so one of the most original specimens of Shelley criticism to appear in the Netherlands was met with near-silence by those for whom Shelley was ostensibly part and parcel of their intellectual life. By the time De groote dichters was on sale in 1935, Kloos had reached seventy-six years of age and had long since begun to devote his attention almost exclusively to the composition of his versified spiritual autobiography, published in monthly instalments in De Nieuwe Gids as his 'Binnengedachten'. Obviously, the days of vigorous and direct exchange of ideas with contemporary writers and critics were long since gone.

3. Kloos as a follower of Shelley

The previous decade, however, had witnessed the publication of some highly revealing Shelley contributions by Kloos. The first of these was a response to an article from 1920 by Frans Coenen, editor of Groot Nederland, which induced Kloos to write a most

De Nieuwe Gids, February 1891, pp. 315-29.
intriguing review. After having mildly castigated his colleague for misspelling Shelley’s name (as Shelly) and for calling him a Lake Poet (an appellation usually reserved for Wordsworth and Coleridge), Kloos dilates upon Coenen’s appraisal of the relationship between the English poet and the ‘Eighties Movement’. He is particularly offended by Coenen’s use of the word ‘volgelingen’ to qualify the members of the ‘Movement’. The apparent incrimination compels him to formulate a categorical denial: ‘“volgelingen”, dus navolgers en zweerders bij eenigen bepaalden vreemden of Nederlandschen dichter is niemand van het zich “individualistisch” noemende geslacht der echte Tachtigers gelukkig ooit geweest, want ooit behoeven te zijn’ (p. 419). The implied charge of epigonism in Coenen’s piece had struck a sensitive chord:

En ikzelf b.v., als ik mij hier óók mag noemen — ofschoon ik Shelley heel hoog stel, ja, het waag te verklaren, dat hij misschien de allergrootste onder de negentiende-eeuwsche dichters is, ik heb toch nooit ook maar één enkel gedicht van hem nagevolgd, ja zelfs geen afzonderlijken regel, terwijl hij door zijn proza, waar hij het steeds over heel andere dingen heeft als ik in het mijne, mijn evenmin op den weg helpen kon. (p. 419)

Nowhere else has Kloos been so dismissive about the artistic connexion between himself and Shelley. The uncomfortable situation Kloos found himself in was, of course, entirely of his own making. After his continuous attempts in previous years to forge — in both senses — a literary kinship linking the English Romantic with himself, it is hardly surprising that some should perceive the relationship between the English and Dutch poets in terms of model and follower. Loyal as ever, De Raaf later observed in his review of Dekker’s study on the influence of Keats’s and Shelley’s works on Dutch nineteenth-century writers: ‘Kloos lijkt mij een te oorspronkelijke en spontane natuur om voor de stemming van zijn lyriek van anderen te borgen’. He elaborates: ‘Wat we intuïtief voelden wordt door dit proefschrift bevestigd: Kloos is van al de dichters [of the Eighties Movement] het meest zich zelf’. This claim, however, was preceded by this elucidating

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34 A revised version of Frans Coenen’s article was incorporated in his Studiën van de Tachtiger Beweging, 2nd edn (Utrecht: Reflex, 1979); the reference to Shelley can be found on p. 16. For Kloos’s response, see ‘Literaire Kroniek’ in: De Nieuwe Gids, September 1920, pp. 417-22.
35 K.H. De Raaf. ‘Shelley en Keats in Nederland’ in: Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, Saturday 1 May 1926. This was the third in a total of four contributions devoted to Dekker’s dissertation. The other three sections appeared on 17 April, 24 April, and 8 May 1926 respectively.
phrase: 'Inderdaad, in *A Defence of Poetry* heeft Shelley gedachten uitgesproken die Kloos weer opvat, soms wat sterker en scherper uitdrukt en tot uitgangspunt maakt van zijn beoordelingen — aan toevallige overeenkomst mogen we hier niet denken.' Touching on the very core of Kloos’s aesthetic beliefs, he continues with the unambiguous assertion: ‘Het grondbeginsel van alle kunst dat Vorm en Inhoud één zijn, [...] de eisch van individueele expressie der individueele emotie, [...] het inzicht dat de echte poëzie opstijgt uit het onderbewuste [...]; we vinden het alles reeds uitgesproken in de “Defence”’. These poetic battle cries, which generations of readers would come to regard as the very essence of Kloos’s artistic creed, are actually recycled material, De Raaf suggests. This seems to stand in complete opposition to Kloos’s earlier pronouncements. It would be wrong, however, to start doubting De Raaf’s fealty to his literary master and to think that he presumed to steer an independent course in his critical evaluation of Kloos. For the modern reader who should raise the objection that De Raaf did not read Kloos’s passions well and that the Dutch poet, had he seen the review in advance, would have objected to De Raaf’s representation, the following extract from an unpublished letter written by De Raaf settles the case:

Mijn bespreking van het proefschrift over Keats-Shelley van den Zuidafrikaan is nog niet geheel gereed. Ik heb zo weinig [...] tijd om er aan te werken maar het grootste deel is klaar vóór we met Paschen naar Schouwen gaan. Ik zou dit vóór mijn vertrek toch graag even komen voorlezen. Dit was immers de afspraak?

Six years after Coenen’s public claim, Kloos had apparently stopped seeing anything objectionable in Shelley being presented as the rich source for his own theoretical poetics (as is the case in De Raaf’s review). Two possible explanations present themselves to account for this U-turn on Kloos’s part. First, with the term ‘proza’ in his answer to Coenen he in fact referred exclusively to Shelley’s political pamphlets so alien to his own ideologies, and not to the *Defence*. Secondly, artistic originality, as well as poetic and critical independence had to prevail over any reputed, direct kinship, even if it meant momentarily weakening the self-proclaimed bond with his literary idol. Kloos very likely wanted to be seen as on equal footing with the English poet and not as a mere follower.

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36 Unpublished letter from De Raaf to Kloos, dated 21 March 1926 and part of the De Raaf Collections at the Literary Museum in The Hague (R105 B1).
Alfred Haighton, one of the editors of *De Nieuwe Gids* who was to turn it into an unashamedly fascist publication in later years, launched into the following panegyric in the special Kloos edition, mourning the loss of its founder: ‘Willem Kloos was onze grootste Dichter. Zoekt men naar zijn evenknie, dan vindt men, binnen onze grenzen, slechts P.C. Hooft en, misschien, Vondel; buiten de landspalen Verlaine, Browning, Shelley, Keats […]’.37 This is probably how Kloos himself would have liked to be remembered: not as a ‘volgeling’ of Shelley’s, but as his ‘evenknie’.

Kloos also takes exception to Coenen’s claim that the ‘Eighties Movement’ was a short-lived moment in Dutch literary history whose influence has long since ceased to be noted. Kloos retorts:

> de appreciatie die in de allerlaatste jaren door den Staat aan eenigen onzer generatie is betoond, terwijl één onzer ook Koninklijke belangstelling mocht ondervinden, is niet een toevallig verschijnsel, of de welwillende daad van een paar vriendelijke menschen, maar het doorslaandste teeken welk een enorme en volhardende stuwkracht er in de waarheid der nieuwe letterkundige beginselen zit [...]. (p. 421)

This ‘één onzer’ is, of course, Willem Kloos himself who had recently been awarded (on his sixtieth birthday) a ‘Huisorde van Oranje’ and been invited to ‘Huis ten Bosch’ in June 1919 by Queen Wilhelmina. We may ask the question whether the ‘nieuwe letterkundige beginselen’ formulated thirty-five years ago had not somewhat lost their ‘stuwkracht’, but Kloos remained convinced throughout his entire life of the continued relevance of his own poetics for Dutch literature. It is the same self-assurance which underpins his approach to Shelley’s works; an approach he never thought in need of any adjustments. As far as literary principles and political ideology are concerned, the Kloos we encounter in his articles of the 1920s is in essence hardly distinguishable from the youthful co-founder of *De Nieuwe Gids*. In his later years, the charge of repetitiveness and artistic effete ness was more than once levelled against him. In the meantime, some of Kloos’s much repeated claims stuck in the readers’ minds.

As a consequence and as demonstrated by Coenen’s article, Kloos’s strategy of promoting himself persistently as the direct descendant of Shelley’s literary creeds was sometimes too successful. Scores of writers, including some of his closest friends, would

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regard Kloos as a graft on Shelley's sensitive plant. It made someone like Brian W. Downs write with confidence: 'Kloos's general critical position is virtually conditioned by the Defence of Poetry, from which he took not only the wider theory that poetry springs from the unconscious [...] but also the idea that language originated in primitive man's cries for admiration'. In the previous chapter I have argued how selective Kloos was in his borrowings from Shelley's treatise, but this was not something that was always recognised by the Dutch poet's contemporaries. Theodoor Weevers was altogether more balanced in his analysis, but believes nonetheless that the 'fulness of his [i.e. Kloos's] powers was not revealed to him' until 'he came across the works of Shelley and therein literally recognised himself'. In other words, we owe Kloos's poetic oeuvre as it came to be written to a chance encounter with Shelley's works in a bookseller's window-display which was to catapult a passively receptive young man of some talents who had been quite ignorant about his own potential into the limelight of the Dutch literary stage. As we have seen earlier, Kloos's personal account in which he owns up to his initial disappointment after having read the first few pages of his newly acquired treasure paints a rather different picture. Weevers's statement would be equally valid (and perhaps even slightly less inaccurate) if, for instance, August von Platen's name were substituted for Shelley's in the above quotation.

Gerben Colmjon, in his study on the Eighties Movement, has revealed some of the underlying assumptions of the Shelley-Kloos link as promoted by Kloos and his inner circle of devotees. In a typically stinging passage, he shows how De Raaf managed to take the fuse out of a potential dangerous situation (i.e. the representation of Kloos as an impulsive follower of Shelley). Colmjon first adduces De Raaf's review in the NRC of G. Dekker's doctoral dissertation to arrive at his none too sympathetic criticism:

'Als kriticus mag Kloos iets aan Shelley te danken hebben (want zijn theoretische denkbeelden over dichtkunst vinden we voor een groot deel reeds in "A defence of Poetry"), de lyricus is zichzelf.' De biograaf ziet dus geen kans Kloos' lopen aan de leiband van Shelley te ontkennen, maar, zelf aan de leiband vastgeketend van Kloos,

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neemt hij diens wijze van de zaak om te keren over en plaatst het fraaie 'reeds': de
Engelse dichter, in zijn onderbewustheid wetend dat Willem Kloos [...] zijn verzen
zou [...] kopen en er zijn instemming mee betuigen na vier jaar, haastte zich, alvast
een groot deel van de oorspronkelijke denkbeelden van die koper te doen drukken.
Een soort telepatisch overgekomen opdracht uit de toekomst dus [...].

It is not so much the word 'reeds' on its own, as its presence in combination with the
proprietorial 'zijn' in the phrase 'zijn theoretische denkbeelden' which is responsible for
the suggestion of an extraordinary, transcendental link between Kloos and the English
poet. If such a reading may appear somewhat overwrought, more straightforward
examples in the next chapters will evince how Kloos saw himself as Shelley's artistic and
spiritual heir in the Netherlands, fully attuned to receive any messages from the great
beyond which might further strengthen his conviction and his resolve to promote himself
as such.

4. The perception of Shelley's success as a reformer

In the previous chapter I argued that Kloos's views are coloured by the reception of
Shelley's works in Victorian England. Yet, towards the end of the nineteenth century the
political Shelley was (re)discovered by people such as George Bernard Shaw. Shaw and
his likeminded colleagues who will be introduced in this section may have been a
minority, but their opinions heralded a revision of Shelley's works which, it could be
argued, culminated in the New Historicist readings of the 1980s. Kloos, however, turned
a deaf ear to their admonishments and would never show any signs that he was even
mildly interested in the gradual change of tone which crops up in Shelley critiques of the
1890s. In his preface to K.H. de Raaf's Alastor translation, Kloos proves how mistaken
his views on Shelley's radicalism really were. A meek acknowledgement of the poet's
controversial outpourings is immediately followed by a most extraordinary turndown of
the practical effects which the political writings exerted on their readers:

Shelley is in zijn staatkundige ideeën géén voorloper te noemen van het socialisme,
eer misschien nog een anarchist. Maar dit heeft hij boven alle stelselmakers voor [...]:

40 Gerben Colmjon, De Beweging van Tachtig: Een culturenhistorische verkenning in de
hij muntte persoonlijk uit door een groote, algemeene menschenliefde, een absolute onbaatzuchtigheid, en een aan zichzelf niet denkenden aandrang, om de maatschappij en de wereld te hervormen, die [...] alleen maar zoo weinig invloed heeft kunnen nalaten, omdat de drager van al die hooge aspiratie’s reeds op 29jarigen leeftijd noodlottigerwijze in de zee verdrok.\textsuperscript{41}

Consistent with his strong antipathy towards socialism, Kloos firmly dissociates Shelley from socialist doctrines. Of course, Gorter had done as much, but only because his was a purist approach to political terminology. Shelley may not have been a socialist \textit{avant la lettre}, but Gorter did not doubt his ideological commitment. What is certainly contentious in Kloos’s portrayal is the view that Shelley ‘weinig invloed heeft kunnen nalaten’. G.B. Shaw, in his article ‘Shaming the Devil about Shelley’ from which I quoted at the beginning of this chapter, had already charted the profound influence of the poet’s political thought on contemporary reformers. Modern critics too recognise the significance of a work such as \textit{Queen Mab} for generations of readers: ‘It touched and inspired the Chartists of the mid-nineteenth century in a kinetic way and to an effect whose importance no amount of aesthetic condemnation of this early work has been able to diminish,’\textsuperscript{42} For Kloos, \textit{Queen Mab}, of course belonged to ‘t onrijpe vers-goed uit zijn knapejaren [...] dat natuurlijk wel merkwaardigheidshalve nog altijd herdrukt wordt, maar door de meer-inzichtigen, de echte Shelley-kenners, alleen wordt beschouwd als nuttige dokumenten voor wie den dichter wil leeren kennen óók voordat hij dichter was’.'\textsuperscript{43}

It is worth while to investigate Kloos’s claim about the opinion of ‘echte Shelley-kenners’ concerning \textit{Queen Mab}. During the second meeting of the Shelley Society on 14 April 1886, H. Buxton Forman gave a lecture on ‘The Vicissitudes of Queen Mab’. In the lively question-and-answer session afterwards, the speaker was reproached by several


\textsuperscript{42} Roland A. Duerksen, \textit{Shelley’s Poetry of Involvement} (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 68. Shaw described how ‘Shelley became a power — a power that is still growing. He made and is still making men and women join political societies, Secular societies, Vegetarian societies, societies for the loosening of the marriage contract, and Humanitarian societies of all sorts. There is at every election a Shelleyan vote, though there is no means of counting it’. ‘Shaming the Devil about Shelley’, p. 245. Paul Foot has traced the impact of Shelley’s thought and works from the time of his death up to the 1980s in his \textit{Red Shelley}, 2nd edn (London, Chicago and Melbourne: Bookmarks, 1988), chapter 7. Before him, John Pollard Guinn also devoted an entire chapter on ‘Shelley’s Political Influence’ in \textit{Shelley’s Political Thought} (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1969).

members, including G.B. Shaw, Dr Furnivall, and Edward Aveling, for having played down the significance of Shelley’s early poem. He had also a hard time defending his decision to include it among the juvenilia in his edition of the poet’s collected works, since some felt that Queen Mab was not so immature a composition as he suggested. This evinces that there was an important debate going on among ‘echte Shelley-kenners’ about the value of Queen Mab and, in a much larger context, the value of Shelley’s political pronouncements. Another incident proves that the Shelley Society has been treated somewhat harshly by modern critics who referred to its members as conservative, contented ‘burghers’. It is probably fair to assume that many Society members had little sympathy for Shelley’s political engagements and that they preferred to see the view of him as an inoffensive word-jeweller perpetuated. However, the systematic facsimile reprints of Shelley’s political pamphlets which it sponsored, as well as the series of lectures at the Botany Theatre, University College London which started in 1886, rendered it extremely difficult for anyone to ignore the reformist agenda of the poet’s writings.

Little did A.G. Ross surmise what a stir his paper was to cause on The Revolt of Islam (the revised Laon and Cythna) before the assembly of Shelley devotees on 13 April 1887. The reactions to the speaker’s argument that ‘the blatant and cruel socialism of the street endeavours to use the lofty and sublime socialism of [The Revolt] for its own base purposes’ and to his protestations ‘against any imaginative writer being cited as an authority in favour of any political or social action or inaction,’ suggest the torrent of indignation afterwards (p. 190). The chairman, W.M. Rossetti ‘said that in many points he did not agree with the views expressed by the lecturer’, Dr Furnivall ‘also disagreed with the paper [...]’. Poets were men who felt certain truths more deeply than other men,

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44 See for instance Paul Foot, Red Shelley, p. 96.
45 On 14 December 1887, for instance, Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx-Aveling delivered a lecture to the Society entitled ‘Shelley and Socialism’, claiming the poet as a socialist. H.S. Salt’s Primer, written especially for the Society’s members, contains statements such as: ‘it should not be forgotten that if Shelley were living now, he would still be a discredited revolutionist, preaching a bloodless crusade against religion, property, and all the conventional notions of social morality’ (p. 123), ‘Shelley was an ardent reformer and republican, and if his early zeal was somewhat modified in his later years, there is no reason to suppose that his convictions were altered’ (p. 33); H.S. Salt, A Shelley Primer, The Shelley Society’s Publications, 4th Series, No. 4 (London: Reeves and Turner, 1887).
and it was their work to put forth those thoughts. Shelley had the divine gift, and he was bound by that to protest against the social iniquities that were rampant in his days’. Mr Salt ‘as a socialist, protested against the manner in which the lecturer had spoken of socialism’. Mr Bernard Shaw ‘said the paper was the most astonishing one he had ever heard, and he combated most of the statements made by the lecturer concerning socialism. In his opinion [...] poetry was the most artistic way of teaching those things which a poet ought to teach’ (p. 193). Dr Aveling ‘remarked that the [speaker’s] attack on socialism [...] was not quite fair. [...] Shelley’s sympathy and largeheartedness made him most essentially practical’ (p. 194). In his sheepish reply, Ross ‘said that [...] he had not expected to meet an audience of such pronounced socialist sympathies’ and that under ‘the circumstances he would not attempt to refute the attacks which had been made on the paper’ (pp. 194-95). Ross’s misgivings about the contrived, artificially established links between Shelley and the ‘cruel’ socialist movement with its ‘sans-culotte[s]’ who run about ‘with a red rag’ (p. 190) remind us of Kloos’s later attempts to spell out the incommensurability of Shelley’s art and the ‘literaire socialisten’ in the Netherlands. The latter keep themselves occupied, so Kloos was to assure his readers, with ‘vergaderingen te houden, waar men onderling fel gaat twisten en van harte elkander den mantel uitvegen’ and ‘smadend te ageeren tegen alles wat “burgerlijk” heeten moet. Ook tegen de burgerlijke kunst’. Kloos thus manages to present Shelley as an exponent of bourgeois tastes, and an ally in stultifying the petty dealings of socialism.

The reactions in England to Ross’s critical position proves that Kloos’s opinions about Shelley, which he proclaimed in the Netherlands as absolute truths, were fraught to the core with problems. His approach to Shelley was in fact more akin to that of Edward B. Koster as illustrated in the following poem written in English. It opens with a paraphrase of the first lines of Shelley’s ‘To a Sky-Lark’. The poem is short enough to be quoted in full:

Hail, mighty spirit, hail! who with wild ecstasy
Hast sung the skylark’s praise, whilst ever soaring high

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48 The ideological context of Kloos’s claim should, of course, be carefully distinguished from Gorter’s analysis in De groote dichters, in which Shelley is presented as the greatest of radical, bourgeois poets.
So unimaginably high to Poetry’s heav’n, thou thrillest
Our verse-enraptured souls, and from thine own distillest
Most passionate and daring thoughts into thy strain,
And movest us in breathing forth thy deep and heartfelt pain.

To identify Shelley as the songbird soaring in the uppermost region of heaven, out of
sight of man on earth is a practice which saw many precedents in the Victorian era. Here
we have a rendition in verse of Thompson’s conception of Shelley who ‘plays truant from
earth, slips through the wicket of fancy into heaven’s meadow, and goes gathering
stars’. In it, we also hear De Raaf’s later characterisation of Shelley as ‘een
uitzonderingmensch [...] die zich kon laten gaan op zijn vervoeringen, zingend als een
vogel, vlage-ruischend als de winden in herfst en voorjaar’. Though Koster refers to
Shelley’s ‘mighty spirit’ (l. 1) and his ‘daring thoughts’ (l. 5), nowhere does he hint at the
seditious quality of many of the poet’s songs.

Already in his youth, Kloos had denied all practical effects of Shelley’s
commitment to the reformers’ cause. In his discussion of Shelley’s Dublin expedition, he
cites the poet’s own phrase from the preface of Prometheus Unbound: ‘[Shelley] has a
passion for reforming the world’. This quotation is followed by Kloos’s fairly snide
remark: ‘De wereld nu is gebleven zooals zij is’. Shelley’s utopia has indeed not become
reality but many of the practical demands he advocated in England (universal suffrage,
abolition of the slave trade, emancipation for women, to name but a few) were gradually
adopted and becoming part of mainstream politics. Kloos implies that Shelley’s
endeavours were bound to remain futile since, as we have seen, literature can hardly ever
carry any political, ethical or didactic ballast. Shelley’s ‘passion for reforming the world’
therefore, was in essence misguided idealism: Shelley ‘na veel theoretsieerende geestdrift,
en heerlijk lyrisch gefantasteer en gemijmer, en ook een nog-half-kinderlijke, en dus
tamelijk-grappige poging, om (in Ierland) het een en ander van zijn droomen tot
werkelijkheid te maken [...] moest, met al zijn beminnelijk willen, al heel spoedig tot de
overtuiging komen, dat een wezenlijke redding der menschheid voorshands onmogelijk

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50 Francis Thompson, *Shelley*, introd. by George Wyndham (London: Burns & Oates, 1914),
p. 65.
51 K.H. de Raaf, *Problemen der poëzie: Beschouwingen over de beginselen der dichtkunst en het
52 Willem Kloos, ‘An Address to the Irish People’, unpublished notes K533 H3, see Appendix 1,
No. 4.
was', he wrote in 1916. In his notes on the Dublin tour, which date back to the early 1880s, Kloos had also written: 'Een onderdrukt volk te bevrijden is stellig een goed ding, maar werk van de mannen van de dood. Van een philosooph en poëet verwachten wij iets anders' (see Appendix 1, No. 4). Ironically enough, this is precisely the kind of attitude which Shelley, during his entire writing career, had been at great pains to fight.

Nowhere in Kloos's vast critical output can we find the poet enter into debate with critics stressing the political tenor of Shelley's works. This is a very remarkable fact, and not one which can easily be explained. As a member of the Shelley Society, Kloos is likely to have read about Ross's lecture and its hostile reception in the Society's Notebooks. His later Shelley pieces, as I demonstrated in Chapter One, clearly show that they were modelled on a distinctly outmoded perception. In this Kloos sidelined himself from his British and some of his Dutch contemporaries. Though he eagerly collected all modern scholarly works concerning Shelley to add to his impressive library, he in fact never tore himself away from the legacy of mawkish, mid-Victorian enthusiasts of the English poet. Kloos was also surrounded by many devoted disciples who took in his every word to be happily repeated by them when the opportunity presented itself. K.H. de Raaf was perhaps the most loyal of these and his unfaltering sympathy and friendship for his mentor, even when the latter had completely isolated himself from modern developments in Dutch literature, reveals a truly generous spirit. Yet, being the most prolific writer of the entourage, he was also responsible for the perpetuation of many of Kloos's fallacies. In the following excerpt not only the reasoning, but even the style smacks of Kloos:

Wat kan het ons schelen, dat hij [i.e. Shelley], de uiterst fijn bewerktuigde, de schoonheid-en-wijshheid-minnende, in zijn hartgrondigen afkeer van politiek, die zoooveel klein- en grof-menschelijks naar voren brengt, geen parlementszetel heeft gewenscht [...]; wat komt dit alles er op aan, wanneer hij ons zijn heerlijke eigen

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54 In a letter to Albert Verwey dated 22 August 1890, Kloos asks for his 'drie deeltjes van de uitgaven der Shelley-society, in groene kaften' to be returned. G.H. 's-Gravesande, De geschiedenis van De Nieuwe Gids: Brieven en documenten (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1955), p. 311. The reason for the absence of these volumes in Kloos's Shelley collection can be read in an unpublished letter from David Spanjaard to Kloos dated 12 February 1931: 'de bijzonderheden over de tijd, toen je de papers van de Shelley-Society mocht van de hand doen (over de opbrengst, in dien tijd, zul je je wel geen illusies hebben gemaakt, dunkt me, en de
This aversion to politics was very much Kloos’s stance. In this context, one could almost be excused for forgetting that Kloos’s career as poet, critic, and editor had started in a politically highly charged atmosphere. With contributions by Pieter Lodewijk Tak, Domela Nieuwenhuis, Frank van der Goes, M.C.L. Lotsij, and J. Stoffel De Nieuwe Gids had positioned itself from the start very much at the political left. The very first issue of the new periodical, for instance, contained an anonymous ‘Varium’ (by Frank van der Goes) pleading passionately for universal suffrage, a subject which had also been very close to Shelley’s heart. B. van Tijn has shown in De inhoud van de vorm: De Nieuwe Gids 1885-1894 how the first series of the periodical was indeed perceived as a radical publication by the Dutch establishment, so much so in fact that it was often ‘doodgezwegen’, ‘in de ban gedaan omdat het [...] een politiek- en sociaal-radicaal karakter had’.\(^5\) When Kloos took over absolute control of the journal in 1894, its ideological colours changed accordingly. His attack on Adama van Scheltema in 1908 is symptomatic of this change, even if he tried to strike a pose of political impartiality: ‘Ik was en ben geen politicus, en nog minder een kapitalist: en het socialisme kan mij dus volstrekt niet schelen, omdat ik er evenmin iets meê te maken heb, als bv. met de walvischvangst’ (p. 789).\(^5\) It will be clear then, that W. de Hoog, when rounding off his chapter on the members of the Eighties Movement in his two-volume Studiën, could not have had Willem Kloos in mind when he stated that the significance of this generation of

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56 B. van Tijn, ed., De inhoud van de vorm: De Nieuwe Gids 1885-1895. Maatschappij en politiek, Kort en Goed (Amsterdam: Querido, 1975), p. iii. Het Vaderland did review the first few issues of De Nieuwe Gids, and as Nop Maas has shown, it was particularly the political contributions which incited disapprobation. See Nop Maas, ed., De ontvangst van De Nieuwe Gids, Vaderland-Reeks I (Nijmegen: Vriendenlust, 1985), pp. 35-37.
57 Stuiveling assessed this development as follows: ‘Hoewel het blad behouden bleef en sinds 1895 maandelijks bij een andere uitgever verscheen, bezat de Nieuwe Gids na deze catastrofe [i.e. the disintegration of the original editorial board and Kloos’s ‘coup’] nog maar een flauwe glans van wat eens zijn onvergetelijke glorie was geweest: het hartstochtelijk verlangen naar schoonheid, in de kunst en in de maatschappij’, Garmt Stuiveling, Een eeuw Nederlandse letteren, Synopsis, 5th edn (Amsterdam: Querido, 1982), p. 143 (italics mine).
Dutch writers was ‘niet alleen zichtbaar op letterkundig en aesthetisch, maar zelfs ook op sociaal gebied’.

It could be argued that Kloos probably refrained from launching any immediate attacks on ‘politucisers’ of Shelley’s poetry because he realised that in the end the remedy could well be worse than the disease. Attacking critics who believed that there was much ethical/political content in Shelley’s poems would, in effect, boil down to agreeing with the detractors of Shelley who thought he was no more than a vapid lyricist with nothing of any importance to say. It also stands to reason that Kloos was likely to be more concerned with the various translations by which rival Shelley admirers seemed to arrogate Shelley’s poetry to themselves. It is especially in this context that Kloos was to produce his most substantial commentaries on the English poet.

5. Vindicating Shelley

Some of the underlying tension characterising Kloos’s situation can be gauged from his review of Adama van Scheltema’s De grondslagen eener nieuwe poëzie. As we have seen earlier, Adama van Scheltema had ventured to propound that Shelley was the author of little except musical but meaningless ‘feeëriën’ [sic] and ‘operateksten’. Kloos fought this claim and, perhaps to his own surprise, found useful ammunition in the writings of Herman Gorter, Adama van Scheltema’s political partisan: ‘En als gij mij niet geloof in wat ik zeide over Shelley, daar ik als niet-socialist alle dingen een beetje anders zie als de socialisten, lees dan wat Herman Gorter, dus uw politieke medestanders, over Shelley schrijft in De Nieuwe Tijd’ (p. 780). After this slight concession in which Kloos is seen as implicitly agreeing with the views of a socialist if only to attack another, he continues with a thorough condemnation of ‘[h]et socialistische beginsel [dat] [...] iets [schijnt] te zijn, wat zijn gelukkige bezitters ontzettend-slecht gehumeurd maakt tegen de heele wereld’ (p. 781). This is in fact the only time that Kloos acknowledges the existence of Gorter’s pages on Shelley. When he came to revise his critique on Adama van Scheltema’s book for his Letterkundige inzichten en vergezichten, Kloos added another

58 W. de Hoog, Studien over de Nederlandsche en Engelsche Taal[-] en Letterkunde en Haar Wederzijdschen Invloed, 2 vols, 2nd rev. edn (Dordrecht: J.P. Revers, 1909), vol. 2, p. 256. This second volume contains a brief section which deals with the influence of Keats and Shelley on the members of the ‘Eighties Movement’. Interesting is de Hoog’s positive assessment of Queen Mab and his reference to Shelley’s much ignored drama Hellas (p. 253).

paragraph in which he attacks the author's gross incompetence in his treatment of Shelley. After all, had Adama van Scheltema not dared to advance the idea that Shelley 'slechts zinledige fantasieën gaf' 60 Kloos was perfectly right in fighting such claims, but he himself did not surmise, or refused to accept, how 'practical' some of Shelley's poetry was intended to be.

In 1909, De Raaf harked back to the incident in an article published in De Nieuwe Gids of April and May 1909. 61 The article is in essence an endorsement — 23 years de dato — of Stopford A. Brooke's inaugural address to the London Shelley Society in which he condemns Matthew Arnold's superficial views on Shelley; views which De Raaf sees repeated in Adama van Scheltema's De grondslagen eener nieuwe poëzie. How odd, then, to see De Raaf open his piece with a motto taken from Crabbe's 'The Library', which can easily be read as a summary in verse of Arnold's and Adama van Scheltema's perception of the English poet as an unrealistic, insubstantial creature: 'Go on then, Son of Vision! Still pursue /Thy airy dreams; the world is dreaming too'.

Van Scheltema's exact words 'Shelley was het rijk van schoone woorden en beelden, van muzikale feeëriën [sic], maar zonder werkelijken inhoud, zonder waarachtig ideaal, zonder eenige vaste levensbeschouwing' are also cited by Wismans in 1917, when he contributed to De Katholiek with a longish study on Shelley. 62 Bearing in mind his astute comments in an earlier article on the English poet and his estimation of the role of poetry, some of which I quoted in the first half of this chapter, it is curious to see Wismans adopting a far more negative attitude in this particular Shelley critique. He even goes so far as to agree with Adama van Scheltema's damming characterisation of the English poet. Given the ideological background of the journal, it is less of a surprise to find that it is especially Shelley's atheism which proves to be the bone of contention. However despicable in itself, Wismans thinks it more excusable, given the poet's chronic spiritual and physical ill health, than Kloos's rabid attacks on Christianity: 'Vele van Shelley's bewonderaars en navolgers, die hem niet wisten te evenaren in zijn kunst, hebben getracht hem te overtreffen in zijn anti-christelijke gezindheid. Vooral Willem Kloos is hierin zijn meester voorbij gestreefd' (p. 13). The phrase 'zijn meester' is

61 K.H. de Raaf, 'Shelley-critiek' in: De Nieuwe Gids, April 1909, pp. 387-402 and May 1909, pp. 579-91. It is this article which contains a footnote with a reference to Gorter's 'Kritiek der litteraire beweging in Holland'.
particularly meaningful and calls to mind Coenen’s estimation of Kloos as a follower of Shelley’s. Like Irving before him, Wismans feels that ‘Shelley’s heftige uitvallen tegen het Christendom’ resulted from ‘zijn chronische lichamelijke en geestelijke overspanning’. Yet, ‘wat te zeggen van deze telkens terugkeerende aanvallen van den rustig levenden Kloos’ (p. 14)? One can imagine how pleased Kloos must have been to see his name paired with Shelley’s, even if this occurred in the context of a severe rebuke. As De Raaf later wrote to Kloos, Wismans’s article contains more than just adverse criticism. For instance, Wismans can assure his readership that not all charges levelled against the English poet are justified: ‘Shelley’s poëzie [wordt] nooit wulpsch en cynisch als die van Byron, door de spleten en scheuren van wiens gezwollen verzen voordurend de dampen stijgen van zijn innerlijke ongerechtigheden’ (p. 22). Highly critical of Shelley’s religious creeds, the article nonetheless contains important references to the poet’s *Essay on Life* and the *Essay on Love*. Mentioned in passing and accompanied by relevant passages from letters are *The Necessity of Atheism* and *The Address to the Irish People*. In this respect, Wismans’s article is yet another indication that Shelley’s (political) prose was slowly but steadily being discovered and read. Very gradually a significant body of Shelley criticism was being produced in the Netherlands alongside Kloos’s partisan articles.

If it was no longer Shelley’s political radicalism that had an adverse effect on his reputation in the Netherlands, there was still one major obstacle that hampered a straightforward, unadulterated promotion of his poetry. For the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Shelley’s atheism *pace* Wismans, had also ceased to be a major impediment for canonisation in the Netherlands. What kept haunting the poet’s reputation and his admirers was Shelley’s abandonment of his first wife, Harriet Westbrook, in favour of Mary Godwin, and, to a lesser extent, his apparent promotion of polygamy in *Epipsychidion*. In his Bilderdijk speech of 1906, Kuyper had vilified Shelley as a licentious reprobate: ‘Van Byron en Shelley is hun losheid van zeden te bekend, om nog bespreking te behoeven. Men kan in de biographiën [sic] van al deze dichters ‘t breed

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63 On page 19 of his article Wismans declares: Shelley’s ‘overspannen geestestoestand, zijn koortsachtige opwinding, verbittering en miskening ontnamen hem alle zelfbeheersching. Dikwijls leed hij aan hallucinaties en valsche inbeidingen’. 64 ‘Ik denk dat ‘t stuk verschenen is in Juli, maar kan het op ‘t ogenblik niet nagaan, daar ik alleen een ongedateerde overdruk tot mijn beschikking heb, met ook een artikel van denzelfden over Shelley’s poëzie met lof en blaam curieuzelijk doormengd’. K.H. de Raaf in an unpublished letter to Willem Kloos, dated 10 October 1922 (De Raaf Collections, R105 B1).
Yet, the Netherlands was not wanting in critics quick to plead for extenuating circumstances. Conrad Busken Huet, for instance, who recognised the quality of Shelley’s writing and the generosity of his character long before Kloos acquired his first collection of Shelley’s verse, had already prepared his defence against the criticism that the poet’s elopement and rejection of the orthodox Church were in fact ‘een voorwendsel [...] om den apostel des vleesches te kunnen spelen’. If some people maintained that Harriet Westbrook was kidnapped by Shelley from her parental home, then Busken Huet is categorical: ‘Niet hij schaakte haar zoo zeer, als zij hem’. Moreover, she ‘was in geen enkel opzigt hem waardig’. His final attempt to exonerate Shelley brings him to this statement: ‘zoo haar noodlottig uiteinde is kunnen voorgesteld worden als eene vrucht van zijn omgang, er is reden om te vermoeden dat de omgang met andere mannen, ook toen zij moeder van twee kinderen was, haar krachtig aantrok’ (p. 103).

Gutteling, in his long poem ‘Shelley: Een nagelaten gedicht’, which was published posthumously in De Beweging, referred to this episode in a similar vein:

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Een vrouw sleepte u in onheil. Geesteloos
Hing zij dra aan uw ziel als 't loodzwaar pantser
Aan de ongeduld-doorschokte flanken van
Een snellen hengst. Gij dacht haar ontrouw. Toornig
Verliet gij haar, en steunloos wankte zij
Tot aan den oever van haar murmlend graf.
Rust — fluisterde 't — een plons — 't sloot boven haar.
Een moord? [...] 
Maar schuldloos wist hij zich.
(ll. 148-55, 159)
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67 Alex. Gutteling, ‘Shelley: Een nagelaten gedicht’ in: De Beweging, May 1914, pp. 130-41
Shelley is ultimately presented as the real victim in this domestic tragedy. Harriet was an impediment, she was ballast hindering the poet in his dazzling artistic course. Though the following chapters will show how Gutteling was far from sympathetic to Kloos’s attitude towards Shelley, his 361-line portrayal of the English poet has some distinctive Kloosian overtones. He purports that Shelley was ‘van de aarde niet’ (ll. 24, 31): ‘Gij hebt uw heele leven / Dronken gestaard op uw verheven droomen’, ideals which were not realised (ll. 37-38). This, however, did not refrain Shelley from throwing his ‘zeekre pijlen, / Wrekende Apollo: uw geestdriftig lied’ (ll. 40-41). When people did not heed his song, ‘Dan toornen gij en weendet en gingt heen’ (l. 46). This helpless resignation is a trait which Kloos too, with misplaced confidence, ascribed to Shelley. Gutteling’s poem tries very hard to give a more positive spin to some of Shelley’s other heterodox ideas and actions. Gutteling, who was a deeply religious man, was incapable of accepting Shelley’s atheism. This leads him to refer to the publication of the ‘Necessity of Atheism’ in 1810 as the ‘eerste dwaze, dappe daad’ by this apostle of beauty (l. 133). However, according to Gutteling, Shelley did not deny God’s existence at all: he only ‘Hoon[de] wat [hem] in strijd leek met de Schoonheid’ (l. 132, italics mine). Similarly, in Shelley’s supreme poem of negation, ‘Mont Blanc’, which outlines with uncompromising and merciless starkness man’s pernicious reliance on self-fashioned and delusional images of a Godlike Power, Gutteling recognises instead how the poet saw ‘dood en leven [...] in Gods Macht’ (l. 202), feeling how his ‘stem’ and ‘ziel’ rose ‘ten hemel’ (l. 205). In one and the same line and for the same reason, Shelley is dubbed both a ‘dwaas’ and a ‘Godheid’ (l. 254) because he believed that mankind would ‘in éénen bond’ establish ‘Een onzelfzuchtige wereld’ (ll. 254, 255). This representation is not at all far removed from Matthew Arnold’s view of Shelley as an ‘ineffectual angel’. In sum, Shelley comes across as a well-meaning, but dreamy and deluded soul whose life was destined to end in disaster. Nonetheless, the final section of Gutteling’s poem undergoes a dramatic change in tone:

Uw geestdrift davert als een bazuingeschal
In ‘t oor van hen, die wanklend, moedeloos,
Door nevel schrijden als verdwaalde krijgers.
Zij hooren ‘t en hun hand grijpt vaster ‘t zwaard,
Hun zwaar-ompantserd lijf recht zich, hun stem
The similarities to Van Eeden's poem on Shelley's 'Epipsychidion' are remarkable. Though published in 1914, Verwey's note informs its readers that Gutteling's poem was composed in August 1906, exactly one year after the appearance of Van Eeden's hymn in *De Beweging*. As such, it is not unlikely that Van Eeden's piece induced Gutteling to begin his own 'hymn'. More in tune with the rest of the poem is the concluding set of lines, which, perversely, present Shelley's poetic achievements as proof of God's existence:

Alle idealen gaan voorbij, de tijden  
Wisselen snel, alle monden belijden  
Andre evangeliën, als 't oude sterft.  
Maar wat geen frisheid ooit, geen leven derft:  
De adem van leven is 't, die zangen drijft  
Zoo zeker, dat hun schal door de eeuwen blijft  
Luiden: de stem van den oneindigen God. —  
(II. 355-61)

It should be borne in mind that Gutteling did not think his poem suitable for publication. The reason, according to Verwey's footnote, was that he thought it 'niet voldoende beheerscht'. Perhaps Gutteling was not satisfied either with its conception of Shelley the poet. It is clear that in some of his published articles, Gutteling shows himself far more in tune with Shelley's revolutionary messages than his 'Nagelaten gedicht' would suggest. Nonetheless, as the most substantial poem in praise of the English poet to be written in the Low Countries, it occupies a unique position in Dutch literature, and encapsulates as none other the conflicting views held by some Dutch poets and critics alike.

There were more men of letters in the Netherlands who were willing to cover Shelley's non-conformist character with the cloak of charity. David Spanjaard anticipated the Shelley critics in the final part of his long treatise on the poet of universal love: 'Maar ziet ge dan niet — zal men vragen — deze vlek op het beeld van uw dichter, de donkere
vlek, die het anders in reine blankheid blinkende beeld ontsiert’? Spanjaard’s defence for Shelley’s actions runs: ‘Het genie is in zijn wezen goed, maar het kan dwalen als ieder van ons. [...] Juist het menschelijke — dat is helaas ook het onvolmaakte — in hem brengt hem ons nader’ (p. 484). The charge of polygamy being promoted in *Epipsychidion* is also tackled and exposed as malicious nonsense. Apart from Plato’s philosophy, which is called upon to interpret Shelley’s encomium on the ‘meervoudige of buitenechtelijke liefde’ (p. 481), Dante, ‘de provençaalsche’ troubadours, and even Goethe, in his *Torquato Tasso*, are all cited as ‘dichter[s die] den dichter te hulp komen’ in his defence (p. 477).^69

H. Wismans had already added a few more names to the list in his article in *De Katholiek* of 1917. Shelley’s life is ‘een vermenging van droeve verblindheid en oprechte edelmoedigheid. Het telt vele misstappen en ééne misdaad: hij verstiet zijn vrouw, die, [...] zich [tenslotte] zelfmoordde. In dit opzicht rust op hem een zware, maar ook geen zwaardere schuld dan op Milton en Biderdijk, al werd hij, en zijne vrouw vooral, er zwaarder voor gestraft’.^70 With such illustrious predecessors, Shelley’s record as an infidel becomes less of a stigma. It would seem that Wismans refused to aggravate his earlier accusation and condemnation of Shelley as an atheist, a charge already softened by his own admission of the poet’s many health problems. Ruber too, who introduced the truly radical Shelley to the Dutch reading public, pleaded for leniency: ‘het karakter van Shelley, dat zelfs door zijn felste tegenstanders geprezen wordt, staat er ons borg voor, dat ook hier het Fransche spreekwoord waarheid zal behelzen: tout savoir c’est tout pardonner’.^71

All these critical appraisals had long since appeared in print when Willem Kloos, in the *NRC* of 1 July 1922, maintained that Shelley’s name ‘op grond van mijn jarenlange

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^68 David Spanjaard, ‘Shelley: De dichter der universeele liefde’, p. 482.

^69 Spanjaard returned to defend Shelley’s passionate nature in the first rhymed translation in Dutch of Shelley’s *Epipsychidion*, published in 1927. In the preface, which reworks in a condensed form the arguments of his earlier essay, he also adds that the work’s almost unprincipled passion ‘de weerklank is op de van zuidelijken gloed doortintelende uitingen der schoone Italiaansche vrouw’. David Spanjaard, trl., _P. B. Shelley: Epipsychidion_. *In Nederlandsche verzen overgebracht*, p. 11. In an explanatory note on p. 41, Spanjaard mentions Shelley’s ‘eerste vrouw Harriet Westbrook, die hij op betreurenswaardige wijze, doch om nog steeds niet geheel opgehelderde motieven heeft verlaten’. Even more coy is the following statement which manages to circumvent the issue of Harriet’s suicide altogether: ‘deze [i.e. Harriet Westbrook] leefde in 1820 sinds lang niet meer’ (p. 42).


ondervinding [...] aan het grootste deel der ontwikkelde Hollanders [...] nog niet zoo bijster veel zegt’. Given the fairly large amount of sympathetic articles as well as Dutch Shelley translations which had by then seen the light, such a statement loses much of its factual credibility. What it does tell is how Kloos never lost a chance when it came to promoting himself as the Dutch authority on the English poet. Will contemporary readers not have perceived the delicious irony that while Kloos insisted how ‘belangrijk Shelley overal in de wereld, behalve tot dusver in ons land, gerekend wordt te zijn’, the NRC presented them with five other contributions devoted to the allegedly much neglected poet?

6. Kloos’s legacy

James Anderson Russell was applying the finishing touches to his book Dutch Poetry and English: A Study of the Romantic Revival, when news reached him that Willem Kloos had died. The study, which contains a substantial chapter on the ‘Eighties Movement’, had first been serialised in De Nieuwe Gids, and Russell had struck up a friendship with its editor in the process. The work had clearly been a labour of love and an expression of the author’s heartfelt reverence for Kloos. It led him to set forth a juxtaposition of

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72 Willem Kloos, ‘Ter gedachtenis aan Shelley’s honderdsten sterfdag’ in: Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, Saturday 1 July 1922.
73 Many of these will feature in the next chapters. Kloos’s claim stands in stark contrast with Dekker’s evaluation: ‘Teen die end van die [negentiende] eeu sien ons die kermis van die Engelse digters in Nederland, veral van Shelley, toeneem. Niet alleen digters word deur hulle beïnvloed, nie alleen Kloos getuig van die diepte en die prag van hulle poësie nie. Orals kom ons nou die naam van Shelley teë, in die recensies en studies van alle moontlike tydskrifte en van de mees uiteenlopende skrywers’ (Dekker, p. 233). Not included in Dekker’s overview is the poetess Hélène Swarth who, in 1896, chose to be portrayed by H.J. Haverman clasping a volume of Shelley’s poetical works in her hands. In a letter dated 15 February 1890, Willem Doorenbos wrote from Brussels to Willem Kloos: ‘Ik blijf voortdurend veel belang stellen in Helene Swarth, die te Mechelen alleen van boeken en correspondentie leeft. […] Zoo vroeg zij mij herhaalde malen om Shelley van [W.M.] Rosetti [sic], meenende dat ik die nog bezat, en hoewel gij wijs gedaan hebt die terug te houden, zoude ik nu toch wel, als ‘t mogelijk is, die jure postliminii weder willen ontvangen om de dichteres […] genoegen te doen’. Quoted from G.H. ‘s-Gravesande, De geschiedenis van De Nieuwe Gids, p. 287. The impact of Shelley’s ideas on her own literary output, however, was slight if not negligible, notwithstanding the occasional echo in her (early, French) verse such as the line ‘Les plus désespérés sont les chants les plus beaux’ which is inspired by ‘Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought’, ‘To a Sky-Lark’ (l. 90). For a discussion of literary influences on Swarth, notable of the so-called ‘Parnassiens’, see Herman Liebaers, Hélène Swarths Zuidnederlandse jaren (Gent: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde, 1964). The Swarth portrait with the Shelley volume is reproduced in Jeroen Brouwers, Hélène Swarth: Haar huwelijk met Frits Lapidoth 1894-1910. Open Domein 15 (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1985), p. 81.
Shelley’s and Kloos’s characters which ends with a resounding victory of the latter’s artistic make-up over Shelley’s alleged insubstantiality:

Where he [Kloos] stops short, [...] is in refusing to give endorsement to the famous concluding dictum that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world”. And clearly, I think, because in Kloos we come up against a more robust, a more substantial, type, one standing nearer to the norm of his countrymen; with a nature less dreamy and idealistic, one more warm and personal, more passionate too in the generally accepted sense; with a mind more sharp and precise, more egocentric as well, one less likely to be given over to the allied defects of vagueness and verbosity. [...] How radically different, for instance, would have been [the] course [of the Dutch ‘Eighties Movement’] had its leader been under the almost Messianic delusion that it is the artist’s primary function to help and improve mankind, confronting to that end the problems which have baffled metaphysicians and sociologists alike! (p. 166)74

Despite its many contradictions, the implied attack on Shelley’s ‘passion for reforming the world’, a passion far less commendable than Kloos’s ‘passionate’ nature ‘in the generally accepted sense’ is evident. It is also made clear that Shelley is by no means the master and Kloos no longer the follower; rather the latter managed to overcome the former’s limitations of ‘Messianic delusion’ in content and ‘vagueness and verbosity’ in style. Especially the second part of this statement becomes virtually incomprehensible when read with Kloos’s ‘Binnengedachten’ in mind.

There were other critics abroad who took Kloos’s own assessment of Shelley sometimes a little bit too much at face value. Though G. Dekker published his doctoral dissertation during Kloos’s lifetime, and though he was aware of the limited understanding of Shelley’s character by the editor of De Nieuwe Gids, he sometimes let himself be swept along by the impetuosity of Kloos’s prose. When Kloos toys with the following notion: ‘Stel dat Shelley [Zola’s] “Fortune des Rougon” had willen schrijven, dan zou hij al dat omhoog geduwd en duwende gekrioel [...] tot schitterende gruizelen gegeeseld hebben met de rythmen van zijn verontwaardiging en uiteengewaaid met den wiekslag zijner lyrische vlucht, om dan zich geheel boven zijn onderwerp te verheffen en ons zijn ziel te doen zien, rein en diep, als de avondluchten zijner visioenen’, Dekker goes

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into rhapsodies over this 'mooie beskouing oor Shelley,' little realising how flawed and misleading it is. As we have seen, Shelley's 'beautiful idealisms,' carried by the force of the imagination always depend on the existence of other sensitive beings and their interactive relationship with the poet. The latter does not want to forget about 'zijn onderwerp', i.e. the vicissitudes of mankind, at all, but aspires to formulating codes of conduct which may help to alleviate, or even eradicate, human suffering.

In another passage which suggests that Dekker sometimes looked at Shelley's works and character through a distinctly Kloosian lens, he declares that Shelley, during his exile in Italy 'het hom, na al die leed en hoon en miskening hoe langer hoe meer teruggetrek in sy wêreld van sublieme geestelike skoonheid' (Dekker, p. 244). He also explains how Busken Huet's article on Byron and Shelley of 1872 'nie vrygepleit [is] van 'n sekere oppervlakkigheid en gebrek aan insig in die diepte van Shelley se digterskap nie', mainly because '[w]at Huet in die eerste instansie gee [...] is 'n etiese bespreking van Shelley se houding as rewolsonêr' (Dekker, p. 70). Though in the conclusion of his study Dekker demonstrates his awareness of the ideological basis of Shelley's verse, it is clear from the above statement that he, like Kloos, did not deem it to be the driving force behind the poet's vocation. Consequently, we find him categorising *Queen Mab* among the poems 'wat nie tot die beste van Shelley behoor nie' (Dekker, pp. 62-63).

The influence of Kloos's views on later generations of writers and critics is profound. It is clearly discernible in J. Keunen's biographical study, *P.B. Shelley*, the only Dutch monograph on the subject so far to appear in book form. Not unlike Francis Thompson, though his name is absent from the bibliography, Keunen presents a 'droomerigen Bysshe [...] [die] lijk de Kleine Johannes geheimzinnige hoeken en plekken ontdekte, ze met zijn verbeelding bevolkte', he is the 'elfenkoning, de Adonis, de Narcis, [...] de tengere en aanminnelijke feeëndichter' (p. 39) who, by the end of his life, stood on

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75 G. Dekker allowed himself to be deceived by Kloos's never-ending asseveration that he and Shelley were totally kindred artists: 'So sien ons dus dat die mees gepassioneerde digter van die tachtigers, wie se poësie uiting is van sy hewige, heftig-begeerde siele-lewe, [...] in sy stemminge baie maal groot ooreenkoms vertoon met Shelley, en hoe hy ook van die verwante digter geleer het hoe om daar die siele-melodieé te verklank' (Dekker, p. 139). The extract on *La Fortune des Rougon* appears on p. 112. Though Dekker is aware of some discrepancy between Kloos and Shelley, his phrasing suggests only a partial understanding of this difference: 'Kloos se poësie is nie, soos die van Shelley, die onwillekeurige uiting van 'n droewige stemming na bittere desillusie of na die geweldige spanning van hoog-idealistiese skeppinge nie' (p. 124, *italics* mine).

76 J. Keunen, *P. B. Shelley: Bij de honderd vijftigste verjaring van zijn geboorte 1792-1942*, Keurreeks No. 31 (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1942). It is this biography that presents a Hazlitt portrait as Shelley's likeness.
the verge of embracing traditional Christianity. Keunen’s study is structured as a triptych, presenting Shelley’s artistic, psychological and religious development as a mental journey starting with the ‘Inferno’ of *Queen Mab* and *Zastrozzi*, going through the ‘Purgatorio’ of *Laon and Cythna*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and *The Cenci*, and ending with the ‘Paradiso’ of *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais* and *The Triumph of Life*. Above, I have argued that *Epipsychidion* was a work causing Shelley admirers considerable unease because of its rejection of monogamy. Many readers of the poem were also reminded of Shelley’s earlier abandonment of Harriet Westbrook who later committed suicide. Dante, Bilderdijk, Milton, all were invoked by Dutch critics to vindicate Shelley. Keunen, in his desire to establish an ascending line of moral excellence in the poet’s development, took recourse to a crafty comparison with yet another canonical writer, thereby giving Shelley’s work a sheen of respectability: In *Epipsychidion*, Shelley’s ‘verlangen hunkert naar vereeniging en bezwijmt smachtend in het laatste vers: “I pant — I sink — I tremble — I expire.”’ Dat vers, dat ook Gezelle’s verlangen naar Jezus aldus ontschoot: ‘“k ga vallen, zwichten, zinken” in het gedicht: *O Heere, maak mijn herte sterk. (Tijdkrans)*’ (p. 173). True enough, Shelley ‘was een heiden’, but ‘welk heiden heeft ooit klaarder … ooit droeviger bewijs geleverd van de waarheid van Tertullianus: “anima naturaliter christianae”? (p. 227). This comes very close to G.B. Shaw’s bugbear of Shelley in top hat accompanying his children dutifully to the Sunday service in the parish church.

The following passage demonstrates Kloos’s influence on Keunen’s conception of the poet’s character and work:

> In het lijden had Shelley zijn illusie: wereldvernieuwing door prediking, kwijtgespeeld, zijn inzicht gezuiverd en veredeld. Gedaan is het met zijn pamfletten, open brieven en sermoenen, gedaan ook met de onstuimige tooneelen als in *Queen Mab*, de buitensporigheden van *The Revolt of Islam* of de gruwelen van *The Cenci*, gedaan met alle actie gekeerd naar buiten of afswijzend in grootsche natuurpanorama’s uit den Kaukasus [i.e. *Prometheus Unbound*]. Voortaan gespannen verinnerlijking, adoratie van de schoonheid in haar eigen gestalte en wezen. Shelley verdiept in loutere poëzie, geworden “The beautiful angel” der Engelsche literatuur. […] Evenals voor Dante, was ook voor Shelley het volledig uitrukken van gehechtheid aan het vergankelijk menschelijke de voorwaarde tot een opgang naar het Paradiso, naar de hoogste aspiraties van ideale schoonheid en liefde, naar de onsterfelijkheid. (pp. 139-140)
Here we have all the ingredients of Kloos’s interpretation: the mature Shelley turning his back on his earlier radical years to concentrate on his own precious, inner self, detaching his being from the mundaneness of earthly existence. It is also worth noting how Arnold’s disparaging phrase ‘ineffectual angel’ was given a far more positive twist. Curiously enough, though, when evaluating Shelley’s importance for the Eighties Movement, Keunen suddenly shows an increased sensitivity towards the political Shelley:

Shelley heeft Tachtig zichzelf doen worden! In die schittering van Shelley’s dichtergenie hebben zij zichzelf gekoesterd, gestaroogd op die stralende verschijning. Zij keken zich blind op den vorm en hun ontsnep intusschen de Shelley, die vóór alles belang stelde in de sociale stroomingen van zijn tijd, de Shelley die van het onbelangrijke individuele wist op te stijgen tot de verrukking en zelfverloochening in de geestelijke schoonheid, in God. (p. 229)

Freed from Kloos’s ivory tower, Shelley is now transported straight from ‘de sociale stroomingen van zijn tijd’ into the celestial palaces of God’s Kingdom. It is obvious that Keunen’s vision is still far from accurate.

Whereas Keunen’s biography was geared towards a mature readership, during Kloos’s lifetime, E. Kiebooms published his Selection from Shelley and Keats for the benefit of pupils studying English literature in secondary education. It goes almost without saying that (extracts from) Queen Mab, Laon and Cythna, or ‘The Mask of Anarchy’ found no place in Kiebooms’s upbeat anthology. After all, Shelley’s ‘shorter lyrical poems’ are the works ‘upon which the poet’s literary fame is based more firmly than on his longer works’ (p. 6). Shelley is further characterised as a poet who ‘truly lived in a world of dreams: with his powerful imagination he created a world of idealism, and in that ethereal atmosphere he lived high above the concrete troubles of every day life’ (p. 6). If this passage has some distinct Kloosian overtones, the following phrase might well have been written by the Dutch poet-critic himself: Shelley ‘felt the necessity of pouring out his heart in streams of spontaneous poetry’. Kiebooms concludes: ‘His beautiful, original imagery, together with the great variety and musical melody of his verse have been praised without reserve and have been imitated [sic] not only in England

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but even abroad' (p. 6). That Kieboom includes the Netherlands among the countries whose national literature was influenced by the English writer is obvious from the set of questions at the end of his anthology. These questions are designed to help pupils come to grips with what is, after all, very complex poetry. I reproduce two of them: 'In order to fully appreciate [Shelley’s ‘Autumn: A Dirge’ and ‘Dirge’] write an essay in which you draw up a contrast between these two and other similar poems. Such as: [...] Verwey’s “Rouw om ‘t Jaar” [and] Kloos’ “Oudejaarsavond”’ (p. 99). ‘Can you find any resemblances between the poet’s opinion in [Shelley’s ‘To the West Wind’] and “De Zee” by Kloos?’ (p. 100). This may well have come close to the ultimate realisation of Kloos’s dream: to see Shelley’s poetry taught alongside his own. This pairing works in two directions though. If Kloos’s work is seen in a Romantic context, it is obvious that Shelley’s work, at the same time, will inevitably be associated with the aestheticism of the Dutch ‘Eighties Movement’.

A quarter of a century after the publication of Kieboom’s course book, Walter Thys, in his otherwise excellent monograph on P. L. Tak’s *De Kroniek*, refers to ‘De zuiver aesthetische renaissance die Shelley en Keats en andere [sic] Lake poets hadden gebracht’ and which ‘had niet in de sociale noden kunnen voorzien’. The origin and *raison d’être* of such claims lie in Kloos’s own Shelley representations, but that Thys’s view needs to be modified has been explained in the previous pages. Some writers were certainly responsive to the political streak in the works of someone like Shelley, but Kloos’s self-proclaimed, critical monopoly on the poet’s writings has ensured that this more congenial reception became obscured in time. Thys’s opinion is correct, though, when he means that the literary renaissance in the Netherlands resulted from a partial understanding of, in particular, Shelley’s works because form prevailed over content in the borrowing of English Romantic models by the Kloos circle.

From all this material some general conclusions can be drawn that will underpin the more specific analyses in the following chapters. The first point to keep in mind is that

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78 With the provision of course that Kloos should then not be represented as having ‘imitated’ Shelley. To all intents and purposes, Kloos would probably not have taken kindly to the anonymous critic of Hubert Michael’s *Willem Kloos*, who described him in his review as a follower of another English Romantic poet, i.e. Kloos ‘having in the fragment Okeanos imitated Keats’s Hyperion with some success’. Anon., ‘Dutch Romantic’ in: *Times Literary Supplement*, 14 September 1967, p. 818.
79 Walter Thys, *De Kroniek van P. L. Tak: Brandpunt van Nederlandse cultuur in de jaren negentig van de vorige eeuw* (Gent: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde,
Kloos’s admiration for Shelley was not as exclusive as he wanted his readership to believe. In fact, the most informative and penetrating pieces on the English poet to appear in Dutch were not written by Kloos at all. As far as quantity is concerned, Kloos remains the undisputed champion of Dutch Shelley criticism, but none of his pieces come even close to the intellectual vigour we encounter in the studies produced by writers such as David Spanjaard and Herman Gorter. What is more, such was the status of the English Romantic among writers in the Netherlands that Shelley’s works and character were deemed suitable enough subject matter for poetry: Herman Gorter, Frederik van Eeden, Alex. Gutteling, Albert Verwey, and E.B. Koster all wrote about Shelley in their verse. Secondly, a significant number of critics, though the one perhaps more established than the other, were well aware of the deficiencies in Kloos’s Shelley representations and readings. Some of them did not refrain from attacking Kloos directly and expose his limited understanding of Shelley’s oeuvre. As these attacks usually focussed on the political slant of Shelley’s work, and as Kloos himself was ill at ease with his idol’s radicalism, he, more often than not, chose to keep silent. To enter into a debate with these critics would have meant for Kloos to concede that the ideological aspect of Shelley’s oeuvre was a moot point after all. Even so, and this is conclusion number three, Kloos left his mark on generations of critics in the Netherlands. In their course books at secondary school, for instance, pupils were presented with Shelley images which were very much based on Kloos’s perceptions. The only Dutch Shelley monograph, published in 1944, also takes on board many of the claims Kloos made about his literary hero. Echoes of Kloos’s Shelley representations could be heard in studies and publication for many years to come. Kloos’s name, and the authority that (once) went with it, combined with the fact that his were ideas drawn from a perennial tradition of Victorian Shelley criticism, ensured the steady dissemination of his views. The fourth point to bear in mind is that Kloos’s vindication of Shelley’s character was not as unique a gesture as he promoted it to be. Many critics were ready to leap to Shelley’s defence and make allowances for his unorthodox life style. Shelley’s atheism, for instance, did ruffle only a few feathers, and when it was attacked, it was seen as a weakness of character rather than a (perfidious) act of rebellion. The same holds true for his amorous exploits which were

1955). Tak seems to be guilty of the same inaccuracy as once F. Coenen before him by applying the term ‘Lake poets’ to the younger generation of British romantic writers.

80 As we will see in the final chapter, it was only when The Cenci was brought into the limelight that Shelley’s religious iconoclasm became a matter of dispute.
explained away as exercises in Platonic love or as proof of his generous, and according to some excessively generous, disposition. The names of the greatest in the literary canon were invoked to help institutionalise Shelley’s respectability as a writer. Finally, Kloos’s efforts to claim Shelley as his own could have a very undesirable side-effect: instead as Shelley’s Dutch counterpart, Kloos was sometimes seen as an epigone. It will be clear that for someone who considered individualism of paramount importance, anything that degraded his art and poetics as derivative and second-hand had to be denounced. Nevertheless, for Kloos the emphasis lay very much on the literary and psychological rapport between himself and the English poet. The next chapters will reveal the extraordinary lengths to which Kloos went in order to get across the idea that he and Shelley ought to be seen not in terms of model and follower, but as artistic compeers.
Chapter Three: Alastor

Marking the onset of Kloos's very public appropriation process, the year 1906 was of profound importance in the propagation of his customised Shelley image. Early that year, there appeared the first complete, self-contained Dutch translation published in book form of a major poem by Shelley: *Alastor, of de geest der eenzaamheid*. The subtitle, in smaller but proud capitals, reads: 'Uit het Engelsch in Nederlandsche verzen overgezet door Dr. K.H. de Raaf'. This emphasis on the versificatory character of the translation would be a crucial factor underlying much of the debate which followed De Raaf's publication. If translating a canonical Shelley poem and publishing it as an independent volume already was an ambitious project hitherto never attempted in the Netherlands, producing a translation which also observed the metre and rhythm of the original could not fail to be perceived as a real feat. After all, the musicality of Shelley's verse, which would be referred to with almost irksome regularity in the ensuing critical debate, was likely to prove a major stumbling block. Any translator of his works therefore set himself a formidable task, something which Kloos, who wrote the preface to De Raaf's translation, fully appreciated: 'de aangrijpende, schoon-muzikale' effusions of Shelley's poetic mind, as well as the 'millioenen-lijnige, duizend-tintige' quality of his art '[maken] het voor een vertaler niet gemakkelijk, om fijn-precies [...] over te brengen wat de dichter inderdaad schreef' (p. 11).

If the preface was meant as a seal of approval on Kloos's part, I believe it also served other, more militant goals. A careful reading will expose the specific agenda which Kloos had set himself and which was to dominate the remainder of his career as a poet-critic. Derided in the preface of De Raaf's booklet, Verwey would respond with the publication of his own *Alastor* translation in 1909. I will argue that Verwey's rendition was meant as a deliberate emulation of De Raaf's earlier attempt, implicitly trying to usurp Kloos's self-proclaimed position as Shelley specialist. Not only Kloos's preface and

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Verwey's epilogue, I will demonstrate, but the very style of the translations themselves were ideologically motivated.

1. Kloos's introduction to De Raaf's Alastor translation

As it turned out, De Raaf's translation provided Kloos with an ideal opportunity to set himself up as the foremost devotee of Shelley in the country. It is in fact the very first time that Kloos asserts himself publicly as an (amateur) Shelley scholar. Indeed, his preface to the dutchified Alastor predates the series of articles on Shelley and the various reviews of translations which appeared in De Nieuwe Gids between 1912 and 1927.² His intimi and associates were of course familiar with Kloos's infatuation with Shelley, but now he had the chance to speak out to a much wider audience. To some extent, Kloos had already publicly coupled his name with Shelley's in his preface to the posthumous publication of Jacques Perk's poems when in 1882 he had referred to 'die eeuwige-vloeiende wel van aandoening en zaligheid, den onvergelijkeloijken Epipsychidion' (JP1, p. 72).³ Yet, at that time, the Eighties Movement was still to come into existence and Kloos had not yet consciously begun to act as the sole proprietor of Shelley's legacy. De Raaf now offered him the chance to start the process through which he would establish himself as the only acknowledged legislator of Shelley scholarship in the Netherlands. Though the twelve-page preface in written as one continuous piece of prose, it is made up of five distinctive sections. The first discusses Shelley's relevance for the Dutch Eighties Movement (pp. 5-7), the second advances Alastor as Shelley's first mature poem (pp. 7-8), the third consists of a comparison between Shelley and Byron (pp. 9-12), the fourth goes into the difficulties of translating Shelley (pp. 12-15), and the fifth section summarises the previous arguments (pp. 15-16).

In the first section of his preface, Kloos can be seen setting out the terms and conditions for what he considers to be the only valid discourse with regard to Shelley's art. Referring to the English poet in personal terms allows him to keep the distance

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³ In the earlier ‘In memoriam Jacques Perk’ for De Nederlandsche Spectator (19 November 1881), which formed the basis of his later introduction to the Gedichten, Kloos also mentions very briefly Alastor, Prometheus Unbound, 'The Cloud', and 'The Witch of Atlas'. Reproduced in JPI, pp. 17-25.
between the reader and Shelley’s exacting poetry wide enough to make his own position appear crucial in any successful reading of Alastor. Indeed, Kloos promotes himself as principal Shelley champion and rightful mediator for the Eighties Movement. ‘Hij [Shelley] is mij lief geweest sinds mijn achttiende jaar’, and, continuing in the same breath, ‘zijn invloed op het tot stand komen der beweging van ‘80 is dus een groote en zeer heilzame geweest’ (pp. 5-6, italics mine). The causality highlighted by Kloos is singularly meaningful in this context. In the public’s mind, Kloos’s name, as perhaps no-one else’s, was immediately associated with the Eighties Movement. Now, Kloos will try to extend this association, turning the link between his name and Shelley’s into as self-evident a fact.

Though nearly ninety years have passed since the publication of the original, the reader setting eyes on Alastor for the very first time may well be surprised by the modern feel of the poem, Kloos argues: ‘In 1816, dus bijna 90 jaar geleden, is ‘t gedicht verschenen; maar voor wie het nú gaat lezen, zal het veelal zijn, of hij een dichtstuk heeft aangetroffen, dat eerst kortgeleden het licht mocht zien’ (p. 7). Notwithstanding his explicit rejection of the idea that this is because contemporary writers approximate Alastor’s beauty in their works, it is not impossible that Kloos’s statement contains some hidden agenda. Having advocated Shelley’s works as the example par excellence of inspired poetry, and having induced his colleagues to write in a similar vein, it is not at all out of the ordinary that Kloos should discerns a seemingly new-fashioned quality in Alastor. As we have already seen, just a couple of paragraphs prior to this statement, Kloos had drawn attention to Shelley’s wholesome influence on the genesis of the Eighties Movement. Forced out of their determinant historical context, Shelley’s works are now projected several decades ahead in time to coincide with Kloos’s writing career. Through this displacement, Kloos vindicates the inherent value of the contemporary achievements in Dutch literature modelled after Shelley’s writings. As such, Shelley’s topicality for the literary scene in the Netherlands obviates an advanced artistic sensitivity which, Kloos argues, was brought about exactly by writers like himself. The works of the authors belonging to the Eighties Movement are presented as the necessary catalyst for the appropriate consumption of Shelley’s poetry. This curious reversal of the temporal vector tightens even more the relationship between Shelley and the Kloos circle. Rather than a unilateral impact of Shelley’s works on the compositions of the Eighties Movement, Kloos statements suggest a real interaction instead. If Shelley’s works have
been instrumental in generating 'de herrijzenis en hervorming der Nederlandsche poëtische letterkunde' (p. 5), than Shelley's own *Alastor* likewise owes its new-fashioned quality to the writings of the Dutch 'jeugdige hervormers' (p. 6). As a matter of fact, it can only be fully appreciated by adopting the 'frisschere opvatting' (p. 6) by which these youthful reformers have been invigorating the literary climate during the past two decades. With an almost self-congratulatory bow, Kloos, in his preface, takes leave by pointing out once again that the reader awaits some 'verrassend-nieuwe artistieke en geestelijke genot' (p. 16, *italics mine*). By then the reader has been duly told whom he ought to give the credit for the privileged intellectual pleasures he is about to experience. For reading Shelley is a privilege, his poems being 'geenszins spoorweg-lectuur voor den eerste den beste, die nog nooit van hem gehoord heeft' (p. 12). The first of Kloos's objectives has been reached: the Dutch reading public was now fully informed about the fact that Kloos and Shelley formed an exceptional twosome whose importance for the development of Dutch literature could not be overestimated. There were, however, some other significant assertions to be made.

Skipping section 2 for the moment, we turn to the third section of the preface where Kloos stresses the many differences between Shelley and Byron, and where he voices an opinion that had once had been very popular in Britain as well. 'Shelley,' Kloos writes, 'stond geestelijk veraf van de wereld, en keek er slechts heel uit de verte naar' (p. 10). As I have already demonstrated, Shelley's deep-rooted interest in political matters tells quite a different tale. It is also in this preface that Kloos advanced the idea that Shelley 'in zijn staatkundige ideeën géén voorloper te noemen [is] van het socialisme' (see the previous chapter). *Alastor*, featuring a self-absorbed wanderer bent on pursuits which are essentially egocentric, seems to be far removed from the earlier, radical-reformist *Queen Mab*. Mary Shelley's headnote which she included in the 1824 edition of the *Posthumous Poems* and which De Raaf dutifully prefixed to his translation stresses the strictly 'individuele beteekenis' (p. 17) of *Alastor*, something which Kloos was only too happy to underscore. Yet, as Shelley claims in his own preface to the poem (in De Raaf's rendition), 'de schildering is niet ontbloot van leering voor den praktischen mensch' (p. 22). *Alastor* is a stern warning to its readers not to neglect their social concerns, or to withdraw from human community into the entrapments of 'self-centred seclusion' (*SPP*, p. 69). With individualism being at the heart of Kloos's poetics, it is revealing that De Raaf rendered this particular phrase as 'zichzelf-zoekende afzondering'
As a modern critic put it, because the poem’s wandering youth ‘refused to accept the natural outlet for his human social instincts’, they become ‘distorted into a monomania’. This monomania is the Poet’s desire to be united with the girl who appeared to him in a dream. Shelley states explicitly that the youth ‘overleaps the bounds’ in his quest for ‘that fleeting shade’ (ll. 206, 207). Since the Poet ‘spurned’ the ‘choicest gifts’ of ‘sweet human love’ (ll. 203-205, italics mine), the outcome of his narcissistic journey can only result in absolute failure. Apparently blind to the poem’s ‘[praktische] leering’, Kloos makes no reference either to ‘The Daemon of the World’ and ‘Superstition’, two poems which Shelley had included with some others in his *Alastor* volume. These two works in fact consist of recast material from *Queen Mab* and demonstrate that the title poem ought to be read in the context of Shelley’s moral and political concerns.

The inclusion of Mary Shelley’s note, and, indeed, the entire set-up of the Dutch volume seems to be influenced by an important publication issued by the Shelley Society in 1886. Edited by Bertram Dobell, *Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude and Other Poems*, was sent to all members of the Society which had come into existence earlier that year. Kloos was one of its members (infra), and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he lent his 1886 copy to De Raaf who followed its design fairly closely. That the Shelley Society publication provided the model for De Raaf’s own volume is substantiated by Kloos’s preface which, in its turn, relies heavily on Dobell’s foreword. The second section of Kloos’s preface which argues for the special place of *Alastor* in the Shelley canon starts thus:

Ja het is goed, dat er een vertaling van Shelley is gekomen, een woordgetrouwe vertaling van zijn eerste eigenlijke gedicht. Het bekendere “Queen Mab” toch is wel Shelley’s eerste, grootere, in versmaat geschrevene letterkundige proeve, doch telt als gedicht nagenoeg niet meê. De dichter had toen zichzelf en zijn ware kunst nog geenszins gevonden, en zoo ging hij, als negentienjarige jongen (1812), daar aan ‘t

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5 One of the other poems included in the *Alastor* volume is entitled ‘Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte’.

geestdriftig speeche en ‘t abstract verzekeren, gelijk dit in de rijmende geschriften van het eind der 18e eeuw de mode was geweest. Neen, Alastor is Shelley's vroegste wezenlijke dichtwerk, en zijn jonge ziel breekt daar plotseling open in overvloedige schoonheid, gelijk een knop die uiteenspringt tot een groote, mooie bloem. (p. 7)

The similarities to a paragraph in Bertram Dobell's preface are too striking to be discarded as coincidental:

*Alastor* is, by the general verdict of Shelley's critics, admitted to be the work in which his peculiar excellences were first exhibited. *Queen Mab* indeed, [...] with all the audacity of thought, declamatory force, and enthusiasm for humanity by which it is characterised, [...] yet shows few or no traces of the melody of versification, the subtlety of conception, and the inexhaustible wealth of imagination which distinguished the poet's later works. In *Queen Mab* Shelley treads in the footsteps of his predecessors and contemporaries, [...] but in *Alastor* he first struck out a pathway of his own on which he was henceforth to travel, and which led him to ever fairer regions of splendour and delight. (pp. xi-xii)

Kloos is far more disparaging about *Queen Mab*, but for the rest, both passages are much alike. This strongly suggests that Dobell provided the blue-print for Kloos's preface. This is not to say, however, that Kloos was not in earnest about his own claims. He had arrived at an assessment of Shelley's works in the early 1880s, and must have found it encouraging to see his judgement shared by professional scholars and founding members of the august Shelley Society. Yet, at the time Kloos was writing his preface, an articulate segment of critics (notably G.B. Shaw) had shifted the emphasis from the purely aesthetic towards the political slant of Shelley's writings. With his temperament, however, it was unlikely for Kloos to change his original conception. In this respect, Kloos’s phrase that ‘de dichter had toen [in *Queen Mab*] zichzelf [...] nog geenszins gevonden’ is all-revealing. The political part of Shelley’s character ran counter to Kloos’s views, and therefore, surely had to be excused as some folly committed in youth before his real personality had been duly formed. In the preface, Kloos will now impose on Shelley the self that he thought proper: ‘In Alastor is Shelley voor het eerst geheel zichzelf [want] hij redeneert niet en zeurt niet’ (p. 8). The result is aesthetic unsubstantiality (or unsubstantial aestheticism): ‘De bekoring zijner kunst is dikwils als die van een glans op
The light which Kloos is shedding on Shelley’s art as a whole is of course carefully polarised and filters out what he thought objectionable or offensive: ‘Nadert men te veel [...] dan ziet men niets meer’ (p. 11; Kloos’s italics). Kloos will make sure that no-one comes too close to Shelley: he will not permit anyone to trespass the boundaries of that magic circle he himself had drawn around Shelley to safeguard him against voyeurs prying for traces of indecent sedition. Through the absolute negation — ‘niets’ — of everything that lies outside his limited range of vision, Kloos’s readers are forced to look at Shelley through Kloos’s own eyes which he has deliberately rendered myopic. How ironic then that Kloos seems to compensate his reductionist readings of Shelley’s poetry by his insistence on its visionary quality, the ‘gevoelde ziening’ (p. 11) which distinguishes Shelley’s writings from the works of his fellow poet Byron. As if to cover himself against potential attacks on his limited perception of Alastor, he propounds that there is more to admire than the exterior beauties only. The profundity of Shelley’s art lies in his attempts to explore and describe ‘zijn eigen psychische Wezen aan de wereld’ (p. 8). With such remarks Kloos demonstrates that he viewed Shelley as a supreme individualist probing his soul with the sole intention to create beauty.

True to his own poetic principles which define literature as clothing unique sensations in exquisitely personal language, it is no surprise to find Kloos advocating a literal translation which must strive to recreate the ‘zachtkleurig, vormenwisselend wolkenpaleis’ so characteristic of Shelley’s unique style (p. 11). In the fourth section of the preface, he commends De Raaf for having kept the verbal integrity of the original text: the end result is ‘zoo woordgetrouw als maar mogelijk is’, with the extra quality that it renders Shelley’s poem ‘in aangenaam vloeiende, vaak zelfs fraai-klinkende verzen’ (p. 14). That this is not at all self-evident appears from the fact that De Raaf was to resort to prose when translating Epipsychidion one year after the completion of his Alastor. According to Kloos’s doctrines, it takes a real poet to translate another. Even if to an unbiased reader, De Raaf may seem to fall somewhat short of literary excellence, Kloos is
quick in praising his friend as 'een wezenlijk-ontwikkeld en verstandig man' gifted with a 'zuiveren smaak' (p. 14) who acquitted himself satisfactorily of his task.7

It is strange that Kloos, who saw himself as the foremost man of letters in the Netherlands and who felt himself akin to Shelley's mind and art, did not produce any Shelley translations himself.8 By the time of De Raaf's publication, Kloos was already forty-five years of age, having had ample opportunity to tackle some Shelley poems. Was it perhaps due to a feeling of linguistic insecurity or even incompetence that Kloos never wrote, let alone published, a complete translation of the works by a poet he had come to admire already decades ago? There are indeed some (scarce) allusions in Kloos's writings to his deficient knowledge of the English language. 'Zoo herinner ik mij van mijzelf, dat ik na gelukkig-volbracht eind-examen Hoogere Burgerschool 5-jarigen kursus, met voldoende cijfer voor 't Engelsch, toch geen gewoon boek kon begrijpen, zonder telkens een woordenboek op te slaan.'9 Kloos remedied this by reading and excerpting George Grote's History of Greece, which, he claims, also inspired him to write Rhodopis.10 Yet even his painstaking labour of going through the twelve-volume work were not enough to eliminate his sense of insecurity with regard to English. Despite his vast collection of English books and his acquaintance with most scholarly studies on Shelley, he still needed to appeal to his brother-in-law to write the occasional English letter for him (see Chapter Four). In the past, Kloos had nonetheless toyed with the idea of translating Alastor, as the following phrase taken from a letter by Verwey (15 November 1884) to van Eeden

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7 De Raaf was clearly impressed by Kloos's preface. On 24 April 1939, he wrote a postcard to Jeanne Kloos-Reyneke van Stuwe who had lost her husband the previous year. In it, he refers to the small-scale exhibition on Kloos he was preparing as a window-display in the book shop 'Mensing en Visser' in The Hague: 'Graag zou ik willen laten uitkomen wat de oorzaak is geweest van mijn relatie tot Willem; n.l. Shelley, ik leg, behalve portretten van Shelley, ook een paar uitgaven neer van mijn vertalingen. Het Handschrift van Willem's Inleiding vóór Alastor zal wel niet in je bezit zijn, wel? Ik geef er wat voor als ik dàt had' (R105 Bl). This is another indication of how the link between Kloos and Shelley was reinforced by the Dutch poet's associates after his death.

8 There is one manuscript with an incomplete translation of Shelley's 'Mont Blanc' by Kloos held in the Albert Verwey Collections at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). It has been reproduced, in modernised spelling, in WKJL, pp. 271-74.


demonstrates: ‘Ik heb een brief van Kloos gehad. Hij schrijft een groote studie over Shelley en heeft plan Alastor te vertalen.’

2. Kloos and Verwey on *Alastor*

In effect, during the second half of 1884, whilst Kloos was working on his large essay on Shelley (see Chapter One), he was also engaged in a prolonged correspondence with Verwey on the subject of *Alastor*. In order to understand better the dynamics of the literary battle over *Alastor* in later years, it is necessary to look at these letters in some detail. Kloos was reduced to communicate with Verwey by post since he had temporarily taken lodgings with the Doorenbos family in Brussels so as to escape conscription at home. It was a productive period for Kloos during which he was busy with several projects. Apart from the Shelley study, he was preparing the notorious *Julia* volume which was to come out the following year. Kloos’s letters from that time leave little doubt about his preoccupation with Shelley: ‘Mijn eenige lectuur en studie is tegenwoordig Shelley en wat daarmee in verband staat’. They especially show Kloos’s determination to unravel some of the more perplexing passages in *Alastor*. Yet, his were not so much problems of signification as of visualisation of the more descriptive passages. For him, the main crux lay in the Poet’s voyage by boat (ll. 374-401) whose trajectory appears to flout some elementary laws of physics. Having exhausted his own faculties of interpretation, he explained his difficulties to Verwey, asking him for advice. The latter obligingly replied with diagrams and drawings, though these were not to Kloos’s satisfaction. Verwey did all he could in his attempts to explain the Poet’s aquatic route only to see his efforts thwarted by Kloos’s detailed objections. Verwey even drew on his first-hand experience of his visit to the Niagara Falls during his American tour in the summer of 1883, quoting from a brochure describing the treacherous currents and whirlpools at the base of the cascades, to account for some awkward natural phenomena.

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12 Kloos to Verwey in a letter dated 18 November 1884, kept in the Albert Verwey Archives at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) (‘map Kloos 1884’).
described in the poem. Yet, every time, Kloos found some detail which did not quite fit in.

The passage in question is well-known to students of Shelley. The inconsistencies and physical impossibilities which Kloos detected are really there, but they do not interfere with the general meaning of the poem. It is somewhat of a disappointment, though taking Kloos’s and Verwey’s youthful age into consideration (25 and 19 respectively), it is perhaps unfair to expect otherwise, that neither young poet went any further in his analysis of the poem. No attempt is made at defining or even hinting at the overall significance of Alastor. As I will demonstrate later in this chapter, Verwey was to make up for this neglect two decades later. Kloos, however, was not much of an exegete, even in later life. Consequently, an interpretational analysis of the poem in the 1906 preface to De Raaf’s translation will be looked for in vain, even if more than twenty years had elapsed since Kloos’s first gropings at the poem. The closest Kloos ever comes in his preface to a surrogate interpretation is the moment he characterises Alastor as ‘een hoogen berg’ in ‘een ver vreemd land vol bloemige valleien, en wondertuinen binnen rotsomwallingen, tegen wier voet en steile opstijgingen de oneindige oceaan, sterk-klimmend, majestueuslijk klotst’ (p. 8). With such a statement, Kloos firmly displaces Shelley’s work to a very otherworldly realm indeed. It is a landscape of the egotistical sublime in which Kloos disconnects Shelley from all humanity. Within this walled, perfectly self-sufficient and isolated hortus conclusus one can picture without the slightest effort Kloos as the omnipotent gardener pruning away any unwanted growth. Such an enclosure is an apt metaphor for Kloos’s desire to secure everything Shelley meant for him against uncontrollable seepage from without and to exercise total control over the object of his private idolisation.

Alongside his detailed responses to Kloos’s queries in November 1884, Verwey also found time to dwell in more general terms on the different criteria by which poetry can be evaluated. Through his reading of Shelley’s poetry, Verwey claimed to have discovered a touchstone with which to distinguish between true literature and second-rate productions. Unfortunately, Verwey’s first letter elaborating on these criteria has not been preserved, but the general meaning and drift of Verwey’s reasoning can be inferred

13 ‘A propos — ik heb hier een gids van de Niagara falls en lees als beschrijving van gewone draaikolken (Niagara-zelf is anders): the shape of a vast caldron or pool formed by an outlet in the bottom of the vessel (vat) whereby the center is greatly depressed!! Ook lees ik daar als gewone
from Kloos’s snide reply and Verwey subsequent commentary. These demonstrate that Shelley’s poems played an essential role in the artistic development of both young men. Verwey explains to Kloos that, when finding himself baffled by some apparently incomprehensible verses, but nonetheless experiences, what he calls with an English phrase ‘awe’, then the obscurity of the lines must be caused by his own limited perception and cannot be the result of some inherent flaw in the poetry itself. Failing to experience ‘awe’ whilst reading Shelley’s ‘Mont Blanc’, Verwey has come to realise for himself that this is an indication that that particular poem is in some way deficient.

Verwey’s insistence on the relative importance of reason in judging poetry implies a gentle rebuke to Kloos’s strictly intellectual approach to the boat passage in *Alastor*. Kloos had been looking for a logical consecution of transparent tropes rather than an evocation of a particular mood. This belies the established view of Kloos, the poet of passion and poetic intuition as opposed to Verwey, churning out philosophical ideas put to rhyme. Bearing Kloos’s nit-picking in mind, it is rather ironic to see how in later years, De Raaf would turn to Kloos after having read a disapproving article of Jacques Perk’s lyric ‘Iris’: ‘[Stutterheim] bespreekt een reeks van plaatsen [in Iris,] onderzocht die naar de beeldspraak en komt tot de conclusie dat wat Perk schrijft niet overeenstemt met het natuurproces, niet “gezien” is, kortom valsch en rhetorisch moet heeten’.14 This, of course, was exactly Kloos’s attitude towards the *Alastor* boat passage. What De Raaf calls Stutterheim’s ‘droogstoppelachtige, verstandelijke bespreking van een droom, een fantasie van een jongen dichter’ is in no ways different from Kloos’s finding fault with Shelley’s psychological, interiorised landscape. Back in 1884, Kloos had admitted to Verwey about his own attempts at translating *Alastor* ‘ik geloof niet, dat ik het nu al kan. Ik zal het bewaren denk ik, tot mijn studie over Shelley af is’ (18 November 1884). The Shelley study was never completed, the *Alastor* translation probably never begun. It is clear that as early as 1884, Verwey’s and Kloos’s approach to the poem was fundamentally different in nature. These differences will become even more outspoken in later years, with Kloos trying to smother Verwey’s dissident voice.

I claimed that Kloos monopolised his admiration for Shelley, blocking out everyone who tried to set foot in the realm of Shelley scholarship. Kloos's preface to De Raaf's volume offers some further concrete evidence for this. In his piece, Kloos takes advantage of the occasion to administer a few rebukes to his erstwhile friend and literary companion Verwey. The latter had just resigned from his post as Lodewijk van Deyssel's fellow-editor of *De Twintigste Eeuw* and had started his own literary periodical *De Beweging*. This journal was especially set up to counterbalance the 'hyper-individualist' writings of *De Nieuwe Gids*. After they had fallen out in 1889, Kloos and Verwey never resumed their friendship, and now Kloos deemed it fit to swipe at his former bosom friend. Though Kloos does not mention Verwey by name, it is quite obvious who is meant by ‘een enkle der jeugdige hervormers, die [...] [is] gaan meedoen in het verstandelijke versfabrieken, waar hij, als Beweger van ‘85, eenmaal krachtig tegen in was gegaan’ (p. 6). The translation presents itself as a perfect opportunity for Verwey to atone for his heretical errings, having been led astray on a ‘vlak-makkelijken asfalt-weg’ (p. 6). De Raaf's volume will serve as a reliable guide for those willing to turn to the true and only poetic track. Many an unwary reader may have been tempted to infer from Kloos’s words that Verwey was totally inexperienced in Shelleyan matters. As so often, Kloos’s outburst ought to be read *cum grano salis*, for exactly one year prior to De Raaf's publication of *Alastor*, Verwey had contributed to *De Twintigste Eeuw* with three Shelley translations, to wit: 'Mont Blanc', 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' and 'Sunset'. Thirteen years earlier, Verwey had also published his translation of Shelley’s *A Defence of Poetry*. There is thus little renouncement to be found on the part of Verwey, unless, of course, Kloos really had himself in mind and not Shelley when he wrote about the 'grooten Meester' which some now dare '[te] verloochenen' (p. 6). We will see later how Verwey did not let himself be reduced to the role of passive victim. De Raaf's *Alastor*, therefore, marks the beginning of a fierce literary battle which lasted for more than two decades.

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15 These three translations appeared as ‘Shelley’s gedichten van het jaar MDCCCXVI’ in: *De Twintigste Eeuw*, February 1904, pp. 192-203, and were reprinted, with some revisions, in *Poëzie in Europa* (Amsterdam: Versluys, 1920), pp. 1-14.

16 Albert Verwey, *Dichters verdediging: Shelley's A Defence of Poetry en Sidney's An Apologie for Poetrie* (Amsterdam: S.J. van Looy, 1891). It is a rather curious oversight that Paul Cronheim, in the special Albert Verwey issue of *De Stem* following the poet’s death, did not refer to any of Verwey’s Shelley translations in his contribution 'Dichter en Vertaler'. Paul Cronheim, 'Dichter en Vertaler' in: *De Stem [Benevens het Critisch Bulletin]*, 17 Nos 7-8, July-August 1937, pp. 797-801.
3. Critical responses to De Raaf’s translation

De Raaf’s translation enticed A.S. Kok to contribute to De Nederlandsche Spectator with two consecutive pieces, the first of which dealing with Shelley’s Alastor in more general terms.17 Once more, the 1886 edition issued by the Shelley Society, and more particularly Dobell’s preface, forms the backbone of this first part. Though not an actual member himself, Kok recalls how twenty years ago, he had received from the editor personally ‘de fraaie facsimile uitgave van de Shelley Society’ (p. 25). Even if he had not told so himself, there would have been little doubt from where Kok had culled most of his information:

Alastor wordt terecht beschouwd als het eerste werk, waarin Shelley’s karakter als dichter schitterend voor den dag kwam [Dobell: ‘Alastor is by the general verdict of Shelley’s critics, admitted to be the work in which his peculiar excellencies were first exhibited’, p. xi], zoo om de onberispelijke, melodieuse versificatie, als om de ongemeenheid van opvatting en, men zou haast zeggen, weelderige fantasie [Dobell: ‘melody of versification, the nobility of conception, and the inexhaustible wealth of imagination’, p. xii]. In Alastor toont hij met volle bewustzijn zijn eigen weg te hebben gevonden en dien met vasten gang te betreden (p. 25) [Dobell: ‘In Alastor he first struck out a pathway of his own on which he was henceforth to travel’, p. xii].

The Shelley Society, apparently realising its objective of promoting Shelley’s work abroad, seems to have been particularly successful in the Netherlands. Yet, if Kok’s fairly thorough comments on the poem, looking at the genesis, theme and reception of Alastor, rely heavily on Dobell’s preface, he nonetheless adds a few personal observations trying to account for the lack of critical interest at the time of its publication. It is exactly because of ‘het auto-biografische in het gedicht, dat tevens de eerste uiting kan genoemd worden van des dichters innerlijke wezen en oorspronkelijke, geheel eigen dichterziel’ (p. 26, italics mine), features which have now become the source of praise and admiration, that Shelley’s Alastor initially provoked little or no response. This view tallies with Kloos’s conviction, as expressed in his preface to De Raaf’s translation, that Shelley was above all a supreme individualist. Kloos had written: ‘In Alastor [...] geeft hij zijn eigen psychische Wezen aan de wereld’ (p. 8), ‘[In Alastor, it is clear] dat hij waarlijk uit

de diepten heeft gesproken van zijn innerlijke Wezen’ (pp. 10-11), ‘[In Alastor, Shelley] gaf zijn diepste inwendige Wezen (p. 11)’, ‘[His works are] even veelverscheiden van schakeering, als zijn binnenste Wezen zelf dat was’ (p. 11). Kok’s and Kloos’s opinion of Shelley are thus much alike, if seriously reductive.

Presenting an estimation of Alastor in a broader biographical and bibliographical framework, Kok’s piece would, arguably, have made a much more informative and coherent preface for De Raaf’s volume than Kloos’s more personally customised piece. Yet, as I have demonstrated, Kloos’s intentions were not to provide a literary analysis, but, amongst other things, to appropriate the poet Shelley as a precursor of the ‘Eighties Movement’. Interestingly enough, Kok does not refer to Kloos’s preface in any overt terms. Yet, there may be some hidden reference to it when Kok argues that the glorification of Shelley’s works, which started half a century after his death, ‘steeds stijgende [is] gebleven, vaak niet zonder overdrijving, die zich vooral kenmerkte door een onoordeelkundig afbreken van anderer roem’ (p. 26). Kok was an admirer of Byron and may have felt offended by Kloos’s slighting remarks to Byron’s ‘knap-almanak-versachtige’ works which he compares unfavourably with Shelley’s in the Dutch Alastor preface (p. 10). Kok probably read this stern assessment whilst being engaged in preparing his own translation of Byron’s Cain for the press, which was eventually published a few months after his critique in De Nederlandsche Spectator.\(^\text{18}\) On the rebound, Kok divulges some reservations with regard to Alastor, despite his appreciation of Shelley’s genius. He observes that the reader is often confronted with ‘een gebrek aan licht en schaduw’ causing Alastor to become ‘te vlak, te eentonig’ (p. 33). This is far removed from the ‘duizend-tintige’ quality which Kloos detected in Shelley’s art.

The sequel to the overall characterisation of Shelley’s Alastor is followed by a remarkable, almost hybrid review of the merits and, especially, the flaws of De Raaf’s translation. The marked imbalance in his criticism, highlighting the blemishes out of proportion, was made much of by Kloos’s reaction to Kok’s critique. Kok’s evaluation of De Geest der Eenzaamheid starts positive enough, though: ‘De algemeene indruk is, dat de toon en stemming van het oorspronkelijke goed zijn weergegeven’ (p. 33). De Raaf has the sensitivity and keen hearing necessary for translating Shelley. These are paramount qualities for a Shelley translator, given that the melodic versification is ‘trillende van lyrische aandrift’ (p. 33). Many verses have not only been rendered

correctly but also approach the original in poetic expressiveness. This praise, however, is
seriously outstripped by the next page in which Kok lists flaw after flaw against good
taste in general, and prosody in particular. Kok’s objections are put forward in very
strong terms indeed, which makes the clash with the initial favourable evaluation the more
salient. Kok is quite resourceful in his condemnation of De Raaf’s shortcomings: ‘gebrek
mishandelde [...] verzen’, ‘stoornissen en bewijzen van onmacht’, ‘taalverknoeiingen’,
taalverkrachting’, ‘taalverhanseling’, ‘vers-schending’ are just a few of the phrases he
uses. Summarising all his disapproval in one comprehensive statement, Kok concludes
his diatribe with the observation that there are many gross imperfections in De Raaf’s
dutchified Alastor which insult ‘het taalgevoel van den beschaafden lezer’ (p. 34).
Implied, of course, is that Shelley’s art is respectable and worthy of the attention of
civilised society, something which Kok also underscored in the first part of his
contribution to De Spectator. From then onwards, Kok checks himself and the rest of his
review is written in a much more subdued, and, indeed civilised way. He felt induced not
to spare the rod, so he claims, out of interest for De Raafl’s labour. After all, the Alastor
translation is ‘de eerste van een der uitgebreide gedichten in onze taal’ which warrants an
attentive reading, even when this exposes many weaknesses (p. 35). In an obviously self-
conscious mood of magnanimity, Kok sees translator and reviewer, in casu Kok himself,
united in advancing Shelley’s fame.

Of particular interest for my argument is how, Kok, in an afterthought, finishes his
piece by quoting Byron who had said how Shelley ‘had formed to himself a beau ideal of
all that is fine, high-minded, and noble’ and who ‘acted up to this ideal even to the very
letter’ (p. 35). Reading Alastor can only substantiate such an opinion, Kok argues. That is
why he totally agrees with Mary Shelley when she states in her preface to the posthumous
1824 edition that the ‘poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative’. Such a
conviction is totally alien both to Kloos and De Raaf. De Raaf even felt so awkward
about Mary’s phrase that he added a bracketed question mark in his translation, as if
doubtful of the correct reading: ‘Het gedicht is meer didactisch [...] dan verhalend’ (p. 20).
Was it at all possible that Shelley committed such a heinous offence in his ‘first mature’
poem?

If De Raaf felt wronged by Kok’s vehement piece, Kloos was not tardy in coming
to the rescue. In the ‘Literaire Kroniek’ in the April 1906 issue of De Nieuwe Gids, Kloos
turns to Kok’s article contesting the veracity of much of the biographical and bibliographical details therein. He contrived for Kok’s factual errors to reflect badly on his further objections to De Raaf’s prosody. Kloos is right in refuting Kok’s claim that all literary journals let the publication of *Alastor* pass by unnoticed. Kloos quotes from *The Monthly Review* and refers to Leigh Hunt’s praise in *The Examiner* to prove that *Alastor* did receive a number of reviews in the press. When writing down his inaccurate statement (‘Toen het gedicht verscheen, trok het weinig aandacht’, p. 25), Kok probably had Dobell’s preface in mind again: ‘[Alastor] attracted, upon its first appearance, no public attention’ (p. xxxvii), and, more explicitly, ‘I have never met with any contemporary review or notice of it’ (p. xvii). Kloos got his updated information about the reviews, as he discloses himself, from ‘het standaardwerk “The Life of P.B. Shelley by Edward Dowden”’ (p. 288). This seminal two-volume study was published in 1886, after the publication of the Shelley Society *Alastor* facsimile from which Kok drew most of the factual details for his articles in *De Nederlandsche Spectator*. Dowden’s *Life* contained a wealth of new material, including the reprints of the original *Alastor* reviews. Since Kloos himself was acquainted with the Dobell preface, having paraphrased sections from it to make up his own preface to De Raaf’s volume, he must very well have realised that Kok’s oversight was due to his dependence on Dobell’s text. Instead of deriding Kok for his ignorance, it would have been fairer to warn him not to rely exclusively on an outdated source text. In this respect, Kloos accusation of Kok as one prone to ‘voor- de-vuist-weg fantaseeren’ has a false ring to it (p. 288). It proved, however, a highly efficient ploy for stripping Kok of his credibility and incapacitating him as a literary critic. As a consequence, Kloos neatly disenfranchised a rival (amateur) Shelley scholar.

When he comes to remark on Kok’s criticism of the translation itself, Kloos continues pursuing his particular agenda. He accuses the critic of judging the Dutch *Alastor* by the criteria of ‘een vroegere beperktere Vers-aesthetiek’ (p. 292). Kloos asseverates that De Raaf, in his rendition, managed to reproduce Shelley’s ‘individualistische, zich niet naar de destijds gangbare schema’s van versmaat voegende rhythmie’ (p. 292). It is this quality which ranks the translation ‘onder de knappe boeken der laatste jaren’ (p. 291). Again, Shelley is implicitly presented as the proponent of the ‘Tachtigers’ in their battle against the poetic practices of a previous generation.

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Kok did probably not want to start any squabbling at his advanced age (75) and forbore to react. Hence, Kloos must have thought to have dealt with the matter definitively. There were now other issues to deal with after all. De Raaf published two other important Shelley translations in *De Nieuwe Gids: Epipsychidion* in 1906 and the first act of *The Cenci* in 1907. Kloos must have been overjoyed by Shelley’s pervading presence in his journal. Yet, this was likely to provoke the Verwey circle, grouped around the periodical *De Beweging*, and before long they responded with counter-translations. Alex Gutteling was the first to come up with his dutchified *Prometheus Unbound* in 1908, closely followed by Verwey’s ultimate response to De Raaf’s 1906 publication: a new, complete Dutch *Alastor*.\(^{20}\) Apparently, Verwey had at last taken Kloos’s advice to heart, when, in November 1884, and still bosom friends, Kloos had written to Verwey:

> Ja, Alastor! Ik zeg dat maar zoo, vertalen! maar ik geloof niet, dat ik het nú al kan.

> […] Ik denk ook wel eens, dat het beter voor jou geschikt zou zijn."\(^{21}\)

Succeeding De Raaf’s volume so closely in time, Verwey’s translation may well have carried strong overtones of a deliberate emulation, implicitly challenging Kloos’s authority as a Shelley sycophant.

As was the case with De Raaf’s *Alastor*, Verwey’s version did not appear in isolation, but was accompanied by a few pages of commentary, written by Verwey himself. In the appended epilogue to his translation, Verwey ventures to interpret *Alastor* as a poetic sublimation of Shelley’s own troubled and eventful life. The poem, Verwey argues, hints at a deep spiritual disappointment with the failure to realise his ‘hervormingsideaal’ (p. 86). Whereas for Kloos, Shelley needed to be purged of his allegedly immature inclination towards ‘geestdriftig spechen’ and ‘abstract verzekeren’ (p. 7) before he could express his proper self in lyrical effusions, Verwey’s remark demonstrates that he considered Shelley’s desire for social reform not as something deplorable but as a constitutive part of his later writings as well. Much like Kloos, Verwey does detect a strong tendency towards introspection in *Alastor*, with the great

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difference, however, that for Verwey Shelley transcended the narrow confines of the self by his astute insight, rarefying his personal life as an emblem of all life: 'een levensloop, van iederen levensloop het edelste en aangrijpendste zinnebeeld, volkomen weergegeven' (p. 87). Again the marked contrast with Kloos's more particularised view is obvious.

Verwey assures his readers that an occasional obscure description, incoherent thought, or less felicitous phrasing in Alastor will be quickly forgotten because of the sheer sense of movement the poem conveys. This recalls part of the lengthy correspondence between Kloos and Verwey back in 1884, and Verwey's less dogmatic attitude towards some physical improbabilities in the boat passage. At that time, before things had become rather nasty, Verwey could still joke about his friend's exasperation: 'Kloos verdrinkt in de watervallen en draaikolken van Shelley's Alastor en hij schrijft mij brieven om me te laten zien hoe hij 't doet', himself being far more sensitive to the overall effect of Alastor.²²

In all, Verwey's epilogue may strike the reader as a calm, unassuming piece of writing with none of the ideological tensions present in Kloos's preface to De Raaf's volume. Yet, because of its absolute silence with regard to De Raaf's earlier Alastor translation, being the very first of its kind in the Netherlands, it is not entirely devoid of some polemic quality. Verwey must well have realised, and perhaps even wished, that his translation would be read against De Raaf's version. In this respect, the closing remark in Verwey's epilogue is extraordinary. It concerns the discrepancy in style between the main body of the poem and its final verse paragraph. For Verwey these closing lines border on incomprehensibility: 'De heldere gang van de volzinnen [...] wordt vervangen door een donkeren stilstand, waarin men de beteekenis van de gedachten raadpleegt, en dan vindt dat ook die, met toespeling op toespeling, niet helder is' (pp. 87-88). Significantly, Verwey judges them as very unlike Shelley: the 'eerste regel van het laatste gedeelte is er volmaakt een van Keats, en niet van Shelley' (p. 87). Coincidence or not, it is precisely this passage which De Raaf had printed in De Nieuwe Gids in 1904 as a representative sample before the publication of the entire dutchified Alastor as an independent volume.²³

If De Raaf considered it worthy of Shelley, and indeed of his own efforts as a translator, Verwey bluntly informs his readers that it was only for the sake of completeness that he

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²² Albert Verwey in a letter to Jan Veth. Quoted from WKJL, p. 91.
incorporated this final paragraph in his own translation: ‘Wij [...] hebben alleen terwille van de volledigheid de bespiegelen ende passage] aan den hollandschen “Alastor” toegevoegd’ (p. 88). Even if this were not a deliberate confrontational gesture towards De Raaf, it shows that both camps had at least a different opinion about Alastor and its merits.

Verwey did not really need to refer to De Raaf’s volume in any overt terms. Earlier that year (1909), his protégé Alex Gutteling had written, more than likely with Verwey’s blessing, a not altogether positive review of both De Raaf’s Alastor and The Cenci translations. It is evident that Gutteling relied heavily on Kok’s earlier critique when reviewing De Raaf’s Alastor. Kok had emphasised the fact that a translator ought to possess a sense of hearing which is perfectly attuned to poetic diction; a quality which he found wanting in De Raaf. To illustrate metrical irregularities in De Raaf’s translation, Gutteling lists four examples, three of which are also quoted in Kok’s review. To extract the same three lines from a poem which consists of more than seven hundred lines, can hardly be called a coincidence. Gutteling also discerned a proportionate lack of imaginary insight in De Raaf’s rendition: ‘bij al [...] [wat] zuiver verbeeldingswerk is, schoten zijn krachten te kort’ (p. 299). The Dutch Alastor provides conclusive proof ‘dat de vertaler Shelley’s verbeeldingen soms niet gezien heeft’ (p. 232). On the next page, De Raaf is condemned for having inadequately translated a simile, whereby ‘het geheele beeld [...] verloren [gaat]’ (p. 233). As Kloos, in his introduction, had written with admiration about Shelley’s ‘gevoelde ziening’, Gutteling’s critique regarding De Raaf’s lack of it, appears to expropriate translator and prefacer of their revered English poet (p. 11).

4. De Raaf’s and Verwey’s Alastor translations: An analysis

Comparing both translations, one cannot fail to observe the fundamental differences in style. Since these differences are singularly relevant to my argument, I will now examine a couple of passages in some detail. First I intend to focus on the opening verse paragraph which is characteristic of the approach in each translation as a whole. Deducing from this excerpt a few general features, I will then corroborate my initial findings with further

examples from both texts. The eventual aim of this comparison is to understand Kloos’s objections to Verwey’s *Alastor* translation and to magnify his reaction to a startling level of potency. Interpreting the differences in approach will help to reveal what I believe to be the real motives behind Kloos’s critique, which, at a first glance, seems concerned with linguistic matters only.

Already in the first section of Shelley’s poem, both translators can each be seen to assume a very distinctive voice. This is De Raaf’s version of the opening verse paragraph with its famous invocation followed by a long concessive clause:

Aarde, Oceaan, Lucht, broederen bemind,
Zoo onze Almoeder heeft gedrenkt mijn ziel
Met iets van zuivren dank, uw min te voelen,
En deze gaav’ te loonen met de mijne;
Zoo dauwen morgen, *geuren-noen*, en avond,
*Wen zon* daalt in weidsch-prachtgen dienaars-stoet,
En plechtgen *midnachts* tintelende stilt;
Zoo *najaars* holle zuchten in ‘t dor woud,
In winter, kleedend kale takken en grauw gras
Met blanke sneeuw en kronen, ijs-bestard;
Zoo *lentes* weeldrig hijgen, *wen* zij ademt
Haar eerste zoete kussen, *lief mij waren*;
Zoo ‘k geen zacht beest, insekt of schoonen vogel
Bewust heb leed gedaan, doch steeds bemind,
Gekoesterd dees mijn maagschap, dan vergeeft
Dees *woordpraal*, lieve broedren, en onthoudt
Geen deel van uw gewone gunst *mij thans*!

(De Raaf, p. 27 [ll. 1-17])

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25 For the sake of convenience, I have italicised those phrases on which my analysis will focus. Shelley’s original runs: ‘Earth, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood! / If our great Mother has imbued my soul / With aught of natural piety to feel / Your love, and recompense the boon with mine; / If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even, / With sunset and its gorgeous ministers, / And solemn midnight’s tingling silentness; / If autumn’s hollow sighs in the sere wood, / And winter robing with pure snow and crowns / Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs; / If spring’s voluptuous pantings when she breathes / Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me; / If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast / I consciously have injured, but still loved / And cherished
The same lines are rendered as follows in Verwey’s translation:

Lucht, aarde en zee, beminde broederschap!
Indien ons aller Moeder in mijn ziel
Iets stortte van natuurlijk meegevoel
En liefde waarmee 'k uwe liefde loon';
Zoo dauwige uchtend, geurge noen, en avond
Met pronk-omstooten zonnenondergang,
En 't tinklend zwijgen van den plechtgen nacht;
Zoo 't hol gerucht van herfst in 't dorre woud,
En winters witte sneeuw en sterrige kronen
Van ijs om 't grauwe gras en 't naakt geboomt;
Zoo 't weeldrig hijgen van de Lent, haar eerste
En zoete zoenen-aëm, me ooit dierbaar waren;
Zoo vogel, klein insect, zachtaardig dier
Ik nooit bewust gekrenkt heb, maar altijd
Liefhad en koesterde als mijn maagschap, — duldt,
Beminde broedren, dan dien lof en laat
Me ook thans geen deel van de oude gunst ontgaan.
(Verwey, p. 63 [ll. 1-17])

De Raaf’s rendition must immediately strike the reader as the more conventional of the two. First of all, there are the deliberate archaisms in which his translation abounds and which operate on both a lexical and a syntactic level. An example of the first level is the word ‘wen’ (ll. 6, 11)), examples of the second are the regular use of the old genitive case ‘midnachts’ (l. 7), ‘najaars’ (l. 8), ‘lentes’ (l. 11), and the rather contrived word order in ‘lief mij waren’ (l. 12) and ‘mij thans’ (l. 17). All these give a slow, stately pace to the text. The verse in general is ornate and carefully chased, but sometimes borders on rant or lapses into clinical sterility because of De Raaf’s reliance on conventional expressions. By resorting to traditional poetic diction, De Raaf presents Shelley’s poem as part of a long, well-established tradition, so much so that the reader needs must become aware of the temporal distance of the original. After all, Alastor was first

these my kindred, then forgive / This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw / No portion of your wonted favour now!’ (SPP, pp. 70-71).
published in 1816, ninety years before De Raaf's dutchified version appeared. By falling back on conventional devices and slightly outmoded phraseology, De Raaf adds a noticeable patina to his text. His *Alastor*, with its highly wrought diction, conveys very well how the literary texture of his translation was always foremost in his mind. It is by dint of this technical adroitness that the lack of really inspired, poetic power is partly masked.

Verwey's approach, however, is entirely different in nature and typical of a new mode of writing which had emerged in the late 1880s. His is a particular blend of more natural speech patterns and remarkable, poetic neologisms. The former characteristic is evident in the relative absence of the genitive case, which gives his translation a sense of immediacy and purpose ("van den plechtgen nacht", "van herfst", "van de Lent"). The same effect is achieved by using ordinary, every-day words and by adhering to the "natural" word order. A representative example of the latter is the phrase 'me ooit dierbaar waren' (l. 12) as opposed to De Raaf's fairly stilted version 'lief mij waren' (l. 12). This is not to say, of course, that Verwey's text is completely devoid of traditional expressions. For example, his 'uchtend' (l. 5) is taken from the stock repertoire of hackneyed poetisms available to any writer, yet such occurrences are proportionally much lower than in De Raaf's *Alastor*. Contrasting De Raaf's 'woordpraal' (l. 16) with Verwey's 'lof' (l. 16) provides us with a paradigm of the translators' approach: though neither is a very accurate translation of the original 'boast', they exemplify an important difference in tone between both renditions, with De Raaf's chosen phrase neatly characterising the tenor of his entire translation.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Verwey's translation is the presence of neologisms. There are two instances in the extract I quoted above: 'sterrige kronen' (l. 9) and 'zoenen-aêm' (l. 12). These are in fact hallmarks of the kind of impressionist writing which had become very fashionable around the turn of the century. Lodewijk van Deysssel and Arij Prins are the prosewriters most associated with this style whereas Herman Gorter introduced it in poetry. Though it finally became a wearisome mannerism, even De Raaf could not escape its influence: there are a few instances, albeit very rare, to be found in his *Alastor*; 'geuren-noen' being an obvious example in the excerpt above. The effect of Verwey's approach is thus radically different from De Raaf's. Verwey's Shelley seems to become a topical writer as the marked modernisms in his translation link him to the younger generations of Dutch writers. Arguably, Verwey recreated the sense of novelty
which Shelley's first readers must have experienced. By introducing formations such as 'pronk-omsttoeten zonnenondergang' (l. 6) and 'zoenen-aêm' (l. 12), Verwey aligns his translation, and implicitly Shelley, with (other) ruling avant-garde figures. Verwey's *Alastor*, however, is no impressionist or sensitivist piece of writing. The occurrences of neologisms is after all too scanty, and the inclusion of natural speech patterns rather atypical of the movement.

Other examples taken from the two *Alastor* translations bear out the preliminary observations above:

Hij droomde, dat in sluierwade een maagd
Zat bij hem, sprekend op diep-plechtgen toon
(De Raaf, p. 34 [ll. 158-59])

Een gesluierd meisje
Zat naast hem, sprak tot hem, zacht en als plechtig.
(Verwey, p. 68 [ll. 151-52])

Again, De Raaf's archaisms are an unequivocal feature ('sluierwade', 'maagd'), as is the occasional syntactic oddity ('Zat bij hem', where one would normally expect the verbal constituent to conclude the phrase). The difference with Verwey's version could hardly be more obvious. His version has a tone of intimate familiarity and a tenderness ('gesluierd meisje') which is completely absent in De Raaf's text where the translator has adopted instead a poetic voice which is quite aloof. At its very best, however, the style of De Raaf's translation is reminiscent of Jacques Perk's *Mathilde* cycle and Kloos's early verse in which traditional poeticisms are used to great effect. In order to obtain a more natural flow in his translation, Verwey has sacrificed a considerable amount of rhythmical accuracy. This is a crucial point of difference in both translations. In the lines above, one witnesses Verwey's own poetic voice assuming control over the original. I believe it is fair to say that Verwey's approach is more that of a creative poet who feels less restricted by the source text. If De Raaf is wanting a certain poetic panache at times, he can be recommended for faithfully sticking to Shelley's text. Sometimes, in his attempts to

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26 When *Alastor* appeared in 1816, reviewers in England pointed out its extravagant character, not the least in its imagery and poetical expressions. See Barcus, pp. 95-105.
render the original as closely as possible, he has no qualms about violating Dutch grammar. The artificial word order in the phrase 'Hij droomde, dat in sluierwade een maagd / Zat bij hem' copies the English sentence perfectly: 'He dreamed a veiled maid / Sate near him'. With the utmost respect for Shelley's wording, De Raaf, as a rule, refrains from engaging in the kind of liberties which Verwey allowed himself to take. No matter how achieved in themselves, Verwey's freer renderings will indeed be severely frowned upon by Kloos. The latter was correct in pointing out in his preface to De Raaf's *Alastor* that the translator had opted for a word-for-word rendition without tampering too much with the original. Verwey had deliberately departed from this principle and adopted his own which would find no favour in Kloos's eyes.

To illustrate De Raaf's predilection for poetic archaisms (lexical and grammatical), I have listed a few more examples below and set them against Verwey's renderings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHELLEY</th>
<th>TRANSLATIONS DE RAAF (R) &amp; VERWEY (V)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>she drew back a while (l. 184)</td>
<td><em>R:</em> Een wijle week ze (p. 35 [l. 191])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>V:</em> zij deinsde even weg (p. 69 [l. 184])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in their branching veins / The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale (l. 167-68)</td>
<td><em>R:</em> in heur takkend' adren / 't Sprekend bloed onzegbre konde gaf (p. 35 [l. 174-5])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>V:</em> in hun aaden-tak / Sprak 't bloed zijn onuitsprekelijk verhaal (p. 68 [l. 167-68])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with strong wings (l. 278)</td>
<td><em>R:</em> op sterke zwingen (p. 40 [l. 287])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>V:</em> met krachtge vleugels (p. 72 [l. 276])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where the fiercest war among the waves / Is calm (l. 372-73)</td>
<td><em>R:</em> waar der golven felste krijg verkalmt (p. 44 [l. 383])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>V:</em> waar de felste strijd van golf met golf / Bedaart (p. 75 [l. 371-72])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glassy quiet (l. 393)</td>
<td><em>R:</em> kristallijnen kalmte (p. 45 [l. 404])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>V:</em> glassige rust (p. 75 [l. 392])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banks, whose yellow flowers / For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes, / Reflected in the crystal calm (l. 406-408)</td>
<td><em>R:</em> oevers, / Wier gele bloemen steeds heur neigende oogen / Aanstare', in glazen kalmt weerspiegeld (p. 45 [l. 418-20])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>V:</em> [...] oevers: gele / Bloemen zien daar hun neergeslagen oogen / Weerspiegelt in het kalm kristal (p. 76 [l. 405-407])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his tremulous step, that caught / Strong shuddering from his burning limbs (l. 516-17)</td>
<td><em>R:</em> zijn rollen tred, / Die door den brand der leden heftig beefde (pp. 50-51 [l. 531-32])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>V:</em> zijn voeten, bevend door / Het schudden van zijn brandend lijf (p. 79 [l. 515-16])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge / That overflowed its mountains (l. 603-604)</td>
<td><em>R:</em> Een zee van luister op den kimmenrand / Zijn bergen overstroomend (p. 55 [l. 622-23])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>V:</em> Een zee van glans die op de horizon / De bergen overvloeide (p. 82 [l. 602-603])</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 'He dreamed a veiled maid / Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones' (*SPP*, p. 75, ll. 151-52).
Many of the features I discussed so far are also found in the following passage:28

Avond kwam op,
Laat zonlicht hing zijn regenboogkoleuren
Hoog in het wisslend schuimbekleed gewelf,
Zijn pad betronend over het woeste diep;
Scheemring, verrijzend traaglijk uit het oosten,
Wond in al grauwer kransen hare vlechten
(De Raaf, p. 42 [ll. 344-49])

En de avond kwam nabij;
De stralen van zoneinde regenboogden
Hoog in schuim-vlagige fonteingewelven
Die over 't woeste diep zijn pad bespanden;
Schemering, langzaam stijgend uit het Oost,
Wond in donkerder wrong de lokkenvlechten
(Verwey, p. 73 [ll. 332-35])

De Raaf’s version displays an instance of the by now familiar presence of lexical archaisms (‘regenboogkoleuren’). One may put a question mark, like Gutteling in his review, against the word ‘betronend’ as a translation of ‘canopied’, but in all, the rendition is fairly close and adequate. In Verwey’s version, the first phrase is rhythmically more unaffected than De Raaf’s rendition where the absence of the definite article has a rather contrived feel. It is no surprise to find that De Raaf’s grammatical idiosyncrasy is caused once more by his determination to produce a strictly literal translation. Shelley wrote: ‘Evening came on’, probably with the preposition ‘on’ suggesting the idiomatically deviant ‘op’ in the Dutch text, as if De Raaf’s ‘avond’ were a character in a play which now appears on stage. The formation of verbs out of existing nouns such as ‘regenboogden’ in Verwey’s Alastor, is another unmistakable characteristic of impressionist writing. The presence of neologisms like ‘zoneinde’ and ‘schuim-vlagige’ is part of the same stylistic fashion and gives Verwey’s translation a very topical flavour. De

28 ‘Evening came on, / The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues / High ‘mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray / That canopied his path o’er the waste deep; / Twilight, ascending slowly from the east, / Entwin’d in duskier wreaths her braided locks’ (SPP, p. 78, ll. 333-38).
Raaf’s version is not entirely lacking in such word-formations, but they are outnumbered by those in the 1909 translation. Verwey’s very effective use of assonance in the final line of the above extract also betrays a poet’s hand.

An analogous set of dissimilarities emerges from the next excerpt. Notice, for instance, the stark contrast between each opening phrase:

Om midnacht
De maan verrees; en zie! de hooglucht-klippen
Van Caucasus, wiens ijzen toppen blonken
Tusschen 't gestern als zonlicht [...]  
(De Raaf, p. 43 [ll. 362-65])

Te midnacht  
Klaarde de maan: en zie! 't luchthoog getop
Van Caucasus, dat ijze-spitsig scheen
Onder 't gesternt als zonlicht [...]  
(Verwey, p. 74 [ll. 350-53])

Going back to the source text, the unorthodox grammar of De Raaf’s version explains itself at once for Shelley’s original phrase runs: ‘At midnight / The moon arose’. In the past, Verwey’s Alastor translation has been condemned for its syntactic intricacies which tend to obscure the meaning and impair the overall readability. My analysis proves that such a view ought to be modified somewhat. Verwey’s coinages ‘getop’ and ‘ijze-spitsig’ once more manifest an acute awareness of the literary developments happening around him. A simple litmus test will demonstrate how his lexical innovations are symptomatic of the new-fashioned style which came to be known as impressionism. Comparing Verwey’s phraseology in all the fragments quoted above with some of the word-formations in Van Deyssel’s work, it becomes clear that theirs is a common idiom.

29 ‘At midnight / The moon arose; and lo! the ethereal cliffs / Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone / Among the stars like sunlight’ (SPP, p. 79, ll. 351-54).
31 The examples from Van Deyssel’s prose are taken from the third volume of his Verzamelde opstellen, published in 1897 by Scheltema and Holkema in Amsterdam. Arij Prins’s Een koning,
This does not mean that De Raaf was a stranger to lexical experimentation, but the frequency of coinages is much lower than in Verwey’s translation. It is significant, for instance, that in my juxtaposition of corresponding passages from both Alastor translations (nearly 40 lines in all), De Raaf’s renditions were completely devoid of such neologisms. Of course, Verwey too occasionally resorts to traditional poeticisms. His ‘gestart’, for instance, is the stylistic equivalent of De Raaf’s ‘koleuren’ in the previous excerpt. It could be argued, however, that Verwey is adding something new to conventional phraseology, trying to invigorate poetic diction without discarding the tradition entirely.

In sum, De Raaf’s text evinces the translator’s preference for archaisms and traditional phraseology. However adequate these may be to render Shelley’s florid language, at times they halt the poetic momentum of the original. Distortions in syntax are often caused by sticking (too) close to the original. This is compensated by a scrupulous respect for the original metre. Kok’s and Gutteling’s criticism of the metrical irregularities in De Raaf’s translation is certainly out of proportion. There are indeed some prosodic blemishes but these are not as numerous and irksome as Kok, and in his footsteps, Gutteling, wanted their readers to believe. Verwey allowed himself much more freedom, often departing from the original prosody. As a result, his verse acquires a certain volatility, enhanced by his reliance on ordinary vocabulary. Casting away the fetters of a strict iambic pattern, Verwey often causes a certain sloppiness to creep in

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32 Other examples in Verwey’s translation include ‘wintrige’ (p. 74 [l. 345]), ‘schaduwig’ (p. 78 [l. 480]), ‘slijmige’ (p. 79 [l. 509]), ‘breukige’ (p. 81 [l. 578]), ‘takkig’ (p. 82 [l. 598]), ‘sneeuwige’ (p. 82 [l. 600]), and ‘klippige’ (p. 83 [l. 648]).

33 Another nice instance in Verwey’s Alastor is ‘gestruik’ (p. 66 [l. 104]).
which muffles the musicality of Shelley’s verse (even if Shelley himself was careful to avoid a monotonous, iambic beat). His translation has nonetheless a poetic quality to it, stemming from his use of neologisms which can be startling in their effect and which give a very personal touch to the text. As Hietbrink has pointed out, for Verwey translations should ‘idealiter [...] leiden tot nieuwe (Nederlandse) gedichten’. In other words, translations should transcend their status of being translations and aspire to being original compositions. Verwey’s *Alastor* tries to achieve just that. Yet, we should always bear in mind that Verwey produced his Dutch *Alastor* after having read De Raaf’s. He was therefore in a far more self-conscious frame of mind, and could work on purpose towards a radically different version: Verwey was effectively translating *against* his predecessor.

5. The centenary of Shelley’s death

The notion of Verwey’s poetic personality shimmering through his dutchified *Alastor*, thereby invading Shelley territory, is an important one for it accounts for the fact that the translation drove Kloos into an apoplectic rage. Intriguingly enough, before this happened, a full thirteen years were to elapse. Perhaps the most astonishing fact in the entire *Alastor* saga in the Netherlands is Kloos’s silence which followed the first publication of Verwey’s translation in *De Beweging* in 1909. It is difficult to interpret this lack of response. Maybe other activities, such as the silver jubilee of the foundation of *De Nieuwe Gids* in 1910, were absorbing and gratifying in their own right so that parrying Verwey’s publication with a profoundly disapproving silence was deemed satisfactory enough a gesture. Yet, when Kloos was teased out of his erstwhile reticence, he pulled out all the stops.

After the dissolution of *De Beweging* in 1919, Verwey no longer had a journal at his ready disposal to publish his work. His admiration for Shelley and his desire to participate actively in the centenary of Shelley’s death in 1922, however, induced him to

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35 This aspect is entirely ignored by Baxter in her analysis of Verwey’s *Alastor* translation (De Raaf is not mentioned once in her study). Nor does she make the link with the impressionist mode of writing. Her examination of the acoustic effects in Shelley’s poem and Verwey’s success in reproducing these in Dutch is still sound, but it ignores the specific circumstances that may have brought Verwey to translate in the way he did. B.M. Baxter, *Albert Verwey’s Translations from Shelley’s Poetical Works*, pp. 102-34.
take some action. The Albert Verwey collection at the University of Amsterdam holds two attempts of a draft letter addressed to the editorial board of *English Studies* in April of that year. They show that Verwey was very anxious to be involved in the commemorations. Draft one reads: 'Gaame zou ik aan het Shelley Memorial Volume van *English Studies* iets bijdragen, vrees evenwel dat de tijd om iets nieuws te schrijven me ontbreken zal. Ik wil U daarom het volgende voorstellen.' A second attempt, written on the opposite page, reads:

Dertien jaar geleden liet ik in De Beweging een vertaling van Alastor afdrukken, zonder dat ik toen gelegenheid had het handschr. [illegible]lijk na te gaan. Is uw redactie genegen een zeer verbeterde lezing van die vertaling op te nemen, dan kan ik u die bijtijds toezenden en zal het mij veel genoegen doen daarin aan het Sh.-Mem. Vol. mee te werken.36

The changes Verwey made to the first version of his *Alastor* translation are actually less dramatic than this letter implies.37 The journal thought favourably of Verwey’s plan and included the translation in its July issue. In the same month that Verwey wrote the above letter, *English Studies* had also been in touch with De Raaf. The latter informed Kloos:

De redactie van “English Studies”, a journal of English letters and philology, schrijft mij dat ze in Juli een Shelley-nummer wil uitgeven en verzoekt mij om een bijdrage. Ik heb weinig tijd om iets goeds over S. te schrijven, iets nieuws, van enige belangrijkheid. Wel zou ik een fragment kunnen zenden van een vertaling van Laon and Cythna, de worsteling van arend en slang [Canto I, stanzas 8-14]. Wel kenschetsend, daar immers de slang S. bijzonder sympathiek was, en hij meer malen slang en arend als beeld heeft gebruikt. Maar voór ik die redactie antwoord, wilde ik u vragen of de N.G. misschien ook Shelley-plannen heeft, en zoo ja, of U dan prijs stelt op genaamd stuk. Zoo niet, dan is het wellicht iets voor Engl. Studies. Gaat het U allen goed? Misschien was het wel aardig als de N. Gids eens liet zien, wat nu

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36 Unpublished draft of a letter by Verwey, Noordwijk-aan-Zee 21 April 1922. Albert Verwey collection (UvA) (LXII.10 ‘Littéraire aantekeningen’).
37 For an overview of the differences between both versions, see: B.M. Baxter, *Albert Verwey’s Translations from Shelley’s Poetical Works*, pp. 171-89.
eigenlijk onze letterkunde aan Shelley te danken heeft, hoe ver zijn invloed is gegaan,
wat er van hem vertaald is.  

It is perhaps somewhat curious that Kloos had not contacted his friend and experienced Shelley translator to discuss the feasibility of a special Shelley issue of _De Nieuwe Gids_. Also surprising, at least at first sight, is the fact that De Raaf’s suggestions about an analysis of Shelley’s influence on Dutch literature, or a survey of different Shelley translations were not adopted. Why did Kloos not follow De Raaf’s advice and try his hand at a scholarly essay on Shelley along the lines suggested by his friend? Kloos’s precise response to De Raaf’s postcard has not been preserved, but it can be inferred from De Raaf’s next letter:

_Wat Shelley betreft: Ik geloof ook, dat het een heel tijdroovende en misschien nog weinig loonende studie zou zijn, na te gaan, hoe ver Shelley’s invloed is gegaan. “De Mannen van ‘80”, heet het, voor zoover het dichters waren, ondergingen die invloed, maar zeker, erg in het oog vallend is die niet._

Kloos’s dissuasive reaction may have been prompted by his fear that a detailed overview of Shelley’s influence on the Eighties Movement could prove damaging to his own, virtually exclusive claims on the English poet. For an overview of (Dutch) Shelley translations, Kloos would similarly have had to acknowledge the diligence of his literary rivals in this particular field. By 1922, complete translations of three major Shelley poems, namely _Alastor, Adonais_ and _Prometheus Unbound_ had appeared in the rivalling _De Beweging_, with Verwey having published a dutchified ‘Mont Blanc’ and ‘Hymn to Intellectual Beauty’ in _De Twintigste Eeuw_ in 1904 on top of his _Defence of Poetry_ translation of 1891. De Raaf, who was ever forward to curry favour with his own idol Kloos, played down the importance of Shelley’s writings for the Movement collectively. Bearing in mind that it was De Raaf who had suggested the comparative study in the first place, his claim sounds particularly hollow.

_De Raaf’s ‘Shelley en de slang’, a four-page treatise followed by a translation in blank verse of ll. 178, 187-258 taken from Canto 1 of _Laon and Cythna_ was published in

38 Unpublished postcard by De Raaf to Kloos, Rotterdam 5 April 1922 (R105 B1).
De Nieuwe Gids of July 1922. This was, in fact, old material which De Raaf had already sent for publication on no less than three separate occasions, in 1913, 1915, and later again in 1916. It would seem that on each occasion Kloos turned the material down. Maybe appreciating the need to produce a Shelley number and wanting copy, he accepted the piece when it was offered to him a fourth time. The same issue of the journal also contained the first instalment of Spanjaard’s extensive essay on Shelley as ‘De Dichter der Universeel Liefde’. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Spanjaard had originally intended it for publication in De Stem. So, it was almost by accident that there were any contributions on Shelley at all in the July issue of De Nieuwe Gids (Shelley drowned on 8 July 1822). Given the significance of Shelley in establishing his own reputation, Kloos had, of course, not kept silent on the subject. In an article specially commissioned by the Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant and printed prominently on 1 July, we can see his depoliticisation process in full sway. What is perhaps even more interesting than the article itself is the way in which it was introduced by the paper:

Toen, nu veertig jaar geleden, de vriend van Perk diens nalatenschap bracht, leidde hij haar in met [een verwijzing naar Epipsychidion] [...]. Veertig jaar ook is het geleden, dat Kloos schreef voor de weekblad-pers. Wij beschouwen het als een

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40 K.H. de Raaf, ‘Shelley en de slang’ in: De Nieuwe Gids, July 1922, pp. 112-117.
41 In an unpublished letter to Willem Kloos, De Raaf wrote on 25 October 1912: ‘Eindelijk kom ik er toe, U mijn vertaald stuk van Laon en Cythna, te zang, te zenden. Ik zou wel gaarne uw oordeel vernemen, vóór ik het waag, er mee voort te gaan. [...] Of ik er ooit in slagen zal het gansche werk te vertalen [nearly 5000 lines], betwijfel ik. Vindt U reden, om mij aan te moedigen, dan zal ik het met Canto I beproeven’. Kloos’s reaction to this letter is not known. Another (unpublished) letter by Raaf, dating from 3 February 1915, suggests that Kloos needed to be reminded about the existence of the fragmentary translation: ‘Ik heb, om over iets anders te spreken — een tamelijk brok liggen van Laon and Cythna, in vijf-voetige rijmloze jamben vertaald. Mocht U het wenschen voor De N.G., dan zal ik het U gaarne zenden’. Again, Kloos seems not to have reacted, for De Raaf wrote on 25 September 1916: ‘Een vertaling in blank vers van Laon and Cythna heb ik nog liggen. Wilt u er een plaatsje voor inruimen, dan zal ik U het stuk zenden’ (R105 B1). De Raaf would have to wait another six years.
43 ‘Shelley is begonnen met revolutionair te wezen, zooals [...] zoovele naïeve jongelui-van-aanleg dat in zijn tijd zijn geweest’. Shelley ‘was tegelijkertijd tot het inzicht gekomen, dat alle revolutie, hoe mooi zij moge lijken, door den bril van het Ideaal gezien, toch in werkelijkheid geenerlei goeds doet’; and finally: Shelley’s ‘ naïeve jongensgeestdrift voor revolutie [...] vervuistigde zich [...] toen hij een dieperen blik in het leven had leeren werpen, en hij het tot in zijn altijd geheimzinnig-blijvenden, door de kleurige nevelen van gevoel en verbeelding omsluiender bodem had gepeild’. Willem Kloos, ‘Ter gedachtenis aan Shelley’s honderdste sterfdag’ in: Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, 1 July 1922.
This shows that there was a very close link between Kloos’s reputation as a critic and innovator of Dutch poetry on the one hand, and his Shelley admiration on the other. This connection will be examined more fully in Chapter Five.

Despite the title of his contribution ‘Shelley en de slang’, De Raaf only devotes two paragraphs (half a page) to the recurrent symbol of the snake in Shelley’s poetry. The rest of his article presents a more general characterisation of the poet’s work. It contains this typical passage:

Wat kan het ons schelen, dat hij [i.e. Shelley], de uiterst fijn bewerktuigde, de schoonheid-en-wisheid-minnende, in zijn hartgrondigen afkeer van politiek, die zoooveel klein- en grof-menschelijks naar voren brengt, geen parlementszetel heeft gewenscht en met zijn sociale verbeteringspogingen, als het bedijken van de zee aan de kust van Wales, fiasco maakte. Wat zou het, dat zijn poëzie over ‘t algemeen meer droom is dan werkelijkheid, dat we erin missen de substantieele levensrealiteit van Byron en Wordsworth (verwijt van Matthew Arnold); wat deert het ons dat hij óók als dichter onpraktisch was en ons niet gelijk anderen het leven verklaart, het gewone leven van mij en u, het leven van dag tot dag; wat komt dit alles er op aan, wanneer hij ons zijn heerlijke eigen schoonheid heeft gegeven en ons met het meest eigene van zijn ziel, zijne visioenen en zijn woordmuziek, weet te treffen, zóó, dat we soms het lezen een oogenblik moeten staken en neerzitten in stille ontroering met een traan in het oog? (p. 112)

Here we find all the ingredients of Kloos’s views on Shelley. Indeed, De Raaf refers explicitly to his mentor, characterising Shelley’s ‘kunst en gedachteleven naar het zeggen van Willem Kloos’ as ‘een zachtkleurig, vormenwisselend wolkenpaleis’ (p. 113). As fate would have it, De Raaf’s article, with the phrase taken from Kloos’s preface to De Raaf’s own *Alastor* translation, coincided with the publication of Verwey’s revised *Alastor* in the July issue of *English Studies*.

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44 Albert Verwey, trl., ‘*Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude: Translated into Dutch [with a preface]*’ in: *English Studies*, July 1922, pp. 152-70.
It was the reprint of Verwey’s translation which finally brought Kloos to write on Shelley in *De Nieuwe Gids*. In the hybrid piece entitled ‘Percy Bysshe Shelley in Nederland’, he saw it proper first to refute the idea that other Dutch men of letters, and notably Busken Huet and Potgieter, had ever been serious admirers of Shelley. In this part of his article Kloos once more attests to the uniqueness of his early veneration for the English poet as if to prove his credentials as a Shelley custodian authorised to judge the activities of other Shelley enthusiasts. Instead of analysing Shelley’s pervasive presence in Dutch literature during the last decades as De Raaf had originally suggested, Kloos engaged in another act of self-promotion. As the title of his article indicates, Kloos single-handedly took on himself to represent an entire nation: ‘eerst in 1878 viel er een toevallige kleinigheid voor, waardoor de Dichter [Shelley] de eerste kans kreeg om waarlijk gekend dus geliefd te worden in ons land’ (p. 309). Kloos then relates the familiar story of how his curiosity was aroused after having seen a copy of Shelley’s poetical works in the window of a bookshop, and how he was initially disappointed during his reading because he happened to have started with *Queen Mab*. Yet, very soon ‘zou dat heel anders worden en kreeg ik voor de poëzie van dien grooten Engelschman die onverdeelde bewondering, waarvan ik nu al 40 jaar in woord en geschrift onverflauwd heb getuigd’ (p. 310). The phrase ‘onverdeelde bewondering’ may in fact be read as ‘ongedeelde bewondering’, for Kloos was unwilling to share his idol with people outside the circle around *De Nieuwe Gids*. Now that he has made it plain that he is in truth the only elected one among his compatriots, Kloos switches his attention rather abruptly to Verwey whose *Alastor* translation has incurred him his merciless anger.

Before analysing the translation, however, Kloos provides his readers with a general characterisation of Verwey’s works. His thoroughly negative assessment sets the tone for the rest of his article. Curiously enough, Kloos admits how Verwey’s poetry has never been able to impress him or catch his imagination because, he could ‘uit het gelezen [...] geen leering trekken’ (p. 313). Given his incapability of finding instruction in *Alastor* — it will be remembered how Shelley wrote, in De Raaf’s translation: ‘de schildering is niet ontbloot van leering voor den practischen mensch’ (p. 22) —, Kloos’s statement suggests how unnerved he really was about Verwey’s translation. If he had not been bothered to review Verwey’s poetry in the past, Kloos continues his critique, it is

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because Verwey was after all a harmless writer: ‘Geen verstandig mensch kan er schade door lijden’ (p. 314). Moreover, ‘Gel[ee]zen wordt deze ijverige willer slechts weinig of volstrekt niet, omdat er over ‘t algemeen door dit op gelyke afstanden ingeke[r]fde, zware prozagebeente tamelijk-moeielijk heen te bijten valt’ (p. 314).

He now puts his cards on the table, maintaining that Verwey has wanted to undertake a task which goes beyond his intellectual capabilities ‘door den Alastor zoogenaamd te vertalen, maar hem in waarheid te bederven en hem te maken als tot een vers-stuk van hem zelf, van Verwey’ (p. 315). The real purport of Kloos’s accusation is that Verwey had assimilated Shelley within his own creative output. This coalescence must have fuelled Kloos’s jealousy, both as a lover of Shelley’s works, and as a literary rival, to the extreme. If Kloos had appropriated Shelley by pontificating endlessly about his idol’s works and character, Verwey had forced a symbiosis between himself and the essence of Shelley’s being contained within Alastor. Kloos will do his utmost to disentangle Shelley from Verwey’s alleged ‘nuchter-drv[o]g[e] verzenmaker[ij]’ and ‘ledertaaien, ja als baksteenen dichtstijl’ (p. 315).

It will be remembered that Kloos, in various other pieces on Shelley, had informed his readers at length about the close psychological and spiritual affinity between himself and the idolised English poet. Since they were two kindred spirits, he considered himself entitled to claim Shelley as his intellectual property. Yet, Kloos had been forced to set up an elaborate construction to ‘prove’ the congeniality between Shelley and himself, not eschewing to tamper with the historical facts in order to make his point. In the introduction to De Raaf’s Alastor translation (1906), Kloos had pointed out how modern the poem still appears due to its intrinsic qualities. The inference was that it was Kloos who had created a wholesome climate in which a profound appreciation of the contemporary reader for Shelley’s poetry could prosper. Bearing in mind De Raaf’s approach towards the poem, it is questionable whether the reader in Kloos’s time would actually have thought the translated Alastor as presented by De Raaf such a thoroughly modern work of art. It is true that the phraseology of De Raaf’s translation, to a certain extent, bears some resemblance to the diction of Kloos’s youthful and most accomplished sonnets, without, of course, reaching the same level of excellence. Yet, by 1906, a number of influential poets (among them Gorter) had already gone further, stretching the limits of poetic language to an unprecedented degree.
The daring imagery which had been the real innovation when Shelley’s *Alastor* first appeared, is rendered faithfully enough by De Raaf, but has inevitably lost much of its initial power and freshness. As I have argued, Verwey tried to counter this by the use of radically new modernisms. Kloos will have recognised at once how Verwey managed to accomplish what he himself (through De Raaf) had been unable to do. Verwey had done nothing less than appropriating Shelley by casting the original *Alastor* in a uniquely individual mould and interfusing his own poetic persona with Shelley’s. In the preface to his translation — an English version of the one that had appeared in *De Beweging* thirteen years ago — Verwey asserts that *Alastor* was ‘the first [poem] in which [Shelley’s] inmost soul revealed itself’ (p. 153). Kloos had claimed exactly the same in De Raaf’s *Alastor* volume. Now he had to witness how Verwey had turned his own translation into an *epipsyche* in which Shelley’s soul revealed itself to the outer world in an unmistakably Verweyan guise. It is difficult to estimate how vexed Kloos must have been when confronted with Verwey’s literary annexation strategies. Not only was this the second time that Verwey openly challenged De Raaf’s translation to which Kloos had lent his unconditional support, but he had added insult to injury by committing the unspeakable offence of arrogating one of Kloos’s favourite Shelley poems through unambiguous stylistic signposting.

This literary conquest caused Kloos to vociferate that Verwey must not defile ‘de subtiele taal van Shelley’ (p. 317). For this is what Verwey had really done in Kloos’s eyes. He had imposed his own self, which Kloos implies lacks all the refinement of an intelligent and aesthetic reader, on the incorporeal *fluidum* of the original. The result was that his translation ‘ons alleen maar Verwey, altijd maar weer Verwey en hèm alleen laat zien’ (p. 316). It is precisely because one can trace the style of the translation back to one individual writer that Kloos is so exasperated. Moreover, Verwey’s ‘streven [is] bovendien geheel overbodig’, because ‘van Alastor bestaat reeds sinds jaren een zeer lofwaardige weergave door Dr. K.H. De Raaf’ (p. 315). For Kloos the result was all the

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46 When Kloos came to revise this review for his collected *Letterkundige inzichten en vergezichten*, he changed this phrase to ‘de engelen-taal van Shelley’. Willem Kloos, ‘Percy Bysshe Shelley in Nederland’ in: *Letterkundige inzichten en vergezichten*, vol. 15, pp. 13-30 (p. 26).

more jarring since he considered Verwey and Shelley exact antipodes of one another. Pledging his supreme devotion to Shelley, Kloos declares: ‘En ik, die Shelley ken en liefheb, zal daar nu de overtuigende bewijzen van geven gaan’ (p. 315). One of these ‘convincing’ proofs consist of pointing out an obvious mistranslation of the word ‘love’ which Verwey had rendered as ‘lief’ (meaning ‘beloved’) instead of the abstract noun ‘liefde’ in line 34. Such a slip, of course, came as a blessing to Kloos who happily ignored the fact that De Raaf’s translation is not without similar flaws. Kloos infers from this that, apart from the absence of any affinity between Verwey and Shelley, the former does not grasp even the basic meaning of the original. No wonder, then, that Verwey’s dutchified Alastor is plain ‘onzin’ (p. 319). Kloos could not keep silent and let matters pass by, especially since it all concerns the ‘onbeschermde weerloosheid [...] eens grooten Dichters’ (p. 318). The discourse used here is almost that of lovers, where the cavalier poet dedicates his life to the protection of his beloved’s innocence. Having defiled Verwey’s name and belittled his accomplishments, Kloos decides to draw the matter to a close, standing guard over Shelley’s honour against the wickedness of unscrupulous suitors. He concludes his verbal onslaught with self-satisfied contentment: ‘Het is mij voldoende, dat ik Shelley’s eer gered heb’ (p. 320).

translator ‘den dichter in zijn gansche persoonlijkheid op den voorgrond te brengen’. He takes issues with Kloos (‘Voorrede van de Alastor-vertaling van Dr. K.H. de Raaf’) who had opined that ‘de nagedachtenis van een groot dichter het beste [wordt] [ge]eer[de] door zijn werk woordelijk te vertalen’. Despite these contentions, Ter Laan’s translation is fairly conventional, though, as he allowed himself more freedom, a little less contrived than De Raaf’s. As his was only a brief fragment of the original, and as no-one seems to have responded to his translation efforts, I have not included Ter Laan’s ‘Praeludium’ in my discussion. The following representative excerpt will give a good enough idea of Ter Laan’s qualities as a translator: ‘Gij meine broed’ren, Aard, Lucht, Oceaan! / Zoo d’al-moeder mijn ziel ooit heeft gelaafd / met iets van zuiver’ en devoten dank / uw liefde te gevoelen en die gift / te loonen met mijn gaven, — zoo de dauw / des ochtends en de geur / van zonnedagen / en d’avond, als het Licht in grootsche stoet / van vrome dienaren wordt ingewacht, / en stilte, in den hoognacht tintelend, — / zoo najaar’s holle zuchten in ‘t dor woud / en winters kleed van versch-gevallen sneeuw / en kronen van ijssterren op grauw gras / en kale takken, — zoo ’t hijgend verlangen / der weelderige lente, als zij ’t eerst / haar zoete kussen ademt / in de lucht / m’ontroeren tot bewond’ring liefdevol [...]/ vergeeft mij’ (p. 347 [ll. 1-16, 20]).

For instance, De Raaf translated Shelley’s ‘[she] Folded his frame in her dissolving arms’ as ‘Sloot ze zijn lijf in haar ontvouwend’ armen’ (p. 35 [l. 194]). However, Shelley is describing the visitation of ‘a vision on the poet’s’ sleep’. Verwey’s version makes it clear that Shelley’s ‘veiled maid’ is a ghostlike illusion: ‘[ze] Omving zijn lijf [...] in arremen van damp’ (p. 69 [l. 187]).

Earlier on, Kloos had underlined his resolution to defend Shelley’s honour at the expense of Verwey’s: ‘de eer van Shelley, zoowel als die der Waarheid, hebben hier natuurlijk hoog boven die van den vertaler te gelden’ (p. 318).

It was not Verwey, but Ch.M. van Deventer who responded to Kloos’s critique. Van Deventer had taken offence at Kloos’s disparaging remarks about his late uncle Conrad Busken Huet and found it his duty to clear the latter’s name in De Amsterdammer, ‘De heer Verwey’, who had also been attacked by Kloos, ‘kan voor zich zelf spreken’ (Verwey, however, did not deign to respond). Huet had claimed in his Litterarische fantasien en kritieken that it was possible to detect several parallels between the lives of Shelley and the (minor) Dutch poet Van der Palm: both were capable marksmen, but lacked the swimming skills of Lord Byron. Kloos had made fun of these comparisons because they fail spectacularly to outline the poets’ artistic accomplishments. Van Deventer now accuses Kloos of having quoted Busken Huet out of context, for Huet’s argument ran that despite a resemblance in biographical particularities, Dutch readers ignored Shelley and applauded Van der Palm. Thus Huet had argued that it could not only have been Shelley’s character which made his works unsavoury to Dutch palates.

Kloos responded to Van Deventer’s article in the next issue of De Nieuwe Gids. He stands by his original claim: ‘Huet gaf niets om Shelley’ (p. 728). However, one should not condemn Huet too harshly, for he was after all, ‘ook theoloog, politicus en historicus, terwijl ik [i.e. Kloos] zelf vind, dat een algemeen-ontwikkeld en ernstig-werkend mensch maar één of twee hoofdstudiven in zijn leven er op na kan houden’ (p. 729). The inference is that with his many interests, Huet was bound to produce superficial articles. Having repeated his accusations in some detail, Kloos concludes rather superciliously that ‘nu ook dit kwestietje, gelijk reeds vroeger zoovele andere, grondig is uiteengezet en definitief beslist’ (p. 735). This proved somewhat premature, however.

This time, it was Andries Bonger who reacted to Kloos’s renewed charges with an article in the Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant of 6 January 1923. He informs his readers how, in the summer of 1880, Huet had explained and translated in his Parisian study room the difficult stanzas in Shelley’s Adonais. He continues: ‘Behalve Adonais heb ik met den

50 Ch.M. van Deventer, ‘Willem Kloos over Busken Huet en Shelley’ in: De Amsterdammer, 30 September 1922.
52 Willem Kloos, ‘Nog eens Shelley in Nederland’ in: De Nieuwe Gids, November 1922, pp. 727-35. Kloos does not mention that Busken Huet had spurred him on in 1881 to write a study on the English poet (see Chapter One, footnote 27).
heer Huet ook *Prometheus Unbound* en *The Cenci* gelezen […], de heer Huet mij steeds voorlichtend bij de moeilijke passages'. He therefore feels entitled to the claim that ‘in dat vertrek uiting gegeven [is] aan eene onbegrensde bewondering voor Shelley, dien Huet als de grootste dichterfiguur van de 19e eeuw huldigde’.  

Again Kloos reacted with an article in *De Nieuwe Gids*: ‘Nog eens: Huet en Shelley’. He was particularly stung by Bonger's suggestion that a spelling error in Kloos's previous article (‘Trelawney’ for ‘Trelawny’) raised the question whether the editor of *De Nieuwe Gids* had really read Trelawny's *Records* on Shelley's life. Kloos assures Bonger that, in spite of ‘[het] drukfoutje’ (not spelling error) in the reference to the author's name, the two-volume *Records* have been in his possession since 1880. They are even the ‘grondleggers’ of his collection of Shelleyana

die meer dan 40 jaren lang allengskens door mij [i.e. Kloos] bijeengebracht, tegenwoordig 110 deelen bedraagt, en waartoe natuurlijk ook het door den heer Bonger vermelde werk van prof. Dowden behoort, dat de auteur mij bij de verschijning “with the complements of the author” toekomen deed, vermoedelijk omdat hij, die op alle teekenen in Europa, van Shelley-vereering lette, bespeurd had, dat er ook in Holland, reeds meer dan een gewone merkwaardigheidsbelangstelling, zooals die van Busken Huet slechts zijn kon, op te komen begon. (p. 280)

Kloos ends his article with the familiar words: ‘Zie zoo, dit eigenlijk niet zoo zeer belangrijke kwestietje is dus óók weer in orde gebracht’ (p. 282). Insignificant it may be, but Kloos thought it important enough to devote two articles (thirteen pages in all) to the whole affair. What Kloos is really saying is that it is not really important that other Dutch men of letters were reading and admiring Shelley during the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Even if they did, their understanding of Shelley could never have equalled his own. Seemingly throw-away claims such as the reference to his collection of

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55 Kloos even inserted a footnote, blaming ‘de thans in zwang zijnde zet-methode’ for these kind of errors (p. 280). The same ‘printing error’ occurs in the handwritten catalogue of Kloos’s library (see Appendix 2, item 49).
Shelleyana were meant to reinforce Kloos's unique relationship with the works of the English poet. This was especially important in the larger context of the commemorative celebrations of the centenary of Shelley's death.

As I demonstrated in the opening chapter, occasional echoes of Dowden's influential study *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, mentioned by Kloos in his reply to Bonger, can be found in Kloos's writings. It can therefore not be denied that he was familiar with its contents. More puzzling, however, is the extra information about the circumstances in which the copy was acquired. The plausibility of Dowden sending his far from inexpensive study, with a personal dedication, to a young Dutch critic whose only connection with Shelley in the Netherlands at the time consisted of a brief reference to *Epipsychidion* in the preface to Jacques Perk's *Gedichten* of 1882 seems rather slight. The most likely way for Dowden to have come across Kloos's name would have been the membership list of the Shelley Society. The Society was already some time in existence when Kloos paid his one-guinea contribution. As its *Note-Book* attests, by the end of 1886 — when Dowden's study was published — the Society could boast 207 members, with 'Kloss, Wilhelm, Govert Flinck Straat 81B, Amsterdam, Holland' being one of the handful of non Anglo-American members. Had Dowden, who sat on the Committee, been charmed by the attention of a Dutchman for their venture and, as a token of his appreciation, rewarded him with a free copy of his scholarly study? As it happens, Kloos's personal copy of Dowden's work has been preserved and sits, uncatalogued, unreferenced in the cellars of the Literary Museum and Documentation Centre in The Hague (see Appendix 2, item 42). The first tome of the two-volume work does indeed

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56 See footnote 3. Kloos also referred, very briefly, to *The Cenci* in an article which he published under the pseudonym N.Q. in *De Nederlandsche Spectator* in December 1879. See Chapter Six. On 20 August 1888, Verwey's friend J.C.C. Grasé wrote that he was able to get a copy of Dowden's work at a much reduced price: 'Dowden's Shelley. publ. 31-6 [31 1/2 shillings] verkrijgbaar voor 10-6 [10 1/2 shillings]. Wensch je een copie?'. Quoted from Margaretha Schenkeveld and Rein van der Wiel, eds., *Albert Verwey: Briefwisseling 1 juli 1885 tot 15 december 1888* (Amsterdam: Em. Querido, 1995), p. 492.

57 Kloos's name is not mentioned in the first printed membership list. See *Note-Book of the Shelley Society*, ed. by the Honorary Secretaries, The Shelley Society's Publications, 1st Series, No. 2 (London: Reeves and Turner, 1888) [no page numbers]. In *De Nieuwe Gids* of June 1934 (p. 643), Kloos published his letter to the Shelley Society about the renewal of his membership: ‘Sir, I send you by this post the sum of one guinea as contribution for the second year of my membership of the Shelley society [sic]. I am, Sir, Yours, very truly, WILLEM KLOOS’. The letter was addressed to 'Jos. Stanley Little, Hon. Sec.' and dated 13 February 1887.

58 I am extremely grateful to the staff at the Literary Museum in The Hague who granted me access to Kloos's Shelley library.
contain an inscription. It is, however, not in Dowden’s hand, but in Kloos’s and reads: ‘Gekocht bij Sch. en H. fl7.50 (1901)’. Had Kloos once possessed another (untraced) copy before he bought one from the Amsterdam-based book firm ‘Sch[eltema] en H[olkema]’? All direct references to and quotations from the work in Kloos’s own writings date from after the purchase of the 17.50-guilder copy. Yet, this in itself is not sufficient proof as Kloos only started writing about Shelley with some regularity from the publication of De Raaf’s Alastor onwards. One of these early references to Dowden occurs in Kloos’s response in 1906 to Kok’s critique of De Raaf’s translation (supra). Assuming that Kloos was not telling the truth, it is not difficult to appreciate the rationale behind the deceit: in the broader framework of his colonisation of Shelley territory, he seized the opportunity when it presented itself to advance any claim — with embellishments added if needs be — that would substantiate his status as Shelley expert.

In the face of Bonger’s persuasive account of Huet’s appreciation of Shelley’s writings, Kloos could do little else than barricade himself behind his Shelley tomes. The self-publicising mention of the Shelleyana collection indicates how much Kloos’s literary persona depended on the association between his own name and Shelley’s. Immediately following the reference to his 110-volume library, Kloos reprimands Bonger in these terms: ‘Heusch, de heer Bonger zou verstandiger gedaan hebben, indien hij zich eerst eens vergewist had, tegen wien hij eigenlijk optreedt’ (p. 80). As Kloos saw it, Bonger had endeavoured to defy the éminence grise of the Dutch literary establishment and doubt the presence of the foundation stone (‘een der grondleggers’) of his Shelley library.

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59 The point about Kloos’s possible deception should perhaps not be pressed too much. In her Het menselijke beeld van Willem Kloos, Jeanne Kloos-Reyneke van Stuwe too mentions how her husband was sent Dowden’s ‘vermaarde’ Life of Shelley by the author. If she were not, on many other (verifiable) occasions, so prone to distorting the historical facts in accordance with her husband’s fabrications, her statement would have counted as conclusive proof that Kloos had indeed been telling the truth. As it stands, it leaves open at most the possibility that Kloos was sincere after all. Jeanne Kloos-Reyneke van Stuwe, Het menselijke beeld van Willem Kloos, Nederlandsche Monographieen 7 (Lochem: De Tijdstroom, 1947), p. 176.

60 An account by Frederik van Eeden to Albert Verwey of a visit made to Busken Huet in the winter of 1885 illustrates how Huet’s understanding of Shelley was not as superficial as Kloos proclaimed. In his letter, Van Eeden quotes Busken Huet as saying: ‘Wat praat jelui van Shelley en zijn positie! — Shelley die de vooroordeelen van een heel volk trotseerde, die gestreden en geleden heeft[,] die een reus was in zijn tijd — en jelui die daar in Amsterdam hokken — en niets doen en niets van de wereld gezien hebt’. Quoted from Margaretha H. Schenkeveld and Rein van der Wiel, eds., Albert Verwey: Briefwisseling, p. 80. Even De Raaf had written in 1909: ‘Onze eerste critici van de vorige generatie, Potgieter en Busken Huet, hebben wel geweten, dat [de] maker [van deze dichtwerken] [i.e. Shelley] een der zeer grooten was, die men genieën noemt’. K.H. de Raaf, ‘Shelley-critiek’ in: De Nieuwe Gids, April 1909, pp. 387-402 (p. 388); May 1909, pp. 578-91.
which had paved the way for his present-day authority as a poet-critic in general, and as champion of Shelley in particular.

In conclusion, Shelley’s *Alastor* turned out to be of fundamental importance in Kloos’s career as a critic. De Raaff’s first Dutch translation allowed Kloos to continue and intensify his battle for critical supremacy with Verwey. It also provided him with the chance to enlist Shelley in the ranks of the young reformers of the Eighties Movement, and advocate himself as the proper conduit into what he saw as Shelley’s world of aesthetic individualism. In 1922, the reprint of Verwey’s *Alastor* in *English Studies* spurred Kloos on to highlight once more the exclusivity of his understanding and admiration of the English poet. True, the re-emergence of Verwey’s rendition will have galled Kloos, but at the same time the second Dutch *Alastor* allowed him to raise a (quasi)-authoritative voice and dismiss it (and its translator) in the strongest possible terms. In order to grasp the purport of the *Alastor* episode for both Kloos and Verwey, we may turn to the latter’s translation of Shelley’s *Defence of Poetry* back in 1891, or more precisely, to Frederik van Eeden’s appreciative review of it for *De Nieuwe Gids*.

Apart from complementing Verwey on his achievement, Van Eeden also broached on the subject of publishing translations in general: ‘Dat gaat nooit zoo droomerig en toevallig — zoo zachtzinnig bij ongeluk, met een excuus dat het wel geen kwaad zal kunnen’ (p. 300). The two Dutch *Alastor* renditions provide compelling proof of how translations, instead of disinterested exercises, can become combative gestures of aesthetics turned politics.

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Chapter Four: *Prometheus Unbound*

In the previous chapter, I have demonstrated Kloos’s overbearing antagonism with regard to Verwey’s *Alastor* translation. However, only a couple of months before Verwey published his rendition in *De Beweging*, Kloos had already had to stomach Alex Gutteling’s dutchified version of the complete *Prometheus Unbound* which appeared in the same journal.¹ At first, Kloos refrained from reviewing this labour of love. Yet, when Gutteling’s translation was issued as number 127 in the ‘Wereldbibliotheek’ series, and after two more years had elapsed, he finally came into action.² In this chapter, I want to examine the criteria by which Kloos judged Shelley’s lyrical drama against the background of his loathing of didactic verse. Incapable of setting his own prejudices aside, Kloos arrived at a fundamental misinterpretation of *Prometheus Unbound*. In their response, the writers associated with *De Beweging* were more concerned with editorial details rather than with Kloos’s incorrect understanding of the ambitious work. Especially a fairly meaningless tit-for-tat discussion about a minor detail in Shelley’s autograph was to prevent any real debate about the value and merits of Shelley’s lyrical drama and Gutteling’s translation. The determination with which they set to prove each other wrong illustrates the profound significance the two camps attached to Shelley’s poetry. Kloos’s judgement of Gutteling’s *Prometheus onthooid* will also be presented in the context of the negative criticism occasioned by Kloos’s own translation efforts. This contextualisation will once more underline the hidden agenda of his reviews. The ideological bias of Kloos’s statements and reinvention of Shelley becomes even more glaring when set against the opinions of several other Dutch critics and poets. A number of important studies and poems written by contemporaries of Kloos’s will demonstrate that there was a strong interest in the Netherlands in the figure of Prometheus and more particularly in what Shelley had made it to represent. Finally, I want to assess Gutteling’s


translation and discuss how it reflects his attitude towards the ideological subtext of the original.

1. Kloos on Gutteling's *Prometheus ontboeid*

When Kloos decided to evaluate Gutteling’s skills as a Shelley translator, he devised an effective strategy. Before tackling *Prometheus ontboeid* in a separate review, he focuses his attention on Gutteling’s recently published translation of the first six books of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and builds up his attack from there. Though Gutteling’s death from consumption in November 1910 had put a premature stop to his attempts at rendering the entire epic in Dutch, the ‘Wereldbibliotheek’ had nonetheless decided to print what he had been able to finish.3 Kloos starts his review in *De Nieuwe Gids* of May 1912 by explaining once more what is the worst possible offence to commit in poetry: it is to believe ‘dat de dichtkunst in het zeggen van “gedachten”, in het mededeelen van belangrijke waarheden bestaat, terwijl rijm en rhythmus...’4 By now, it is only a small challenge to predict what the next step in Kloos’s argument will be: he is going to take up arms against rhetoric and didacticism which were very much tautologous concepts for him.

En dus, of iemand al bezield wordt door den nobelsten wil, om het Vaderland, den Godsdienst of de Deugd te bezingen, ja, zou die goede bedoeling duidelijk uit iedren regel zijner verzen blijken, [...] indien die verzen tegelijkertijd als kunst, als ontroerende schoonheid beschouwd, droog en vervelend, want kalmpjes-nuchter verzekerend moeten heeten, is hij die hen voortbracht geen dichter te noemen, maar alleen een weinig-verdienstlijk schrijver-op-rijm. (pp. 685-86)

Kloos then proceeds in a very peculiar way. Having outlined once more his pet subject of form and content being one, he continues: ‘Wat ik hier van de Kunst zeide, moet ook geacht worden van toepassing op de vertaalkunst te wezen, indien men dan n.l. onder inhoud verstaat het oorspronkelijk werk, en onder vorm de vertaling ervan’ (p. 686). The

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3 Alex. Gutteling, trl., *Milton: Het paradijs verloren: I-VI*. Wereldbibliotheek No. 161/162 (Amsterdam: Maatschappij voor Goede en Goedkoope Lectuur, 1912). Albert Verwey completed the task which Gutteling had begun; the project came to an end with the publication of canto twelve in *De Beweging* of April 1912, pp. 14-31.

purport of this statement is that the translator is actually an automaton with a merely mechanical task. Whereas, earlier on, content was described as ‘wat er in [de dichter] geleefd heeft’, i.e. the utmost subjective experience, the emotional faculty which registers such feelings must be put on non-active in the translator’s mind: ‘Want zooals de dichter precies afbeeldt [...] wat zijn onbewustheid omhoogwerpt, zoo heeft de vertaler ook [...] haarfijn te volgen wat de schrijver van het oorspronkelijke werk op het papier had gebracht’ (p. 687). Kloos thus seems to believe that it is possible not only to gauge and re-experience fully someone else’s ‘allerindividueelste emotie’, but also to transpose it isomorphically into another language while retaining all the original nuances of the ‘allerindividueelste expressie’ of that emotion in the source text.

Being a prolific and talented translator himself, Shelley was far more pragmatic in his attitude and approach to translation. In his *Defence of Poetry*, translated by Verwey in 1891, he wrote: ‘the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were no poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence than the words themselves’. So far, Kloos would perfectly agree. However, Shelley is immediately aware of the consequences: ‘Hence the vanity of translation’. By this he means, as he admits after having tried his hand at a chorus in Goethe’s *Faust*, that ‘it is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the [original] versification’. Nevertheless, as Joseph Raben has claimed, it was Shelley’s view that the translator must, in practice, adhere to the following principle: ‘the language [of the target text] must seek to stimulate in the reader the same response as the original did’ (p. 198). This was undoubtedly Kloos’s ideal too, with this crucial difference that Shelley realised that this could only be achieved by a freer, less literal translation. Indeed, Kloos wanted the translator ‘haarfijn te volgen wat de schrijver van het oorspronkelijke werk op het papier had gebracht’. The much stricter ideal of perfect congruence, appears to have been a feasibility in Kloos’s eyes. Just as a poet has to give a ‘foto- en fonografisch-juiste weergave van wat hij diep-in-zichzelf heeft gehoord en gezien’, so a translator has to reproduce a facsimile of the original, with the proviso that he has to do so in another language.

Applying these general principles to Gutteling’s text, Kloos accepts that the translator has managed to render faithfully enough ‘het verstandelijk-precies-bepaalbare,
m.a.w. [...] den feitelijken inhoud’ (p. 687). Yet, according to Kloos, ‘Milton’s eigenlijke schoonheid, zijn emotioneerende rhythmus-en-klank’, i.e. the actual ‘form’, is woefully absent in the translation of ‘den armen doode’ (p. 687). Kloos argues that if Gutteling’s ‘eigen voortbrengselen — oorspronkelijke zoowel als vertaalde —’ should not be proof enough, then Het verloren paradijs bespeaks that he ‘van de zaak zelve [i.e. poetry] niet zoo heel veel [voelde]’ (p. 687). Such a flaw is lethal when it comes to translating the poet whom Kloos was to call in his review the next month, ‘de meest dichterlijke der dichters’, i.e. Shelley.

In his critique of Gutteling’s Prometheus ontboeid, Kloos summarises his assessment of the Paradise Lost translation as a starting point for a new, vicious onslaught and this despite his contention ‘Ik val dooden [sic] menschen liever niet hard’.6 Prometheus ontboeid had been dedicated to Albert Verwey ‘wiens vertaling van “Shelley’s Gedichten van ‘t jaar 1816” mij [i.e. Gutteling] tot voorbeeld was’ (p. vii). The cumulative effect of seeing Gutteling’s Prometheus ontboeid with its direct reference to earlier Shelley translations, closely followed by the publication of Verwey’s Alastor was not likely to temper Kloos’s spite. Consequently, Gutteling’s work suffered the full impact of his undignified wrath. Rather than soft-pedalling his criticism in view of the poet’s recent and tragic end, Kloos showed an obsessive relentlessness instead. Probably with Gutteling’s sharply critical review of De Raaf’s Alastor still nagging in his head (De Beweging, February 1909), he believed the time had come to settle an old score. It was especially the preface that Gutteling had attached to the ‘Wereldbibliotheek’ publication which left Kloos utterly scandalised. Kloos was apparently not bothered by the fact that Shelley’s own substantial preface was dropped in favour of Gutteling’s, but by what he perceived to be the translator’s pretentious declarations:

Zoo is zijn [i.e. Shelley’s] woordenkeus niet [...] bepaald door een onverbiddelijke noodwendigheid, maar hij stelt zich wel eens tevreden met een ietwat retorische uitdrukking mits zij den stroom van vers en gedachte niet belemmert. [...] Bij het vertalen vergemakkelijken deze eigenschappen mijn taak. Wie eenmaal Shelley’s toon met den zijnen heeft weten te benaderen, en den geest van het werk goed verstaat, mag zich menige vrijheid veroorloven. (p. vii)

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To claim that *Prometheus Unbound* contains several instances of rhetoric — that foulest of literary vices on which Kloos had repeatedly called down his anathemas — was more than the reviewer could take: ‘rhetoriek toch wordt in Shelley’s werken, behalve in diens jongensproduct “Queen Mab”, volstrekt niet aangetroffen (p. 903).’ Kloos’s condemnation of *Queen Mab* elsewhere (such as ‘t abstract verzeiken’ with which he charges this particular work in his introduction to De Raaf’s *Alastor* translation (p. 7)) have made us aware of how Kloos considered rhetoric and didacticism as concordant, if not identical, defects. He must have thought to be on the same wave-length as Shelley, for the latter had written in his preface to *Prometheus Unbound* (dropped in Gutteling’s translation):

> Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have [...] ‘a passion for reforming the world’. [...] But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my political compositions *solely* to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence, nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not *tedious* and supererogatory in verse. (*SPP*, p. 135, *italics mine*)

Notwithstanding the restriction that his poetry was not exclusively conceived as a vehicle for ideological thoughts, Shelley’s statement leaves no doubt that he did aim at furthering the radical cause, but in an aesthetically pleasing way. Kloos had only eyes for the latter (form) and ignored the former (content), satisfied to recognise yet another apparent similarity between himself and his literary guiding spirit. If Shelley loathed didactic poetry, however, he did not mean that he was averse to poetry which is thought-provoking. Shelley most sincerely wanted to persuade his readers and get his message across. The opening of the preface in which the poet dwells on ‘the moral interest of the fable’ he is about to relate, bears out that Shelley had set himself a clear task. It is ‘to amuse and instruct others’ (*italics mine*). In sum, Shelley took care to avoid didactic preachifying in his poetry, yet ‘his intention was to convert readers to the liberal cause by

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appealing to their feelings and imagination. Later on in this chapter, I will highlight and expound upon the implied politics of *Prometheus Unbound* and Kloos’s blinkered views on them.

It is evident for Kloos that someone who detects empty rhetoric in *Prometheus Unbound* is unlikely to produce a satisfactory translation. Moreover, it is Kloos’s belief that a translator who admits to having allowed himself ‘menige vrijheid’ can only be approached with suspicion. Yet, as I have demonstrated, such a more liberal stance was also favoured by Shelley himself. Gutteling had thus (wittingly?) worked in Shelley’s spirit. This was not Kloos’s opinion, of course. He contends that Gutteling has dramatically failed to capture the ‘in golven van genade, opzwalpende en voortzwierende, hoog-stormende en zacht-uitstervende schoonheid’ found essentially in the ‘form’ of the original poem. Gutteling’s *Prometheus ontboeid* contains ‘zeer weinig van Shelley, behalve den algemeenen gang van diens meesterwerk’ (p. 902), a charge Kloos also made ten years later when he came to review Verwey’s revised *Alastor*. A few paragraphs later, though, Kloos would also put his finger on what he regards as inadequacies in the content of Gutteling’s translation. The distinction he makes between form and content in practical terms is far from clear. Indeed, Kloos’s review comes across as somewhat muddled since the methodological framework in which he wants to evaluate the translation is not sufficiently thought through. In Kloos’s defence, it must be admitted that he is often right in his condemnation of some infelicitous renditions:

I had clothed, since Earth uprose
Its wastes in colours not their own
(Prometheus Unbound, 1, ll. 83-84)

Ah sister! Desolation is a delicate thing
(Prometheus Unbound, 1, l. 772)

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Me thinks, I grow like what I contemplate
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

(*Prometheus Unbound*, i, ll. 450-51)

My soul is an enchanted boat

(*Prometheus Unbound*, ii, v, l. 72)


Gutteling’s choice of ‘prooi’ as a translation for ‘ruin’ in a particular passage to which I shall return in the next section, causes Kloos to intensify his attack even further. In the end, his exasperation sets his course painfully unsound. It is with vicarious shame indeed that one reads the concluding paragraph of Kloos’s mud-throwing piece. Kloos is now addressing Gutteling directly, assuming that ‘de geloovigen en de spiritisten het bij het rechte eind hebben’ and that it is indeed possible to communicate with the dead ‘over den rand van het stille graf heen’:

Als daarginds, in de metaphysische gewesten, de groote dichter, dien gij dorst hoonen, verblind als gij waart voor de grenzen van uw eigen geest, als Shelley, de eeuwige, u zijn aandacht waardig mocht keuren, verneder u dan voor Hem, en vraag Hem diep om vergiffenis, omdat gij Zijn werk vrijwel tot een bespotting hebt durven maken: want als verontschuldiging zal u misschien kunnen strekken dat gij, hier op aarde, nog zoo verschrikkelijk onnoozel, en te vervuld van uw eigen voortrefelijkheid waart! (p. 911)

In a perverse way, Kloos conspires to make his harangue represent Gutteling’s death as an apt retribution for having tarnished Shelley’s reputation. The seriousness of the matter is further emphasised by Kloos’s capitalisation of all pronouns referring to Shelley, completing the deification of the English poet and turning Gutteling’s handiwork into an act of sacrilege.
It may well be that the savageness of Kloos’s attack finds its origin partly in a very unpleasant episode in his own career as a translator. As explained earlier, Kloos felt scandalised by Gutteling’s claim in the preface to his translation that ‘hij [i.e. Gutteling] Shelley benaderd had, en diens geest verstaan!’ (p. 908). Only two years earlier (in 1908), the ‘Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur’ (Wereldbibliotheek), the publishing firm also responsible for the publication of Gutteling’s *Prometheus ontboeid*, had issued Kloos’s translation of Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitatio*. Much to Kloos’s chagrin, his *Navolging van Christus* was very badly received by the Dutch critics. An insufficient knowledge of Latin grammar and religious ‘technicalities’ were blamed for the incompetent endresult. M.C. Nieuwbam was especially critical of Kloos’s introduction to the translation in which Kloos ‘[a]ls rustig metaphysisch denker evenwel […] de beginnende schoolknaap met veel, met heel veel, met onmetelijken zelfwaan [is]’ (24 March 1910). Kloos’s grasp of religious doctrines is more than once called simplistic and infantile. It is almost in the same terms that Kloos was shortly afterwards to refer to Gutteling as the ‘half-of kwart-ontwikkelde knaap’. Professor Is. van Dijk believed he had identified the main shortcoming of the *Navolging* when he accused the translator in his lengthy and highly critical review in *Onze Eeuw* of ‘niet waarlijk doorgedrongen [te zijn] in den geest der Imitatie’ (p. 31, *italics mine*). Perhaps Gutteling’s phrase in the preface had brought back to Kloos memories of the critical failure of his own translation efforts. Combined with the fact that Gutteling had chosen to translate Shelley, the recent *Navolging* debacle may account for Kloos’s aggressive intolerance.

2. The ‘ravin-ruin’ controversy

This time, Albert Verwey clearly felt that Kloos had transgressed the boundaries of decency. In a much more level-headed strain, Verwey published a refutation of Kloos’s

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11 Kloos’s translation of Edmond Rostand’s *Cyrano de Bergerac* was also severely criticised in the Dutch press. See for instance S. Prins Jz, ‘Een slechte en een goede vertaling’ in: *Amsterdams Weekblad*, 25 May 1913.
critique, in *De Beweging* of 1912. Bearing in mind the nature of some of Kloos’s utterances, the opening sentence is a gem of understated disapprobation: ‘Willem Kloos heeft in het Mei-nummer van *De Nieuwe Gids* zijn leedwezen betuigd dat hij een ongunstig oordeel moest uitbrengen over Gutteling’s Prometheus-vertaling’ (p. 308).

Verwey’s argument is twofold: one ought to be aware of the different (conflicting) Shelley editions, as well as of Shelley’s peculiar phraseology which is not always as straightforward as may seem. Verwey discards Kloos’s objections about Gutteling’s translation of ‘ruin’ as ‘prooi’ by claiming that ‘ruin’, as given in the *editio princeps* of 1820, is a corruption of ‘ravin’ which word is found in the manuscript as well as in Mary Shelley’s 1839 edition based on her husband’s own list of *errata*. Gutteling chose the 1839 print as his source text and rightly gave ‘prooi’ as the translation of ‘ravin’.

In each human heart terror survives
The ravin it has gorged
*Prometheus Unbound*, I, ll. 618-20

Wordt prooi, dien het verslond, steeds overleefd
Door schrik
*Prometheus ontboeid*, p. 23

This observation marks the onset of the ruin-ravin controversy which would become a source of much bickering and mutual resentment.

Verwey’s defence of certain phrases in Gutteling’s *Prometheus*, based on the proposition that Shelley’s multi-layered diction calls for less obvious translations, fails to convince, however, and this in spite of the long paraphrases with which he attempts to corroborate his and Gutteling’s interpretations. Such must have been Kloos’s feeling too, for he reacted to Verwey’s piece forthwith. The opening sentence whose fretted agitation stands in stark contrast with Verwey’s cutting understatement forebodes little good:

De heer Albert Verwey — een der meest zelfbewuste onder onze levende letterkundigen — heeft de goedheid gehad, om ongevraagd te probeeren, mij, in zijn

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Curious, but perfectly understandable in the context of his appropriation tactics, is Kloos’s use of the phrase ‘mijn vriend, den dichter Shelley’. Much of Kloos’s article centres around the ruin-ravin issue and Verwey’s contention that Kloos used non-authoritative Shelley editions. Kloos is at great pains to defend the ‘ruin’ reading. After all, did he not rely on ‘de boven alle andren gezaghebbende, want op wetenschappelijk-exacte wijze bezorgde Library-edition in 4 groot-8° deelen, die de Shelley-kenner, H. Buxton Forman van de Poetical Works het licht deed zien’ (p. 94)? ‘Deze hoofd-uitgave van Shelley’ can hardly be called, to borrow Verwey’s phrasing, ‘de eerste de beste’ Shelley edition. Kloos waves aside Verwey’s argument that Mary Shelley’s 1839 edition has ‘ravin’. Not only must the reader allow for printings errors in this imprint, but the ‘ravin’ reading also renders ‘het er om heenstaande [...] tot volslagen onzin’ (pp. 94-95). Moreover, Kloos is not familiar with the existence of any Shelley manuscript of Prometheus Unbound to which Verwey seems to refer and as long as the latter does not specify from which authority he derived this information, one has no alternative than to stick to the monumental Buxton Forman edition.

Given Kloos’s own insecurities about his command of the English tongue, something which he would never avow in public, he resented the accusation that he needed a dictionary to make sense of Shelley’s poetry. Actually, Kloos is quite right to charge Verwey with ‘sophistische handigheid’ (p. 97). The facts are these: Kloos had explained in his review of Prometheus ontboeit that he was puzzled by some of the translated phrases until he realised that, for these instances which left him somewhat perplexed, Gutteling had simply taken the first translation following the lemma in an English-Dutch dictionary, even if the context required another term.15 Subsequently, Verwey had charged Kloos with an insufficient knowledge of English since, apparently,

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15 Kloos provides the following examples: Gutteling’s rendition of ‘Desolation’ in I, l. 772 as ‘t Vemielende’, according to Kloos, illustrates that the translator chose the first word in his dictionary, as Kloos’s own dictionary (unidentified) lists after the entry ‘desolation’: ‘verwoesting, verlatenheid, troosteloosheid’. An analogous example is Gutteling’s ‘verwoesting’ for ‘wastes’ in I, l. 84. Kloos’s dictionary lists after ‘waste’: ‘verwoesting, verkristing, afneming, schade, verlies, woestenij, wildernis, onbehouwd land’. 
he needed to resort to a dictionary to understand Shelley’s words. Indeed, Verwey had implied that this was almost an outrageous crime in itself. For someone who claimed to know ‘den Prometheus en Shelley-zelf door-en-door’ (p. 97), Kloos had to speak out and expose Verwey tactics in defending a ‘jonggestorven vriendje’ (p. 93). By means of the belittling diminutive, Kloos made it plain at the same time that he could boast rather more impressive compères, as is evident from his phrase ‘mijn vriend, den dichter Shelley’. The issue of Gutteling’s seemingly incompetent use of a dictionary had brought Kloos to devote several pages to ‘[h]et geval [...] te curieus [...] om hier niet te worden meegedeeld’. There may again be some hidden agenda in this particular move. In 1908 — two years before the Wereldbibliotheek edition of *Prometheus ontboeid* — K.H. de Raaf had published his translation of Shelley’s tragedy *The Cenci*, to which I shall return in the final chapter. In his review published the next year, Verwey had sighed with obvious exasperation: ‘Indien vertalers eens begrepen *que c’est le ton qui fait le poème* — zij zouden dan niet meenen dat een gedicht vertaald wordt door overzetting volgens het woordenboek’. Kloos may have read this attack on his own protégé (De Raaf) and now seized the opportunity to bring the (proper) use of dictionaries back into the discussion.

There was more in Verwey’s reaction to Kloos’s savage critique of *Prometheus ontboeid* which provoked a response. For instance, Kloos also takes great offence at Verwey’s pairing of Shelley with Robert Southey (1774-1843). Verwey had remarked on Shelley’s usage of the word ‘desolation’ in *Prometheus* which, he believed, found its precedent in Southey’s *Joan of Arc*. Kloos retorts that it is preposterous to make a connexion between Shelley’s poetry and Southey’s. However, Kloos is mistaken to deny any such link. Shelley was much impressed by Southey’s *The Curse of Kehama*, echoes of which can be detected in *Alastor*. Appreciating that they differed in many things, Shelley once even wrote about his colleague that ‘Southey tho’ far from being a man of great reasoning powers is a great Man. He has all that characterises the poet’ (*Letters, I*, p. 212). Though there may be some ulterior motives underlying this gesture, Shelley even

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18 Referring to *Alastor*, Richard Holmes comments: ‘Poetically though, Southey was to remain an influence on Shelley, and the *Curse of Kehama* (1810), especially, was to be one of the primary sources for the long poem Shelley was beginning to contemplate’. Richard Holmes, *Shelley: The Pursuit*, p. 100.
dispatched a copy of *Alastor* to Southey. In the accompanying letter he expressed his ‘admiration [for Southey] as a poet’ (*Letters*, I, p. 462). It can certainly not be denied that there was to develop much animosity between both poets at a later stage, especially after Southey had absconded his political radicalism, but to infer, as Kloos does, that Shelley was entirely unaffected by Southey’s work is a distortion of the facts. Even in De Raaf’s *Alastor* translation, for which he wrote a preface, Kloos could have read (in Mary Shelley’s biographical note): ‘Deze riviertocht [op de Rijn in 1814] was voor hem [i.e. Shelley] een verrukking. Door zijn lievelingsgedicht “Thalaba” [‘een gedicht van Robert Southey’, note from De Raaf], dat de beschrijving van zulk een reis bevat, was zijn verbeelding opgewekt’.^{19} Incidentally, it is not so far-fetched a move on the part of Verwey to link *Prometheus Unbound* with the Poet Laureate Southey. Before him, Richard Garnett, founding member of the Shelley Society, had already mentioned ‘a curious resemblance between the catastrophe of Prometheus in Shelley’s poem and the close of Southey’s *Curse of Kehama*’.^{20} All this, of course, is but a minor point, yet it demonstrates that Kloos kept conveniently silent about certain aspects of Shelley’s life when it was to his own advantage. If he was genuinely unaware of the links, then his proclaimed excellence in Shelley studies begins to sound rather jarring.^{21}

Four years later, in June 1916, P.N. van Eyck (1887-1954), who was a regular contributor to Verwey’s *De Beweging*, harked back to the ruin-ravin controversy. The cause of this was the publication of *Prometheus Unbound* by the bibliophile ‘Zilverdistel’ press in which Van Eyck was involved. This had prompted him to examine the several editions carefully. As he had recently intimated to Verwey in a letter of 10 May 1916: ‘Onder ‘t werken is hoe langer hoe meer mijn verbazing over Kloos geklommen. Ik herlas onlangs zijn 2 stukken [over Guttelings vertaling in *De Nieuwe Gids*]. De onkunde en onhebbelijkheid dier 2 stukken is werkelijk buitengewoon’. He suggests to Verwey: ‘Zou

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^{21} This is what Kloos wrote about the relationship between the two English men of letters: ‘Shelley heeft éénmaal in zijn leven, en wel op 19-jarigen leeftijd, Southey gesproken, maar beide dichters waren volstrekt verschillende naturen, met aan elkander tegenovergestelde levensbeschouwingen, zoodat Southey Shelley verafschuwde, terwijl deze laatste in verderen tijd nooit meer aan zijn meer dan twintig-jaar ouderen tijdgenoot dacht’ (p. 171). Kloos seems to forget that in 1820 there ensued a short-lived and barbed correspondence between both poets.
ik niet nog een korte aanteekening schrijven?', to which the mentor replied: ‘Meen je de zaak met een enkel woord te kunnen afdoen, doe het dan’. Van Eyck started writing forthwith and less than three days after Verwey’s epistolary endorsement the ‘aanteekening’ was ready for the printing press. He opens his piece in the same understated vein as Verwey’s article back in 1912: ‘Men zal zich herinneren dat in 1912 tusschen Kloos en Verwey een korte gedachtewisseling plaats had over vers 619, eerste bedrijf, van Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound’ (p. 212). Van Eyck gives more details about the whereabouts of Shelley’s manuscripts (Bodleian Library), whose existence was unknown to Kloos, and the various scholars and editors who made it the object of their studies. He ends with C.D. Locock’s *An Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (1903), which book came into Kloos’s possession soon afterwards (see below). Van Eyck concludes with an unambiguous endorsement of Gutteling’s reading and translation.

Far from satisfied, Kloos takes up the gauntlet again in *De Nieuwe Gids* of the following month. Rather than admitting defeat, Kloos hammers the point home that the whole issue remains ‘in dubio’ (p. 118) since the English Shelley authorities do not agree with one another. Nonetheless, this does not lead him to withdraw his support for the ‘ruin’ variant. The reading favoured by the ‘rustige en fijn-gewetensvolle Shelley-kenner’ (p. 118), the ‘streng-akkuraten Forman’ (p. 119) should also be that of all ‘buitenstaanders’ (p. 119) for it makes the most sense in the context of Shelley’s verse.

Hoping to settle the question once and for all, Kloos instructed his brother-in-law, J.E.A. (‘Co’) Reyneke-van Stuwe who was living in London, to contact H. Buxton Forman himself. Below, I have reproduced the main part of Reyneke-van Stuwe’s letter, dated 12 June 1916 and transcribed in Kloos’s article. It certainly attests to Kloos’s tenacity and determination.

My brother-in-law, Mr. W. Kloos, editor of the Dutch literary monthly *De Nieuwe Gids* is anxious to know your opinion in the following matter, and, not knowing your address, has asked me to write to you on his behalf.

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There is at present a discussion going on in the Dutch literary periodicals about a word in Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound.

In your edition, (Act I, line 618) the word “ruin” is given. A Dutch literary critic however says that Shelley-himself — according to a manuscript since published — gives the word “ravin”.

In my brother’s opinion, “ruin” should be the word in connection with the preceding lines, but he is very anxious to know your opinion on the subject. The matter is somewhat urgent, the discussion having gone on for some time and as you are looked upon as one of the leading authorities on Shelley, would you kindly give my brother-in-law the benefit of your opinion on this point, as your opinion will carry great weight. (pp. 120-21)

The main reason for Kloos not to have written to Buxton Forman himself was, I believe, not so much his ignorance of the address, something which Co could have passed on easily, but the fact, as Kloos admitted in private on another occasion, that he thought himself not proficient enough in English to write a formal English letter. Since such a confession would seems awkward coming from a devout Shelleyan, Co had to supply an alternative explanation for the circuitous way in which the English editor was eventually contacted. The reply from the Buxton Forman residence was written in a hand different from that of the famous scholar. The reason for this becomes obvious from the start of the letter: ‘I regret to inform you, that my husband has been seriously ill for the last two months and is still confined to his bed’. Actually, he would never fully recover and died on 15 June 1917. Mrs Buxton Forman continues her letter expressing how sorry she is not to be able to ‘give any decided information on the subject of your letter’. However, she had been so kind as to ‘read it to Mr. Forman, and he said at once: “That question has been put to me many times “and of course it is “ruin””’ (p. 121). She doubts nonetheless that ‘this mere statement will be of any use to Mr. Kloos’. Yet, said Mr Kloos had no difficulties in turning Laura Buxton Forman’s fairly tentative reply into a jubilant vindication of his own ‘ruin’ reading. To complicate matters further, however, Kloos refers to Locock’s edition which had been sent to him by Co together with Forman’s

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25 In an unpublished letter to Co, Kloos wrote the following request: ‘Zou je mij den grooten dienst willen bewijzen van even een korte vraag om inlichting te willen schrijven en versturen aan The Clarendon Press te Oxford? [...] Ik zou het zelf wel willen doen, maar mijn Engelsch is zoo inkorrekt’. This letter is part of the uncatalogued material of the Kloos collection (K533) in the Literary Museum in The Hague. A later hand has added the date 20 April 1922 in purple pencil.
reply. Earlier Van Eyck had drawn on it in his ‘Aanteekening’, stressing that the editor had preferred ‘ravin’ over ‘ruin’. Kloos now claims that Locock himself, though adopting the ‘ravin’ variant, did not favour this reading since he failed to mark it with a (!) as one of the ‘improvements worthy of superseding the printed “texts”’. ‘En hiermede, basta!’ (p. 122), Kloos finishes his piece in triumphant mood, believing to have emerged from the battle as the undisputed victor.

Van Eyck promptly delivered his repartee in the following issue of De Beweging. According to Van Eyck, and in the context of Prometheus Unbound, Locock meant by ‘the printed “texts”’ not so much the editio princeps, but, as the plural seems to indicate, the Mary Shelley and W.M. Rossetti editions. Since these later texts give ‘ravin’, there was no need for Locock to make any emendations or editorial comments on this point (i.e. adding a (!)). Van Eyck wonders at Kloos’s stubborn adherence to the Forman text, which was, for Locock, ‘allesbehalve [...] de autoriteit’ (p. 160) and he quotes with noticeable approval from Ackermann, another Shelley critic, in a footnote: ‘er [Buxton Forman] liefert zwar keine kritische Ausgabe im streng philologischen Sinne’, followed by another claim by Ackerman that this particular editor ‘lässt ihn dieser sein Konservatismus auch auf Lesarten der ed. pr. van 1820 verharren, die die Mss. als falsch erwiesen haben’ (p. 160).

If the contemporary reader thought that this would mean the end of a rather ludicrous, if not embarrassing, display of nit-picking, the next issue of De Nieuwe Gids proved otherwise. In it, Kloos is fulminating that it is absurd to question Buxton Forman’s authority as Shelley editor. After all, ‘de bruusk-uitgestooten verzekering’ cited by P.N. van Eyck was ‘niet [eens] van een Engelschman, maar van een vreemdeling,’ and much worse, ‘een Duitscher nog wel’ (pp. 449-50). An ample list of works by Buxton Forman devoted to the study of Shelley is provided as a touchstone of the Englishman’s scholarly sacrosanctity. Yet it was not just Ackermann who had struck a critical note with regard to Buxton Forman’s editorial practices. In his first article (De Beweging, June 1916), P.N. van Eyck had also cited from Locock’s 1911 edition of Shelley’s collected works:

Het is misschien goed nog even te vermelden wat Locock in zijne voorrede over B.
Forman schrijft: “The Preface to Mr. B.F.’s 1892 edition of Shelley’s Poems contains the following statement: — “The text being no longer the subject of such controversy as raged for years over it, I have given it in the form in which I think it may be regarded as established”. There is no necessity, I think, for so despondent a view. While manuscripts remain undeciphered, or incorrectly deciphered, we are not compelled to attribute to Shelley all those deficiencies in sense and metre which have been accepted, either with or without hesitation — often with peculiar admiration, — for some sixty or eighty years”. (p. 213)

Certainly not coming from one of the ‘buitenstaanders’ or of a ‘vreemdeling’, Locock’s caveat as quoted by Van Eyck was conveniently ignored by Kloos.

Below the surface of this serialised skirmish, one can sense that what was really at stake was the rightful ‘ownership’ of Shelley’s work. Kloos felt expropriated by Gutteling’s Prometheus onthooid and reacted with a cantankerous review. When Verwey took up the defence of his late protégé, accusing the editor of De Nieuwe Gids of holding on to inaccurate editions, Kloos felt his credibility as a critic come under siege. He could not allow his position as a custodian of Shelley’s legacy to be challenged. It is striking how many times, and with almost audibly cracking voice, Kloos stresses his unadulterated devotion to Shelley in the ferocious counter-attacks: ‘ik, die zonder enige eigenliefde, maar alleen met groote dankbaarheid, er voor uit kan komen, dat ik dertig jaren met Shelley heb omgegaan en zijn heele kunst en mensch-zijn langzaam-aan heb leeren doorvoelen en aanschouwen’ (De Nieuwe Gids, May 1912, p. 902), or the earlier cited ‘mijn vriend, den dichter Shelley, wiens werken, nu reeds meer dan een derde-eeuw lang, niet uit mijn gedachten gegaan zijn’ (De Nieuwe Gids, July 1912, p. 92), and further, ‘ik [blijf] altijd levendig belang [...] stellen in alles wat op mijn lievelingsdichter en bron van gezette studie betrekking heeft’ (De Nieuwe Gids, July 1916, pp. 118-20). Absent in Verwey’s and Van Eyck’s pieces, such self-complacent statements are undoubtedly meant to force a decisive vantage point. They demonstrate how personal Kloos took the whole matter and how determined he was to emerge victorious. In an unpublished letter to ‘Co’, dated 1 May 1917, Kloos proudly asserted: ‘Na mijn laatste antwoord aan Van Eyck, op grond van jouw mededeelingen [i.e. the note from Laura Buxton Forman], heeft die domme jongen niets meer laten hooren’; adding in contentment: ‘Hij acht zich blijkbaar
verslagen, wat wel een satisfactie voor mij is.\textsuperscript{128} The entire ruin-ravine issue appears to have been used in both camps as a crowbar to force the opponent out of equilibrium. For Kloos, of course, the very foundations of what helped him to constitute his public literary persona were at stake. Not only his hegemony as Shelley critic, but also his entire credibility as a poet and reviewer were in danger of being deflated. Hence, the fact that Van Eyck never issued a reply made Kloos sigh with relief.

3. Kloos and Shelley's 'desolation'

The critical value of the many pages devoted to \textit{Prometheus Unbound} by both parties is practically nil. With all the time and energy spent on rummaging through various Shelley editions, singling out quotations hidden in footnotes of editorial prefaces, both sides kept circling around the main body of the text without ever tackling the important issues brought forward by the poem itself. Reading the commentaries in \textit{De Nieuwe Gids} and \textit{De Beweging} will not have made anyone more knowledgeable about the complex ideas which Shelley wanted to convey. What started as an attack on a translation of a major, 2600-line poem, degenerated into a jejune squabble over a single word. What is more, the rare occasions where Kloos does make attempts at touching on the significance of the work are flawed to the core. It is Kloos's opinion that the superior beauty of Shelley's verse lies in its exclusivity: 'de muziek en de visie's en het hoogere [...] gevoel [...] van wier bestaan [...] de gewone aldags-menschen, in de staege herrie hunner levensjacht, geen vermoeden zelfs ooit krijgen'.\textsuperscript{29} Even if Shelley conceded in the preface to \textit{Prometheus Unbound} that his 'purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence', it was only to make more palpable the aspirations nurtured by the radical and less privileged sections of society. The plight of the 'aldags-menschen' was Shelley's constant concern and the object of more than just a genteel sort of sympathy. When Kloos comes to articulate his understanding of the ideological slant of \textit{Prometheus Unbound}, he manages to distort completely Shelley's objective. Since this is a crucial statement, so typical of Kloos's appropriation techniques, I will quote it at some length:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
Hij [Shelley] schildert er, op zijn gewone, verbeeldingsvolle manier, de bekende
gemoedshouding (desolation) van de beschaafde, de meest-ontwikkelde burgerij
tegenover de allernieuwste richtingen in het politieke leven van hun tijd. In hun hart
voelen die geestelijk-hoogerstaanden, dat de revolutionnaien gelijk hebben in de
essentie van hun willen, maar zij weigren hen te steunen, omdat zij, met recht, door
de geschiedenis geleerd, bevreesd zijn voor de excessen die een logisch bijkomstig
gevolg van de overwinning der lagere standen zullen zijn. Achter de hervormers toch,
met al hun goed-gedisciplineerdheid, trekken de meest veelsoortige en niet altijd even-
waardige hulptroepen mee, waarover ten slotte de leiders zelf niet meer de baas
zullen kunnen blijven, en onder wier losgebroken geweld de hervormers zelf zullen
vallen, zoo goed als het eerst de reactionnaien hebben moeten doen. Dan komt de
anarchie, met al de gruwelen die daaraan vastzitten, totdat de reactie, wanneer de
wereld moe, want uitgeput door al de herrie is geworden, het hoofd weer nijdig
opsteekt, en de oude toestanden, hoogstens met enige kleine verbeteringen, herstelt.
(p. 905, *italics mine*)

This is a perfect summary of the resigned mood advocated by Godwinism which had seen
its worst fears realised in the so-called Reign of Terror following the French Revolution.
In the first chapter, however, I have argued that Shelley preferred active involvement
which inevitably alienated him from his father-in-law who adhered to the principles as
outlined by Kloos: ‘Naar achter, noch naar voren ziend kunnen zij iets goeds ontwaren,
en berusten dus maar vreedzaam, zachtrij, indien op ‘t oogenblik alles maar kalm om hen
blijf’ (p. 905). This was the position adopted by someone like Coleridge after his
‘revolutionary’ years, and one which Shelley much deplored. Kloos failed to realise that
Shelley’s lyrical drama was designed to counter such a pernicious status quo. Whereas
Shelley wanted to stir his readers from apathy into action by drawing on their intellectual
capacities, Kloos maintains that the main achievement of *Prometheus Unbound* lies in its
ability to make his readers ‘bedwelmd [...] door de als angelieke en toch zo reëel-
visionaire schoonheid’ of *Prometheus Unbound* (p. 910), a phrase which recalls
Matthew Arnold’s ‘ineffectual angel’.

In 1886, W.G.C. Byvanck had demonstrated a much keener understanding of the
ideological differences between the first generation of English Romantics (Wordsworth,
Coleridge, Southey) and the second (Shelley, Keats, Byron): ‘Op een tijd waarin men
alles van politieke ideën verwacht had, volgde een ander, waarin de besten, en onder hen
Coleridge, overtuigd waren van haar onmacht en zich hielden aan wat eenmaal bestond. In a footnote, Byvanck further explains:

Het geslacht dat een vijftien of twintigtal jaren later werd geboren en welks jeugd ten tijde der bevrijdingsoortogen [sic] viel, toen de politieke en mijstieke strooming zich weer vereenigde, — het geslacht van Shelley, om zijn edelsten vertegenwoordiger te noemen, — heeft de houding van zijn voorgangers, die het slechts als reactionairen kende, nooit begrepen. (p. 361)

Kloos never understood that Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* was an attack on this attitude of resignation (desolation), not just a poetical analysis of it.

Kloos, who thought very highly of the sustained imaginative beauty and lyricism of *The Revolt of Islam* (or *Laon and Cythna* as the first version was called), was undoubtedly familiar with the ideas expressed in the preface to this work:

The panic which, like an epidemic transport, seized upon all classes of men during the excesses consequent upon the French Revolution, is gradually giving place to sanity. It has ceased to be believed that whole generations of mankind ought to consign themselves to a hopeless inheritance of ignorance and misery, because a nation of men who had been dupes and slaves for centuries were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of freemen so soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened. (*PW*, p. 33)

In Britain, the sorry aftermath of the French Revolution had broken the spirit of many progressive intellectuals who subsequently withdrew their active support for the demands for reform. Reactionary forces were quick to add to the confusion and disillusionment by spreading defeatist propaganda, very much along the lines of Kloos's reasoning. Interestingly, a key-passage in the first act of *Prometheus Unbound* is directly concerned with exposing the flaws in and dangers of such apathy. It is the section where the Furies, to torture Prometheus, conjure up ghastly visions of famine, war and death wrecking 'the struggling World' (1, l. 577) in a post-1789 frame of reference. As Kenneth Cameron has succinctly observed, 'by the picture of the collapse of the French Revolution the Furies

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hope to make Prometheus yield to Jupiter’. By rationalising the implications of the ‘desolation’ with which the title hero is tempted, Kloos is siding with the evil demons, turning a torturous chimaera into the overall redemptive message of the poem. He actually propagates a state of mental torpor as a source of relief to be obtained from feelings of intense despair magnified beyond proportion. However, after Jupiter’s dethronement and Prometheus’ release, Shelley depicts a new era in which mankind has cast aside its shackles of ‘desolation’ and ‘slavery’ (III, ii, ll. 29-31) which had been holding it captive for so long. Though the following lines are initially presented as an unachievable ideal in order to crush Prometheus’ hopes, they leave little doubt that Shelley’s real goal in writing his poem was to incite to action:

See! a disenchanted nation [i.e. France]
Springs like day from desolation
To truth its state, is dedicate,
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate
(I, ll. 567-70, italics mine)

Prometheus Unbound shows that it is at least conceivable to overcome the dangers of anarchy and achieve an egalitarian society without relapsing into the vices and abuses of the old order. Prometheus’ own retraction of his curse in the first act whereby he keeps clear of becoming just another Jupiter, is symbolising just that. On a practical plane, one means to blight the destructive lust for revenge on the part of the oppressed is to instruct them beforehand, as Shelley explained in his Philosophical View of Reform which he wrote while finishing the fourth act of his drama. Earlier, in his preface to Laon and Cythna, Shelley had explained the same philosophy: ‘Can he who the day before was a trampled slave suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent?’ As a poet, he will therefore use all devices available to him to effectuate a reform of mentality before political change takes place. Admittedly, Prometheus Unbound was not a poem geared

32 A similar idea is expressed in the opening lines of Laon and Cythna: ‘When the last hope of trampled France had failed / Like a brief dream of unremaining glory, / From visions of despair I rose’ (ll. 1-3, emphasis mine). The long preface of the poem spells out that ‘many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored appeared to show as the melancholy desolation of all
towards educating the broader layers of society. With 'the more select readers of poetry', addressed in the preface, Shelley may have had in mind these intellectuals who had previously been sympathetic to reform, but had become too apprehensive after the bloodshed in France. *Prometheus Unbound*, then, was partly written to win them back for the just cause and rouse them from the lethargy of despair. As Stephen C. Behrendt insists, it cannot be disputed that Shelley was 'a recruiter, striving to assemble from a variety of audiences a fiercely loyal army of disciples'. Contemporary reviewers of Shelley's work, unlike Kloos, had no problems in recognising the ideological bias of the drama:

[Shelley] has drunk deeply of the two poisonous and kindred streams — infidelity and sedition. We shall not enter into an analysis of his great work, *Prometheus Unbound*, as our principal intention is to recommend it to the neglect of our readers.

— The chief design of the piece [...] is to charm the unsuspecting heart of youth and innocence, with a luscious picture of the felicities which would succeed the subversion of social, religious, and political order — and which he denominates LIBERTY.

Shelley's intentions and missionary zeal were thus diametrically opposed to what Kloos advanced as the political message in the lyrical drama. In sum, what Kloos dubs as Shelley's 'intuitief-juist inzicht in maatschappelijke toestanden' and his 'sociale begripsgevoel' (p. 905) he in fact represents as nothing more than political defeatism ('desolation') devoid of any of the aspirations which ennoble so much of Shelley's humane radicalism. Clearly, such an interpretation is fraught with problems since it is completely at odds with the optimism found in the preface of *Prometheus Unbound*: 'The great writers of our age,' and Shelley no doubt counted himself amongst them, are 'the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it'.

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their cherished hopes. [...] I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem' *(italics mine).*


I have argued that the exchange between *De Nieuwe Gids* and *De Beweging* did nothing to help the reader of *Prometheus Unbound* peel away the dense lexical layers and reveal the poem’s philosophical kernel. Kloos’s disingenuous remark about Shelley’s call for resignation in *Prometheus Unbound* when faced with social and political injustice was not dwelt upon, let alone contradicted by the *De Beweging* clan. We ought to remind ourselves that, whilst Kloos, Verwey and Van Eyck were quibbling about some editorial minutia in a grand, revolutionary poem celebrating the resistance to oppression and tyranny, Europe was being ravaged by World War I. This silence is all the more remarkable since the Zilverdistel edition of *Prometheus Unbound* in which Van Eyck was involved has a prominent dedication completely filling the page: ‘DIT BOEK VAN PROMETHEUS WAS TER PERSE IN HET DERDE & VIERDE OORLOGSJAAR, DEELEND HUN KOMMER EN HOOP OP BEVRIJDING[.] DE ZANG DIE VOOR EEN EEUW LIJDEN EN LIJDZAAMHEID IN ZEGEPRAAL VERKEERDE ZIJ NU EEN WIJZANG VOOR DEN NIEUWEN TIJD EN ONVERDEELBAREN VREDE’. When Kloos received Co’s ruin-ravin letter with the information from the Buxton Formans, he found it resealed with tape bearing the forbidding words ‘OPENED BY CENSOR’. This unsettling confrontation with the harsh reality of a continent at war did not open his eyes to the topical nature of Shelley’s work. *Prometheus Unbound* remained for Kloos no more than a delightful vision of ‘zonneklaren maneschijn, die over een mystisch meer speelt’. At that stage, Shelley truly was an unacknowledged legislator of the world.

4. Prometheus in the Netherlands

The finical nature of the ‘ravin’ contributions in *De Beweging* should not blind us to the fact that in 1911 this literary periodical had also given the opportunity to Isaäc P. de Vooys (1875-1955) to develop an intelligent analysis of the lyrical drama. In a very interesting series of articles, entitled ‘Opstandigheid en dichtkunst’, De Vooys had traced the importance of Shelley’s poetry for the younger generation of poets during the 1880s, or rather how ‘weinig diepgaande [de] aanraking met Shelley [is geweest], waar zo weinig van zijn opstandigheid tegen de maatschappij in de Nieuwe-Gids-beweging is


To explain Shelley’s poethood, he had concentrated on the figure of Prometheus and contrasted it to the eponymous hero in Goethe’s *Faust*. Though the precise meaning of the phrase ‘maatschappij’ is far from clear and seems to change as the argument unfolds, De Vooys arrived at a perceptive analysis of the first act of *Prometheus Unbound* and the political background against which it should be read. It was exactly the publication of Gutteling’s translation, De Vooys admitted, which had induced him to reflect on the significance of Shelley’s hero in particular, and Shelley’s poethood in general: ‘Wanneer ik wil beproeven te teekenen hoe Shelley stond achter, maar toch ook boven, de nieuwe nederlandsche dichtkunst, dan kan het geschieden met de hulp van een der jongste Shelley-vertalingen’ (p. 16). Shelley is still relevant because the ‘nieuwe dichtkunst van 1880’ cannot be understood ‘noch in haar aard, noch in haar vooruitzicht […] zonder een begrip van Shelley’s dichterschap’ (p. 13). The disintegration of the original Eighties Movement, for instance, was a foregone fact because there was no sustained atmosphere in which the ‘opstandige geest in zijn hoogsten, dat is in den scheppenden vorm’ was allowed to prosper, as had been the case in Shelley’s time (p. 240). It is this principle of intellectual ‘omschepping meer dan […] verheerlijking’ which is personified in Shelley’s Prometheus figure (p. 146): Prometheus is not ‘een ideale opstandeling’ but ‘een symbool van den opstandigen geest in beeld gebracht’ (p. 243). This is the very essence of Shelley’s artistic make-up, so much so that De Vooys feels it is justified to refer to ‘Shelley-Prometheus’ as a unity (p. 246). Did Verwey and Van Eyck, one and half years later, think that their co-editor De Vooys had dealt with the issue at sufficient length so that they did not refer to his lengthy contribution when they came to respond to Kloos’s review of *Prometheus onthooid*? Or did they deem the more ‘tangible’ issue of the ‘ruin-ravin’ phrase better suited to force Kloos onto the defensive?

One of the editors of *Onze Eeuw* had also been inspired by Gutteling’s ‘zorgvuldige en in de jambische gedeelten ook welluidende vertaling’ (p. 275). Before outlining the mental difference between the eponymous heroes in Aeschylus’ tragedy and Shelley’s epic poem, K. Kuiper sets off with an unmistakable snub to the editor of *De

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37 Is.P. de Vooys, ‘Opstandigheid en dichtkunst’ in: *De Beweging*, January 1911, pp. 1-16; March 1911, pp. 229-48; May 1911, pp. 145-57. The study concluded with a review of H. Roland Holst-van der Schalk’s lyrical drama *De opstandelingen*, and Albert Verwey’s *Cola Rienzi* in the following numbers of *De Beweging*.

38 K. Kuiper, ‘Prometheus’ zonde’ in: *Onze Eeuw*, 11, [no year], pp. 275-86.
Indeed, it was not only Verwey and his companions who dared to shatter the illusion of Kloos’s self-assigned critical infallibility.

To read ‘boozen ijver’ as ‘naijver’ would by no means detract from the veracity of Kuiper’s remark. Despite his positive assessment of the translation, there is just one thing to be pitied, the author observes, which is that Gutteling failed to incorporate the ‘uitnemende introductie’ (p. 276). It is strange that Kloos never commented on this regretful omission since, on a very superficial level and with its references to didacticism and the more select readers of poetry, it appears to tie in with some of his claims about the drama as a whole. I will discuss later how the absence of the preface drastically affects the ideological delineation of the Dutch text. Kuiper’s concern in his article is to clarify the disparity in conception of Aeschylus’ and Shelley’s drama. Basically, the Greek dramatist propagated the values of orthodox religion, whereas Shelley wanted to liberate mankind from the dungeon of ‘een dogmatisch godsgeloof door de nieuwe troostende, menschen verheffende leer van het pantheisme’ (p. 281). The exact progression of his argument is of little concern here, but it shows how much Kloos, a trained classicist himself, had left unexplored in his pieces on Prometheus Unbound. Kuiper supplied more interesting material: ‘Noch Vondel’s Lucifer noch Milton’s Satan verloochent zijn verwantschap met Prometheus’ (p. 279). This probably inspired D. Tol to contribute with an article in De Nieuwe Gids in June 1917, after the ruin-ravin row.

In his essay ‘Over Vondel, Milton en Shelley’, D. Tol devotes the section on the youngest of the three poets entirely to Prometheus Unbound, and more precisely ‘de

39 Scudder’s edition of Prometheus Unbound, a work owned by Kloos (see Appendix 2, item 13), contains a fairly long section with ‘Suggestions towards a Comparison of the Prometheus Unbound with the Prometheus Bound of Æschylus’. Vida D. Scudder, ed., Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama. Heath’s English Classics (Boston, New York and Chicago: D.C. Heath, 1892), pp. 121-44.
bezielende gedachte' therein. However, the piece is hardly a rigid analysis, but an unrestrained, lyrical effusion pretending to decode the mythos of the Prometheus story. The high-flown periods in which Tol gives an elaborate paraphrasis of the contents of Shelley’s lyrical drama are in keeping with what one can expect to find in *De Nieuwe Gids*. Yet, at the conclusion and deeply buried within the wordy prose, the author makes some observations which indicate that he was somewhat more responsive to the political level of *Prometheus Unbound*. They contradict what Kloos had claimed five years earlier in connexion with the mood of resignation resulting in a political status quo allegedly advanced by Shelley: ‘Niet in een ver verleden, een fabelachtige gouden eeuw of een sprookjesparadijs, maar in de komende tijden, moest de geluksstaat gezocht worden. Dit geloof wilde hij [i.e. Shelley] in de harten branden’ (p. 971). In other words, rather than painting a utopian ideal, Shelley emphasised the necessity of change in a foreseeable future. Recent socio-political developments seem to signal that Shelley’s vision is coming one step closer again to full realisation. To the question ‘Zal de wereldoorlog der opgejaagde volkeren de wereld [...] opnieuw vooruit stuwen?’, Tol himself gives a partial answer: ‘Dit is zeker, zij ontwikkelt zich verder, en het eeuwig orakel spreekt in de teeken der tijden’ (p. 971). In an exclamatory footnote, he adds to this conclusion: ‘Let op Rusland!’ implying that Shelley’s prophecy may not have been so utopian after all.

As a piece of analytical criticism, however, Tol’s piece is far inferior to J.J. van de Leeuw’s interpretation published in five consecutive instalments of *Minerva*, the organ of the students at Leyden University. In the introduction to the actual analysis, Van de Leeuw shows himself very much steeped in Kloos’s literary poetics. For instance, he claims that ‘een waar kunstwerk’ is ‘onmiddellijk bezield van-uit het bewustzijn van den dichter; zijn ziel spreekt er zich in uit, “van zelf” in rythmisch geluid. Het visioen is niet belichaamd in een willekeurige vorm, maar zijn eigen-aard schept zich de kunstvorm’ (p. 410). Van de Leeuw himself formulates the logical conclusion of such an attitude: ‘Een dichtwerk kan dan ook benaderd worden, zonder begrepen te zijn — alleen de kennismaking met het rythmisch geluid ervan, wekt reeds het beantwoordend leven’ (p. 410). Yet, when the student comes to discuss the actual work itself, he argues with great perception what Kloos was incapable of appreciating; namely how desolation and

despair are instruments of torture which need to be overcome, and not inevitabilities to which mankind should succumb with quiet resignation (p. 413). 'De passiviteit der wanhoop' is a debilitating monster which must be slain (p. 426). Van de Leeuw even quotes from Queen Mab to corroborate his reading (p. 449). With his lucid observations in a student journal and ending with the enthusiastic plea 'Leest den Prometheus; draagt het met U als een evangelie, laat het deel worden van Uw bewustzijn, wordt zelf deel van de wereld, waaruit het spreekt' (p. 462), Van de Leeuw put the well-established De Nieuwe Gids very much to shame. At the time of the main editorial crisis in De Nieuwe Gids in 1894, B.A.P. van Dam published his collection of Verdietscht Engelsch dicht. From Shelley's most ambitious poem, he chose the final stanza of Demogorgon's speech, deeming it a representative sample of the whole work. As a neat summary of the new doxology in Prometheus Unbound, it works very well, both stressing the need 'To forgive wrongs' as well as 'To defy Power which seems Omnipotent' (iv, ll. 571-72), or in Van Dam's rendition: 'De Machten tarten die almachtig schijnen'. The emphasis on the work's closing speech anticipates J.J. van de Leeuw's later remark that this 'eindzang van Demogorgon, het machtigste [is] wat ooit een dichter schreef' (p. 462).

I have discussed Kloos's inability to discern the real political thrust in Prometheus Unbound which was due to his selective reading. If the allegorical make-up of the poem may have meant little to the less select readers of poetry, the impassioned 'Mask of Anarchy', written earlier in the year during which the lyrical drama was composed (1819), was much more straightforward, intended as it was to instruct and appeal to the general public. It is relevant for several reasons to mention the 'Mask' in the context of Prometheus Unbound. One of them is that the latter stemmed from the same desire for reform which inspired the demonstrably seditious 'Mask'. Kloos, of course, completely disregarded this poem. It was up to more scrupulous men to point out the kinship between both works:

Om Shelley's Prometheus volkomen te begrijpen, moet men de bewoordingen van dit gelijktijdig gedicht [i.e. 'The Mask of Anarchy'] even zich herinneren. Hij vermaant dáár de mannen van Engeland om op te rijzen, zich te verheffen tegen elke tirannie en

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Such was the opinion of H.P.G. Quack (1834-1917), the famous socialist scholar, writing in 1899, long before Kloos, in his *Prometheus ontboeid* review, sneered at his countrymen for failing to read *and* understand Shelley: ‘Shelley ‘die over de heele aarde, behalve ons soms nog wat achterlijk landje, door allen vereerd wordt’ (p. 129).

Indeed, Kloos did not take any notice of the context in which the four-act version of *Prometheus Unbound* finally appeared. Alongside the drama were published such poems as the ‘Ode to Liberty’, the ‘Ode to the West Wind’ with its clarions of the revolution sounding confidently, and ‘An Ode, Written [...] before the Spaniards had Recovered their Liberty’ in which the opening line ‘Arise, arise, arise’ clearly echoes the famous exhortation ‘Rise like lions after slumber’ in ‘The Mask of Anarchy’. In these poems, it is impossible to read any of the resignation with which Kloos credits *Prometheus Unbound*. As he could probably not come to terms with the subversive nature of the smaller poems, he chose to ignore them altogether in his critical discussions. Initially, however, Kloos seems to have tried to open his mind to this side of Shelley’s poetry. In November 1884, he confided in Verwey and told him about his difficulties to come to grips with some of the poet’s works: ‘Daar is zooveel in S. wat mij koud laat, en dat toch stellig aan mij ligt.’ He goes on to specify: ‘De “Ode on [sic] Liberty” b.v. ken je die? Wat denk je daarvan?’

At that stage, Kloos still acknowledged his own inexperience and immaturity of mind as potential impediments to reach an unclouded judgement. Even then, the insurgent character of the Ode clashed with his notion of the quintessentially lyrical Shelley. Later, Kloos was unwilling to see through the lyricism of *Prometheus Unbound* and grasp the political subtext which underpins Shelley’s poem. Such was Kloos’s discomfort with regard to his idol’s radicalism that in 1904 he had found it necessary to put his readers’

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44 In the first part of his *De Socialisten*, Quack also expressed his admiration for the revolutionary couple William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, devoting an entire chapter to them. In it, P.B. Shelley is referred to as ‘den hoogsten Engelschen dichter onzer eeuw’. H.P.G. Quack, *De socialisten: Personen en stelsels, het socialisme vóór de negentiende eeuw*, 2 vols, 5th edn (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & Zoon, 1921), vol. 1, p. 452.
45 Letter from Kloos to Verwey, dated 18 November 1884, held in the Albert Verwey collections at the University of Amsterdam (UvA, ‘map Kloos 1884’).
minds at rest by taking the sting out of Shelley's poems: 'Shelley, wiens ideaal-anarchistische illusies [...] ons bij kalm abstract beschouwen, kinderpraat lijken'.\textsuperscript{46} Such a drastic reinvention reduces the poet to a quixotic sprite virtually impossible to take seriously. Shelley is represented as offering dreamy visions wafting away on 'serafijnengeluid' which are part of 'een andere wereld' and which have no connexion with every-day reality (p. 502). By creating the image of Shelley in an otherworldly realm, which existed only in Kloos's mind, he could safely become that world's ruler and, as a second Jupiter, was thus in the perfect position to ensure that what took place there would not exceed his capacity of endurance. Later still, in 1921, he concluded his prose epilogue to his Shelley sonnet cycle with the observation that the English poet, though a 'redelijk en oirbaar' revolutionary, was aware that his were ideals 'die zich bemorsend met bloed, in haar tegenovergestelde omslaan' (p. 718). As a consequence, and in Kloos's view, Shelley wisely turned to 'zijn binnenste' as the source of his compositions, no longer wanting to get embroiled in the rough-and-tumble of society. In \textit{Prometheus Unbound}, Kloos saw Shelley raise for good above all mundane concerns and take an exalted flight to the upper regions of hyperindividualist poetry. After all, 'een waarachtig dichter,' as Kloos explained in a review attacking Verwey's 'gedachte-poëzie' is 'voelbaar troonend ook boven het grove gewirwar der geweldigste konflikten'.\textsuperscript{47}

If there was one poet who would have refused to keep Kloos company in his sky-high ivory tower, it was Shelley. When writing to his close friend Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866) in late January 1819, it was with pleasure that he intimated: 'My 1st Act of Prometheus is complete, & I think you wd. like it'. Then without any transition, there comes that extraordinary and very significant statement: 'I consider Poetry very subordinate to moral & political science, & if I were well, certainly I should aspire to the latter' (\textit{Letters}, II, pp. 70-71). This mental leap from \textit{Prometheus Unbound} to 'moral & political' matters should come as no surprise. It also gives a strong indication of the spirit in which the lyrical drama was conceived. Shelley was in his twenty-seventh year when he sent this letter, and had, in Kloos’s perception of things, long since left behind his puerile radicalism. It is beyond doubt that Kloos was familiar with the crucial remark I quoted


above.\footnote{Kloos quoted the remark in his ‘Verspreide Aanteekeningen’, followed by a reference to Multatuli. See Appendix 1, No. 3.} It seems that he just kept all the information which did not conform to his beau idéal of what a real poet ought to be concealed from his readers.

As an icon of the dedicated freedom-fighter discarding conventions and opposing the establishment, the character of Prometheus continued to have a great appeal, both for the translator and the poet, long after the heydays of the European Romantic movement were over.\footnote{For instance, Marcellus Emants’s (1848-1923) Godenschemering of 1883, though basically a development of Germanic lore, is infused with elements of the Prometheus myth whereby Balder has taken on a particularly Promethean guise. See: Garmit Stuiveling, De Nieuwe Gids als geestelijk brandpunt, 3rd edn, Synopsis (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1981), pp. 27-28.} In 1908, H.C. Muller (1856-1927), one of the initial members of ‘Flanor’, published his Verspreide gedichten, containing the translation of a chorus from Shelley’s drama (IV, ll. 93-128), as well as an original poetic treatment of the subject.\footnote{H.C. Muller, Verspreide gedichten (Utrecht: P. den Boer, 1908). In his ‘Prometheus’, Muller refers to Jacques Perk in terms which betray the influence of Shelley’s Adonais: ‘[‘k Zie] Perk, de plant vol bloesems neergeslagen’ (p. 146). Shelley compared Keats in his elegy to ‘The bloom, whose petals nipt before they blew / Died in the promise of the fruit’ (ll. 52-53). Also compare with Kloos’s sonnet ‘Ik ween om bloemen in den knop gebroken / En vóór den uchtend van haar bloei vergaan’ (WKV, p. 62).} He clearly had Shelley’s title Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama in mind when devising his own ‘Prometheus, een lyrisch epos’, subtitled ‘Het heldendicht van den vrije denker’. In the concluding verse paragraph, Muller apostrophises Shelley whom he hears singing ‘de zang der vrijheid’ (p. 213). Even more straightforward was Henk Eikeboom in his Prometheus: Spreekkoor, composed in the Summer of 1925.\footnote{Henk Eikeboom, Prometheus: Spreekkoor (Amsterdam: De Toorts, 1926).} Its motto runs: ‘Den Prometheeën van dezen tijd, — / den opstandgen tegen ‘t gezag, — / den dienstweigeraars’. A. Karelsen wrote the music for the songs, but the whole piece, as instructed by the author, had to be concluded with The Internationale. The first performance was on Christmas Eve 1925 for the ‘Internationale Anti-Militaristische Vereniging’ and was eventually published in the magazine De Wapens Neder. Though there is no direct reference to Shelley, the piece oozes the ideological conviction of Prometheus Unbound.

H. Wismans also acknowledged the political radicalism of Shelley’s lyrical drama. It was, however, a feature which he thoroughly disliked. His evaluation evinces that what seemed so blatant to one Dutch critic remained obscure and impalpable for another
(Kloos). If the first part of his critique has strong Kloosian overtones, Wismans also perceived another fundamental quality in Shelley’s work:

En terwijl hij [i.e. Shelley] in de koren van “Prometheus Unbound” al de zoetheid en zangerigheid en als de verbeeldingspracht zijner volle dichterziel voor ons uitstort, laat hij zich door zijn haat tegen godsdienst en staatsbestuur verleiden, van zijn held een protesteerende demagoog te maken, en worden wij van de sereene hoogten der klassieke godenwereld in den vollen partijstrijd van het moderne leven neergesmakt.\(^{52}\)

Apart from the fact that one may seriously question Wismans’s belief that the Prometheus myth is a tale of lofty serenity, the critic’s reading which sees Shelley’s work as firmly rooted in modern life — for Wismans an artistic failure — comes much closer to the poet’s original intentions.\(^{53}\)

In a comprehensive study, Carry van Bruggen (1881-1932) used the figure of Prometheus as an emblem of the liberated individual fighting for moral emancipation.\(^{54}\) In the section titled ‘Prometheus verheerlijkt’, she puts the celebration of Prometheus in the context of the French Revolution. The picture of Britain groaning under the repressive, reactionary government in the period 1789-1832 is painted in stark colours. Without trying to minimise the atrocities of Robespierre’s Reign of Terror, Van Bruggen puts things into perspective, pointing out that during that period, the ‘bloedorst [...] al-met-al geen veertigste van het aantal slachtoffers eischte, ‘t welk bij den slag van Moskou het leven verloor’ (p. 516). She implies that artists like Byron and Shelley were right in refusing to become paralysed by fear and to let their revolutionary ideals be curtailed. Though Van Bruggen’s claim that, when Byron (in Manfred and Cain) and Shelley (in Prometheus Unbound) were investing their works with Promethean personae, ‘de Revolutie [en] haar Idee [...] zich van de bloedvlek [hadden] schoon gewasschen’

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\(^{54}\) Carry van Bruggen, Prometheus: Een bijdrage tot het begrip der ontwikkeling van het individualisme in de literatuur, 2 vols (Rotterdam: Nijgh en Van Ditmar, 1919). The section entitled ‘Prometheus Verheerlijkt’ and containing many references to Byron and Shelley is found in volume two, pp. 514-57.
(p. 533) is certainly off balance, it is closer to the truth than Kloos’s contention that the radical intelligentsia were reduced to apathy and meekly admitted defeat. It had dawned upon them, as it had on Shelley, that ‘de strijd een noodzakelijk kwaad tot het schoone oogmerk der Verzoening is’ (p. 547). To ascribe this kind of radical activism to Shelley may be too extreme a move for some, but it clear that for Van Bruggen and as far as Shelley’s lyrical drama is concerned, the character of Prometheus is ‘het beeld van den nobelen opstandeling, van den echten, modernen Heiland, die niet door dulden, maar door verzet de menschheid verlost’ (p. 533). As a matter of fact, Van Bruggen includes a very perceptive analysis of what constitutes the ideal breeding ground for tyranny:

De tyannie, het tyannieke individu is het oogenblik gunstig, waarin de onduldbaarheid der anarchie in het “practische leven” is gebleken, en zich rondom elke overwegende persoonlijkheid de radelooze onzekerheid der duizenden zwakkeren onmiddellijk kristalliseert in een hartstochtelijk verlangen om voor alles tot rust te komen, dat is: behouden te blijven (p. 520).

Van Bruggen proceeds with her argument outlining that by dint of ‘een schijnheilig vertoon van verontwaardiging’, tyrants display ‘zedelijken afschuw’ only to reinforce and justify their kind of ‘rust en “Orde”’ in which they can continue to enrich themselves (p. 537). It is typical of Van Bruggen’s approach that she openly identifies Prometheus with Shelley himself (as De Vooy had done before her). His *Necessity of Atheism*, a ‘geargumenteerde weerlegging’ which ‘karakteriseert hem als een Prometheus’ was sent to ‘een raad van in macht gezeten Jupiters’ (p. 547); i.e. the College of Bishops and Archbishops. It has always been Shelley’s desire to convince and reason with his opponents, which is exactly what constitutes his greatness: ‘Shelley zocht vrede door overreding’. This didactic streak, as I have demonstrated, was ascribed by Kloos to the boisterousness of youth. Van Bruggen suggests, however, that this was the guiding principle throughout Shelley’s writing career, right up to the mature *Prometheus Unbound*.

If Van Bruggen likened Shelley to Prometheus, Kloos, satisfying his urge for self-dramatisation, did not shrink from picturing himself in the role of Prometheus as a means to set himself apart from the rest of humanity. In number 183 of his ‘Binnengedachten’, he once more displays his domineering egocentricity:
Diep voelde ik vaak, nog jong, reeds als Prométheus hoog me op Rots
Van breed-klaar inzien aller Smarten, die verre Aard mij toonde [...] 
[...] wijl ik, vroeg reeds Ziener, vaak in kern mijns harten hoonde
Lawaaiende Aarde als leeg rumoeren
(II. 1-2, 6-7, italics mine)\textsuperscript{55}

Whereas Gutteling, and to a certain extent Shelley, recognised in Prometheus the Messiah
whose suffering would liberate those for whom he had an overpowering sympathy, Kloos
reverses the entire dynamics of the story, cursing and ‘taunting’ the inhabitants of ‘far-
away’ Earth.\textsuperscript{56} Though devised to sound as a compliment, it is possible to read in De
Raa\textsuperscript{f}’s characterisation of such a poem how much Kloos’s sense of aesthetic
exclusiveness as well as intellectual and moral superiority must have alienated him from
Shelley’s philanthropy: ‘Zóó ongenaakbaar-\textsuperscript{ver} als de hemelhooge Alpentoppen
verwijderd zijn van de dorpen in het dal, waar de mensen wonen met hun dagelijksche
zorgies [...], zoo oneindig ver staan vele dezer ‘Binnengedachten’ in hun [...] wilde
grootsheid.’\textsuperscript{57} It was precisely this Alastoresque aloofness which Kloos, in his Gutteling
review, had wrongfully defined as one of the primary accomplishments of \textit{Prometheus Unbound}.

\textbf{5. \textit{Prometheus ontboeid}: An analysis}

Having sketched a brief overview of the different reactions to Shelley’s lyrical drama and
its eponymous hero, it is now time to turn to Gutteling’s \textit{Prometheus ontboeid} again and
ascertain, amongst other things, how well he handled the concrete message underneath
the allegorical sheen and melodic versification. Though Gutteling’s contemporaries
scarcely scratched the surface of it, his translation, on closer inspection, yields some very
interesting material. It becomes apparent that the translator was most attracted to its
formal qualities. The song and choruses with their intricate metres and rhyme schemes

also perceives a link between the Prometheus myth and Kloos’s works in ‘De Dichter als
Oceanus’ in: \textit{De dichter, zijn geliefde en zijn muze} (Leiden: Dimensie, 1985), pp. 127-38
(eespecially pp. 133-38).
\textsuperscript{56} In the preface to his translation, Gutteling had remarked: ‘Prometheus is de grieksche Heiland’,
p. v.
\textsuperscript{57} K.H. de Raaf, \textit{Willem Kloos: De mensch, de dichter, de kriticus} (Velsen: Schuyt, 1934),
p. 274.
gave Gutteling the chance to show off his technical virtuosity. Especially in the fourth act where there is hardly any blank verse left — the principal metre of the three preceding acts — Gutteling proved himself particularly resourceful. It is here that his freer approach to the original which he explained in his preface is as conspicuous as it is inevitable. I perfectly agree with Wolvekamp-Baxter that, generally speaking, ‘the narrative portions are accurate translations and the lyrical passages show only a certain amount of freedom unavoidable when imitating so closely the form and acoustic effect of the original’ (p. 238).

The phraseology is conventional and, at times, even archaic, thus reflecting the ornateness of the English text. As a matter of fact, Gutteling’s diction resembles very much De Raaf’s in his Alastor of 1905, rather than Verwey’s in his version of the same poem. Kloos approved of De Raaf’s effort, so it is difficult to see how he could condemn Gutteling’s translation so mercilessly unless there were some hidden agenda behind the attack. Similarly, Gutteling’s motives in dismissing the language of De Raaf’s Alastor (en De Cenci) as ‘dikwijls allerminst natuurlijk’, given the stylistic resemblances with his own phraseology, are likely to have been partisan in nature. Consider, for instance the following excerpt from the opening soliloquy in Prometheus ontboeid.

\[
\text{de Aardbeving-demons moeten}
\]
\[
\text{De spijkers uit mijn sidderende wonden}
\]
\[
\text{Loswringen, wen de rots splijt en weer sluit;}
\]
\[
\text{Wijl uit hun luide afgronden huilend zwermen}
\]
\[
\text{Stormgeesten, ‘t razen van den wervelwind}
\]
\[
\text{Opzweepend, treffend mij met scherpen hagel.}
\]

(p. 2)

The adverbs ‘wen’ and ‘wijl’ are conventional poeticisms, and the word order in ‘wijl [...] huilend zwermen Stormgeesten’ and in ‘treffend mij’ can scarcely be called natural. As is the case in De Raaf’s Alastor, there is a great amount of artificiality in Prometheus ontboeid. Yet, this is completely in keeping with Shelley’s own wrought diction and should not be frowned upon. Representative instances of other, recurrent archaisms can

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be found in the line: ‘de wraak / Des Hoogsten raze dan door holle schaduwen’ (p. 28), i.e. the genitive case and the frequent use of the subjunctive mode.\(^5^9\)

In his introduction to *Prometheus ontboeid*, Gutteling comments on the looseness of ‘vorm in engeren zin’ (p. vii). He characterises the volatility of Shelley’s verse in terms which sound familiar enough: ‘Shelley’s poëzie is een fontein die zijn bekken overstroomt, een vulkaan van onberekenbare uitbarstingen’. Wordsworth’s well-known ‘spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’ in the preface to his in the preface to his *Lyrical Ballads*, and Byron’s equally famous ‘lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earth-quake’ provided Gutteling with the model for his imagery.\(^6^0\) Another influence on Gutteling’s phraseology in the preface, and one which comes hardly as a surprise, is Albert Verwey. Gutteling’s emphasis on ‘de ritmische vaart [...] van Shelley’s verzen’ echoes Verney’s ‘onweerhoudbaarheid [...] van zijn [i.e. *Alastor’s*] beweging’ and ‘de vaart en de vlucht waarmee [Shelleys] verheven geest zich bewoog’ (p. 87) in the postscript of his own *Alastor* translation. Indeed, even Gutteling’s observation that Shelley’s verse in *Prometheus Unbound* is not always of a ‘onverbiddelijke noodwendigheid’, resulting in an occasional ‘retorische uitdrukking’ (p. vii) can be read against Verwey’s template: ‘herhaling of benadering in de woordenkeus’ (p. 87) is a common feature is *Alastor*.

It is clear that Kloos stood isolated with his negative opinion of Gutteling’s rendition. When the first two acts were published in *De Beweging* (December 1908), P.N. van Eyck wrote a very enthusiastic letter and asked for an offprint. In his correspondence with Verwey, he even admitted: ‘de vert. v. Shelley deed mij een oogenblik beduusd staan’. After Gutteling’s death, Isaäc P. de Vooys, co-editor of *De Beweging*, spoke very highly of Gutteling’s translation skills in his ‘In Memoriam’, in terms well beyond the

\(^{59}\) Other notable archaisms include ‘oer-baaiert’ (p. 30), ‘tijgen’ (p. 41), and ‘donderklooten’ (p. 90), the two last examples probably because of Gutteling’s wish to preserve the rhyme: ‘Als tooverkolken spelen daar / Zoet-stemmige echo’s en zij tijgen / Door Demogorgons machtge wet, / Smeltend verrukt of zoet ontzet, / Langs ’t heimlijk pad een geestenschaar; / Als stroomen die van bergdooi stijgen’ and ‘Vloek die den schepter tildet, / Die heel ons groen en blauw heelal well / Met donkren ondergang omwikkelen rondom, / Zendend een vaste wolk, om heete donderklooten / Te reegnen, en ’t gebeente van mijn kindren stuk te stooten’.


conventional requirements of an obituary. The reader will also recall Kuiper’s outspoken approbation which I quoted earlier in this chapter. It must have been a very daunting task, not made easier by Gutteling’s constant ill health, to tackle this most complex of poems in the Shelley canon. The whole work took about two months to translate; by 27 May 1908, Gutteling could inform Verwey that it was finished.

Without any doubt, Verwey played an indispensable role in perfecting the text before its publication in the ‘Wereldbibliotheek’ series. Indeed, many a letter was exchanged between Noordwijk-aan-Zee and Driebergen, dealing with specific translation problems. On one occasion, when he sent Verwey yet another list of queries and asked for his help, Gutteling added with apparent admiration: ‘u bent zoo vindingrijk’ (Wolvekamp-Baxter, p. 257). Throughout the course of 1909, Gutteling kept busy polishing his translation. When he asked his mentor the permission to dedicate *Prometheus ontboeid* to him, Verwey answer implies that he had taken a considerable part in its realisation:

Niets, trouwens zijn alle correcties tegenover de groote en voortdurend toegenomen deugd van je eigen vertaling, dichterlijke zuiverheid en taalkundige trouwheid.
Dáárom, en niet om de overigens aangename samengewerking, zal ik je arbeid graag aan me zien opdragen (Wolvekamp-Baxter, p. 264).

This explains why Verwey did not tardy in speaking up for Gutteling’s labours when Kloos had produced his acrid review. As none other, he had witnessed Gutteling’s zeal and marvelled at the care with which he had undertaken the tremendous task. He also knew about his pupil’s genuine admiration for Shelley which, as the dedication of *Prometheus ontboeid* suggests, probably found its origin in his reading of Verwey’s set of ‘1816’ translations in 1904. In January 1906, Gutteling had been engrossed in Dowden’s two-volume *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* which inspired him to compose a lengthy poem, ‘Shelley’, in August of the same year. Unlike Kloos, Verwey knew of its existence, and had it eventually published in the May issue of his journal in 1914 (see Chapter Two).

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62 Isaäc P. de Vooys, ‘In memoriam Alex. Gutteling’ in: De Amsterdammer, 20 November 1910; reproduced in Wolvekamp-Baxter, p. 215. Much of the factual data about *Prometheus ontboeid* on the following pages has been culled from this work.

63 For instance, on 3 October 1908, Verwey wrote to Gutteling: ‘Dat je groote reien als die van “De Schim” [Jupiter’s Phantasm] zoo juist, en zoo goed in den vorm vertaald hebt, is bewonderenswaardig’. Quoted from Wolvekamp-Baxter, p. 243.
Gutteling’s dedication of *Prometheus Unbound* to Verwey was originally more comprehensive than the printed version. It is worthwhile examining the manuscript version. After having intimated that ‘Shelley’s Gedichten van ‘t jaar 1816’ were his inspiring example, Gutteling explains that there was also another reason which warranted his choice to honour Verwey, namely ‘omdat hij in Idealisme, Schoonheidsliefde en eigen Kunst Shelley’s waardige volgeling heeten mag’ (Wolvekamp-Baxter, p. 231). One can only speculate how Kloos would have responded to this, if he would have responded at all, that is, for he never acknowledged the existence of Verwey’s early ‘1816’ translations with even the slightest reference. Verwey himself, however, had some misgivings about the original dedication: ‘het publiek zou volgeling als navolger lezen en zeggen: Net mijn opinie’ (Wolvekamp-Baxter, p. 231, emphasis mine). Indeed, in the past Verwey had had to swallow such an unpleasant rebuff with regard to his own affinity with Shelley. After the publication of his debut *Persephone en andere gedichten* in 1885, a reader, with the sobriquet Pepifax, wrote a sarcastic letter to *De Nederlandsche Spectator*:


Verwey’s seemingly over-cautious reaction to Gutteling’s praise becomes understandable at once. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Kloos was also very sensitive to any representation of himself as a mere follower (‘volgeling’) of Shelley. Gutteling took Verwey’s criticism to heart and dropped the final line of the original dedication.

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Despite Kloos's claims to the contrary, Gutteling's translation is fairly accurate, save some minor slips. Of tremendous significance, however, I believe to be the following imperfections. Though not wrong in themselves, Gutteling's choice of words demonstrates that he too was not always fully conscious of the political subtext underneath the mythological surface.

Great Sages bound in madness
And headless patriots and pale youths who perished unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the Night I wandered o'er —

(1, ll. 768-70)

Though Wolvekamp-Baxter is very tentative in her suggestion, I am convinced that Shelley wanted 'headless' also to be read literally; i.e. patriots guillotined for their radical beliefs and actions. Gutteling's 'Helden verdwaasd' thus is a too restrictive interpretation of Shelley's adjective. Verwey, who had assisted with the correction of the proof and had been immensely helpful in improving the final text, apparently, read over it as well. In another instance, Gutteling originally translated Shelley's 'Leave the bed, low, cold and red / Strewed beneath a nation dead' (1, ll. 504-5) as 'Laat het bed, laag, bloed-besmet / En koud, onder een volk verplet'. By using the Germanic, less defined word 'volk', Gutteling loses the allusion to the nation foremost in Shelley's mind, i.e. France. The 'Wereldbibliotheek' version is more literal and accurate, allowing for a sense of 'statesmanship' to be read in 'natie': 'Laat het bed, laag, koud en rood, / Waar een natie neerligt, dood'. However, the 'disenchanted nation' (1, l. 567) remained 'een volk zijn ban verbreken[d]', even adding another imprecise rendition: Shelley's 'disenchanted' has clear overtones of the general disappointment (the equivalent of Kloos's 'desolation') which France and its sympathisers were experiencing after the euphoria of the Revolution. Gutteling's 'ban' does hardly do justice to the meaning Shelley wanted to convey in this line.

In the Dutch version, a similar obfuscation of the political realities behind *Prometheus Unbound* can be found in the fourth act where Shelley's phrase the 'Republic of [...] Planets' (iv, l. 398) mirroring the poet's democratic ideal of 'Truth, liberty and love' (1, l. 651) on a cosmic level, is rendered as 'De [...] staat van de planeten'. A few

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65 In her dissertation, Wolvekamp-Baxter identified a few errors, for instance in III, iv, l. 79 where
pages later, when a voice from heaven sings in exaltation ‘Our great Republic hears... we are blest, and bless’ (iv, l. 533), the translation gives: ‘Ons rijk hoort toe; zeegnend in zaligheid’. The English lines recall an important phrase in the preface which Gutteling excluded as a whole from his translation. Shelley had written: ‘the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a Republican, and a bold enquirer into morals and religion’. Shelley seems to have pictured himself in this intellectual tradition for *Prometheus Unbound* is a similarly bold gesture by another humanitarian rebel. What Milton’s Republican spirit meant for Shelley can be inferred from the following surviving fragment written in 1820. Note again the use of Shelley’s favourite incentive verb (i.e. to rise) in the first line:

I dreamed that Milton’s spirit rose, and took
From life’s green tree his Uranian lute;
And from his touch sweet thunder flowed, and shook
All human things built in contempt of man, —
And sanguine thrones and impious altars quaked,
Prisons and citadels...

(*PW*, p. 634)

It is also worth pointing out that originally Shelley had described the luscious garden in his ‘Sensitive Plant’ as ‘a Republic of odours and hues’.66 By passing over such a significant word as ‘republic’, the complex fabric of interconnecting, significatory strands is entirely lost in Gutteling’s dutchified version. What is more, the omission of the preface, enhanced by the careless rendering of phrases charged with consequential meaning, robs the poem of its objectifying framework.

A final example will illustrate how easy it is to miss the political reality behind the original text. In the age of Romanticism, America exerted an enormous appeal to European rebels and critics of the monarchy. The works of the Norfolk-born Thomas Paine, including the pamphlet *Common Sense* of January 1776 which had emboldened the United States to declare themselves independent from English supremacy on 4 July of the same year, were very popular among the radical circles to which Shelley belonged.

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Several references to Paine’s writings can be found in Shelley’s letters. The English poet articulated his admiration for the United States, and especially for the American constitution, in his *Philosophical View of Reform*, written in the same year he conceived *Prometheus Unbound*.\(^67\) Approached from this angle the chorus of spirits singing the following lines in the fourth act of the lyrical drama acquires added meaning:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{And our singing shall build,} & \quad \text{En ons zingen zal bouwen} \\
\text{In the Void’s loose field,} & \quad \text{In de ijle landouwen} \\
\text{A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;} & \quad \text{Van ‘t Leêg, voor de Wijsheid een heilig} \\
\text{We will take our plan} & \quad \text{Naar ‘t menschenrijk richten} \\
\text{From the new world of man} & \quad \text{We ons, ‘t nieuw-gestichte,} \\
\text{And our work shall be called Promethean.} & \quad \text{En ons werk zal genaamd naar Prometheus} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\((Prometheus Unbound, \text{iv, ll. 153-58})\)

\((Prometheus ontboeid, p. 84)\)

It is not inconceivable that Shelley is alluding here to the liberated, democratic society in ‘the [N]ew [W]orld of man’; an allusion which becomes totally obscured in Gutteling’s ‘‘t nieuw-gestichte’ ‘menschenrijk’. It would, of course, be unfair to demand an acute sensitivity to the strong ideological undercurrent in Shelley’s poetry at that time when it has only been in the past two decades that New Historicists have opened our eyes to his far-reaching ‘iconoclasm’.\(^68\) Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine how such an important shibboleth as ‘Republic’ could be glossed over.\(^69\) I would argue that, rather than being bent on consciously altering the tenor of Shelley’s argument, Gutteling, and with him Verwey, must have thought key-phrases like ‘Republic’ insignificant details which could

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\(^{67}\) See William Keach, ‘Shelley and the Constitution of Political Authority’ in: *Shelley: Poet and Legislator of the World*, ed. by Betty T. Bennet and Stuart Curran (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 39-48. Shelley had already referred to America as a model for Europe in his *Laon and Cythna*: ‘There is a People mighty in its youth, / A land beyond the Oceans of the West, / Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth / Are worshipped [...] Nay, start not at the name — America!’ (Canto XI, ll. 4414-16, 4439 [*PW*, p. 146]).

\(^{68}\) Just twelve years ago, Jerold E. Hogle still felt that modern scholars have never fully understood ‘just how iconoclastic he [i.e. Shelley] was and remains, both in his critiques of established belief systems and in his revelations about subliminal transferential tendencies in thought that really underlie these systems’. Shelley’s writing ‘explodes with revolutionary movements and implications hitherto unrecognized’. Jerold E. Hogle, *Shelley’s Process: Radical Transference and the Development of his Major Works* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. vii.

\(^{69}\) J.J. van de Leeuw, in his analysis of *Prometheus Unbound* in *Minerva*, is more scrupulous, as his reference to ‘de Groote Republiek der goden en demonen’ illustrates (p. 462). Interestingly enough, in one of Kloos’s Shelley editions (Appendix 2, item 2) the phrase ‘republic [...] / Of planets’ is underlined in pencil (p. 250).
be safely sacrificed in translation. The net result, of course, is hardly distinctive from depoliticisation. Nonetheless, this carelessness pales into insignificance when compared to Kloos's radical reinvention of the English Romantic.

As we have seen, it is true that Kloos thought himself the victor in the *Prometheus Unbound* debate, or rather in the absurd altercation to which it had been reduced. The fact remains, however, that Kloos's inactivity as a Shelley translator had once more been exposed. It was all very well to condemn someone else's translation efforts, but as long as Kloos had not produced any Shelley translation himself, his criticism was likely to be perceived as rather academic. From this perspective, Kloos, so far, had had to content himself with a position on the sidelines. Yet, all this was to change in November 1921 when he proudly presented his ultimate translation of Shelley. As far as his status of supreme Shelley devotee was concerned, it was to prove Kloos's greatest hour.
Chapter Five: Kloos's Shelley sonnet cycle

In the context of his admiration for Shelley, perhaps the most audacious and most blatant act of appropriation ever performed by Willem Kloos was the publication of a sonnet cycle accompanied by an explanatory appendix in the November issue of *De Nieuwe Gids* in 1921.\(^1\) With 'Het boek van kind en god' (1888), usually taken to be Kloos's sublimated reaction to Verwey's estrangement from him, and the 'Infernale impressies' (1896), written at an Utrecht asylum where he was treated for his severe depressions and alcoholism, I rank this set of twelve poems among Kloos's most important sonnet cycles. Whereas the first two have received considerable attention from literary critics, not in the least because of their biographical interest, the Shelley sonnets have been largely ignored. This is very likely because these poems were composed at a later stage in Kloos's writing career, commonly believed to have yielded works of limited value only. Yet, since the two earlier cycles were related to key events in Kloos's life, it may be assumed that the cycle of Shelley sonnets meant more to Kloos than a set of extempore verse. Apart from the subject matter itself, the care he took in the phrasing of his dedication and general matters of lay-out, as well as in the long commentary following the poems suggest likewise that Kloos himself saw it as an important publication.\(^2\)

If 'Het boek van kind en god' and the 'Infernale impressies' were extremely private poems which puzzled even his most intimate friends, the Shelley sonnets, I will argue, were very much written with a large readership in mind. Like all Kloos's pronouncements on Shelley, the cycle is a clear manifestation of his annexation strategies. What makes it so special, however, is that this series of poems is at the same time an ultimate act of self-defence. Indeed, with a distinctive flair for theatricality, Kloos

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\(^1\) Willem Kloos, 'Percy Bysshe Shelley' in: *De Nieuwe Gids*, November 1921, pp. 698-719. Hubert Michaël includes the ninth sonnet ('Antwoord van Mij') in modernised spelling in *WKJL*, p. 269. However, this late sonnet (1921) is completely out of place in his book, as it is printed in the section 'Poëzie uitgegeven vóór of in 1894'. The entire cycle was reissued in *Van vijf moderne dichters: Verzen van Dr. P.C. Boutens, Wies Moens, Willem Kloos, Margot Vos, Carel Scharten*, Nederlandsche Bibliotheek (Amsterdam: Maatschappij voor Goede en Goedkope Lectuur, 1922), pp. 47-58. For easy reference, I have reproduced Kloos's cycle in Appendix 4.

\(^2\) See Kloos's unpublished letters of that period to his brother-in-law Jacob 'Co' Reyneke van Stuwe, the dedicatee of the cycle; K533, uncatalogued material held in the Literary Museum (The Hague). For more details about the dedication, see: Harry G.M. Prick, 'Willem Kloos als eigenaar van een brief van Shelley' in: *Juffrouw Ida*, 11, No. 1, April 1985, pp. 11-21 (pp. 15-16).
contrived to turn the sequence into a grand public gesture to reclaim his significance as a man of letters. Whereas Kloos is usually seen as a vindicator of Shelley’s character and art, a close reading of the sonnets will suggest how he succeeded in reversing the roles: in the sonnet cycle, the authoritative voice of the English poet Shelley can be heard championing the importance of Kloos’s poethood.

1. Kloos’s Shelley letter and sonnet cycle

Before analysing the sonnets themselves, it may be useful first to examine the events which probably inspired Kloos to write his cycle. What had happened for Kloos to publish important new Shelley material ahead of the centenary of Shelley’s death? Why did he display such impatience, unable to wait a few more months for the start of the commemorative celebrations in 1922? A possible answer may be found in the following letter which Kloos wrote to his brother-in-law Jacob (‘Co’) Reyneke-van Stuwe in London on 23 March 1921.

Beste Co, Wat hier volgen gaat, zul je niet dadelijk willen gelooven. Je zult zeggen: “Willem droomt of schertst”. Maar ik kan je verzekeren, dat ik de nûchtere waarheid meedeel, als ik je zeg, dat ik gisteravond op de verkooping bij Kerling hier de gelukkige eigenaar ben geworden van een onuitgegeven want tot dusver óók in Engeland, onbekenden brief van Shelley.²

Outbidding a considerable number of prospective buyers from Britain and the United States, Kloos acquired ‘het heilige document’ for the hefty sum of five hundred and fifty guilders. The manuscript letter had been discovered recently in J. Kneppelhout’s estate which was auctioned at The Hague after his widow’s death earlier in 1921. Naturally, Kloos was enraptured to have a truly unique and tangible Shelley relic in his possession, and one coveted by many as the auction had made manifest. He continued his letter to ‘Co’ with unmitigated enthusiasm: ‘Ik ben wezenlijk over-gelukkig met dit unieke document, van waaruit nog iets van de psychische essentie van Shelley-zelf je toe te vliegen schijnt’.³ It was Kloos’s fervent desire to inform the public in England about Shelley’s newly discovered letter thereby giving him the opportunity to assert his

³ Quoted from Prick’s ‘Willem Kloos als eigenaar van een brief van Shelley’, p. 12.
⁴ Prick, ‘Willem Kloos als eigenaar van een brief van Shelley’, p. 15.
ownership. To this end, a transcript, accompanied by a note drawn up by ‘Co’ with much proprietal signposting on behalf of ‘Mr. Willem Kloos, the Dutch poet’, was sent to The Times Literary Supplement. It was published in the issue of 2 February 1922.\(^5\)

Kloos had the precious document framed between two sheets of glass and hung it in a prominent place in his study which had gradually been turned into a shrine to Shelley.\(^6\) As his eyes roamed over his new, proudly displayed treasure, he must have felt the need to express his euphoria in a more lasting and more public form than in his private correspondence with Co. The sonnet cycle which Kloos wrote soon after his acquisition of the letter may therefore be interpreted as the actual materialisation of the excitement and glee which the auction had previously occasioned. In a way, the sonnets are Kloos’s attempt to capture the volatile ‘psychische essentie van Shelley-zelf’ which he had brought in to the house, together with the manuscript letter. This letter was nothing less than a holy relic, as he explained to another correspondent:

\[
\text{Die brief van Shelley vooral, je begrijpt wat een vondst dat voor mij is. Ik had nooit gedacht er zelfs maar een onder mijn ogen te krijgen, en nu ligt hij bij ons zorgvuldig beschermd tegen alle ongevallen als een reliqui van den grootsten en echtsten dichter van den modernen tijd.}\(^7\)
\]

With such a potent charm close at hand, Kloos now found himself in a position to conjure up some phantoms of the past.

Shortly after the acquisition of the letter and with all the propitiousness of a self-fulfilling prophecy, Kloos experienced a visitation from Shelley’s ghost. This event found its expression in the self-contained sonnet cycle mentioned earlier. The series of twelve sonnets was dedicated to Co and appeared under the heading ‘Percy Bysshe Shelley, door Willem Kloos’ in De Nieuwe Gids. With the whole set tightly constructed, each sonnet is

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\(^5\) In previous negotiations with The Times, Kloos had only wanted to disclose the first line of the letter. On 26 April 1921, B.L. Richmond wrote to ‘Co’: ‘I am obliged to you for your offer of a letter on the subject of your brother’s Shelley-letter. I am afraid the brief indication of its contents, which you give in the letter you have sent us for publication, is hardly of enough interest to be published [in The Times] as it stands’. The typed letter is preserved in the uncatalogued material in the Kloos Collection (K533).

\(^6\) Gé Vaartjes, ‘Shelley beschut tegen rook en beschadiging: Nóg een brief van Kloos als eigenaar van een brief van Shelley’ in: Juffrouw Ida, 16, August 1990, pp. 8-10.

\(^7\) Undated letter from Kloos to K.H.E. de Jong. Quoted from Harry G.M. Prick, ‘Willem Kloos als verzamelaar van boeken’ in Boeken verzamelen: Opstellen aangeboden aan Mr. J.R. de Groot
given a separate title, pointing towards a progressive and logical narrative: I. ‘Prooimion’, II. ‘Vóórgevoel’, III. ‘De moord’, IV. ‘Shelley’s sterven’, V. ‘Bekentenis van den moordenaar’, VI. ‘Shelley’s verschijning’, VII. ‘Vervolg’, VIII. ‘Vervolg’, IX. ‘Antwoord van mij’, X. ‘Vervolg’, XI. ‘Shelley’s oordeel’, XII. ‘Slot’. The main title summarises at once the whole agenda behind the set of poems: the reader is presented with an image of Shelley as seen through Kloos’s eyes ['door Willem Kloos'], and as he wants it to be perpetuated. Indeed, Kloos appoints himself the trustworthy intermediary through whom the reader is allowed to enter a heavenly kingdom governed by 'Der zonnen Zon' (VI, l. 14) where he can behold a splendid, and above all, authentic, vision of 't goddelijk genie' (II, l. 14). It will be remembered that Kloos had adopted the same procedure in De Raafl's preface to the Dutch Alastor where he promoted his own works as the appropriate channel through which the reader was able to appreciate Shelley’s original works in a legitimate manner.

Given the underlying motivation and the importance of the issues at stake, it was imperative for Kloos to preclude all readings in which his Shelley persona would come across as an entirely fictionalised character with little or no bearing on the historical figure. The illusion of historical veracity is achieved by the inclusion of footnotes commenting on a few factual details in the poems, such as the names of Shelley’s sailing companions when the poet made his fateful journey from Livorno to Lerici, and the title of the volume of Keats’s poetry which was found on his body. These references are


Incidentally, the opening sonnet in ‘Het boek van kind en god’ bears the same title as the first poem in the Shelley cycle, i.e. ‘Prooimion’. This is another indication that Kloos may have gone through the same efforts, compared to the earlier cycle, in the general construction of his Shelley poems.

One of these refers to the copy of Keats’s third and last volume of poetry which was found turned back in Shelley’s pocket. In his minutely researched article on Kloos’s Shelley letter (see footnote 4), Harry G.M. Prick devotes nearly an entire page to this detail, admitting ‘dat [hij] langzamerhand een beetje tureluurs [is] geworden van de tegenstrijdige en vage berichtgeving op dit punt’ (p. 17). In several accounts of the discovery, burial and subsequent cremation of Shelley’s body, Prick has come across different titles with regard to the specific poem Shelley had been reading before thrusting the volume in his pocket. Some sources give Lamia, others Isabella, whereas Kloos believed it was The Eve of St. Agnes. In my opinion, however, the apparent confusion finds its origin in a misinterpretation by earlier biographers. I would suggest that abbreviated references to Keats’s entire volume, properly called Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems (1820), were taken as the titles of individual poems. Going back to Leslie A. Marchand’s scholarly edition of Lord Byron’s Letters and Journals (1979), Prick, for instance, opts for Lamia, thereby falling into the same trap as his predecessors. Prick has obviously misread Marchand for the quotation he uses to support his argument literally reads:
devised to underpin Kloos's premise about the events of Shelley's final hours. Indeed, the point of departure of the cycle relates to the specific circumstances of Shelley's death, which according to Kloos was the result of a cruel felony: 'Shelley is op zee door moord vergaan' (l, l. 14). In the ten-page prose explanation following his poems, Kloos sums up some evidence to substantiate his claim that his account of a deliberate collision at sea between a pirate vessel and Shelley's \textit{Ariel} 'in haar grondtrekken historisch [kan] worden genoemd' (p. 710). He paraphrases some reports in 'de Engelsche pers' about an unnamed Italian sailor who allegedly confessed to the crime half a century after the tragic events in the Gulf of Spezia. The direct source of this piece of information, which Kloos does not mention, is an article by W.M. Rossetti which had appeared in \textit{The Times} of 1 December 1875 and which had caused quite a stir on its publication. In sending his article to the newspaper, Rossetti had acted on the request of Trelawny whose daughter had picked up the sensational news in Italy. At the time, \textit{De Nederlandsche Spectator} had devoted a column to 'deze verrassende mededeelingen betreffende den rampspoedigen dood van den diichter Shelley'.

If the author of the article in the Dutch periodical was totally uncritical of Rossetti's account, most scholars nowadays attach little or no belief to this thesis, though, strictly speaking, it cannot be entirely ruled out.

It is easy to see how the idea of a violent death would have appealed to Kloos. Presented as a martyr, Shelley could be appropriated as a redeemer of all future poets and invested with the authority to salvage Kloos and recognise him as one of the elected. As such, the sonnets evince how much Kloos relied on Shelley's spurious image to construct his own public persona. Naturally, a reference to Kloos's famous first introduction to Shelley, when he saw a volume of his poetry in a bookseller's window display, could not

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'Keats's \textit{Lamia} had been in Shelley's pocket, but nothing remained except the leather binding to identify it'. Marchand's \textit{Lamia} therefore must be read as a short title of the entire, bound volume and not as a reference to one particular poem, as Prick erroneously believed. Shelley's original copy of Keats's poems, or what remained of it, was burnt together with his body on the beach near Viareggio.


In 1878, \textit{Wetenschappelijke Bladen} published a Dutch translation of an article by Richard Garnett from \textit{The Fortnightly Review} in which the Shelley scholar maintains that Shelley's death had very likely been an accident, and not the result of a crime. Richard Garnett, 'De laatste dagen van Shelley' in: \textit{Wetenschappelijke Bladen}, 1878, pp. 161-88 (especially pp. 187-88). In an unpublished letter, David Spanjaard communicated his scepticism about the murder thesis to Kloos: 'Wat uwe opmerking in Uw brief over Shelley's dood betreft, ik heb ondertijd wel gelezen wat Rossetti en vooral wat Trelawny daarover vertellen; maar de waarheid dezer vermoedens schijnt niet te zijn aangenomen [...]. Trouwens de \textit{storm} op zee is op zich zelf reeds voldoende om
be left out. In the ninth sonnet of the Shelley cycle, this particular event is described as another epiphany:

In de' allereersten opgang mijner jeugd
Met wijdingsvolle ontroering heb [ik Uw naam] vernomen.
Ik zag hem ... las hem ... wist niet, hoe mij wierd ...
(IX, ll. 7-9)

Holding the promise of ever bolder variations, this little motif was to be incorporated in many of Kloos's future compositions. Apparently, Kloos never realised that the prominent place given to Shelley's works in the bookshop was in itself a direct refutation of the alleged unpopularity of Shelley in the Netherlands at that time, as Kloos would have it. Yet the key-moment in the cycle had occurred three sonnets earlier when Shelley's spirit like a 'zoeltje' (VI, l. 5) had come to pluck the chords of Kloos's inner being. This moment is also described in a passage in the ten-page explanation appended to the cycle: 'toen ik deze [verzen] dus in mij voelde bewegen, heb ik [...], aandachtig luisterend, op papier gebracht [...], wat mij door mijn innerlijkste Wezen werd vóórgezegd' (p. 717). Kloos did certainly not assume a passive role in this process. I believe that he is, above all, listening to and transcribing his own voice. The sonnets illustrate how Shelley's spirit is attuned to Kloos's own 'innerlijkste Wezen' as the quotation above also seems to suggest. As such Kloos brings the message of Shelley's sprite in unison with his own hyper-individualist strain.

In an earlier sonnet ('Moisa') published in 1888, which Hubert Michaël tentatively identifies as another address to Shelley, Kloos had written: 'Komt Gij dan nu ik val ...
Ziel van mijn Ziel / Die niets dan droom zijt ...
'k roep u aan: O, koom!' (WKV, p. 8). In the sonnet cycle, Kloos's incantation has at last become successful. In order to silence his critics, who had many misgivings about his remaining capacities as a poet, Kloos now has

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12 For Hubert Michaël's thesis about the address to Shelley, see: *WKJL*, p. 146.
himself acknowledged by Shelley as one who has taken to ‘de weg, dien alle dichters gingen’ (VIII, l. 12). That Kloos should bring up the issue of his own enduring artistic excellence was, given the circumstances, no inopportune a gesture. One excerpt from an article in De Kunst of November 1916, and quoted by B. Wielenga, will help to appreciate the extent to which Kloos’s literary star had waned:

Ware Kloos gestorven, toen hij 30 lente’s telde, met, neen, boven Perk, zou hij de roemruchtige van het réveil zijn geweest. De latere verzen-knutselaar, de oer-zeurpieterige criticus leeft en vergeteert [sic] nog, en baart eindeloos uitgerekte reepen vetterdrop. Hij zeurt, met een onduldbaar pedanten domineesaanleg over het al of niet bestaan van God. Hij is een konservatieve Chinees met een staart van 80 ellen lange kroniek. Onze oogen zijn opengegaan voor Willem den Saaie, Willem den Duffe.\(^{13}\)

The raison d’être of Shelley’s spectre seems to be to justify Kloos’s life fulfilment and promote it as an example to the world, and, one would like to think, especially to Albert Verwey and his circle.\(^ {14}\) The sonnet sequence seems almost to challenge them by featuring ‘de allergrootste [dichter] der 19e eeuw’ (p. 719), and making him find at last a truly like-minded spirit on earth: Shelley’s spectre is thus presented as a personal Paraclete, comforting Kloos with the prospect of a just reward in an existence yet to come.

The cycle has many distinct religious overtones with its concentration on the transitory states of life and death and the permeable boundaries of the hereafter. Shelley, the notorious atheist, is said to reside with ‘’t Niet te noemen Eerste’ (VIII, l. 6) and ‘’t Verbeelde Kernpunt van dees Chaos’ (XII, l. 14). Contemporary reactions to Shelley’s death at sea were rather different in nature. In August 1822, the correspondent of The Courier commented: ‘Shelley, the writer of some infidel poetry has been drowned; now

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\(^{14}\) It is worth pointing out that in 1919, two years before the composition of Kloos’s Shelley sonnets, Verwey’s periodical De Beweging had ceased to exist.
he knows whether there is a God or no'. The outspoken mysticism of Kloos's cycle, however, was a prerequisite to turn the visitation of Shelley's spectre into an existential possibility. At the same time, it renders Shelley as an innocuous creature seemingly invested with divine, and hence indisputable, authority. Each sonnet represents, as it were, a Station which the reader has to visit with Kloos himself as the expert guide. Starting with Shelley's premonition of his imminent death, the narrative continues with his subsequent murder, resurrection and, finally, his pentecostal apparition to his most devout apostle. Shelley is indeed presented as a Christ figure throughout. When his boat is sinking, Shelley wonders: "Is dat de Dood? ontvang me..." en willing glijdend / Valt hij de diepte in, zwijgend, de armen breidend' (IV, ll. 13-14). As in St Matthew's version of the Gospel, where the two thieves crucified with Jesus, are given a voice to speak, Kloos's fifth sonnet consists of the confession of one of Shelley's alleged slayers who, on his deathbed, is haunted by Shelley's spirit, and begs for forgiveness.

All this seems to be designed to inspire the reader with religious awe and reverential solemnity. Such a mood was imperative to minimise as much as possible the reader's potential scepticism before being confronted with the dialogue between 'Meester' Shelley and 'vriend' Kloos in the second half of the sonnet cycle. Having described Shelley's murder, Kloos now concentrates on the visitation of Shelley's spirit which duly informs him of his own redemption. Shelley's status of apocalyptic angel is suggested by the title of the penultimate sonnet ('Shelley's oordeel') in which the apparition is painting a very bleak picture of the future:

"Dra zullen dichters wonen in barakken,
"Waar, als zij daags hebben gespit, gedolven,
"Zij worden heengedreven door de kolven
"Van vunze Bolsjewistische Kozakken.

(XI, ll. 5-8)

For the modern reader, such an utterance is simply impossible to associate with the empathising poet of Queen Mab, Oedipus Tyrannus and 'The Mask of Anarchy'. As an iconoclastic radical and advocate of the reformist cause, Shelley had much more in common with the revolutionary convictions of the Bolsheviks, whom Kloos singles out as

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the arch-enemies of all poets, than with Kloos's own self-centred aestheticism and reactionary tenets. The lines, however, are entirely consistent with Kloos's perception of Shelley's character and art. After all, Shelley had to be depoliticised and presented as an inoffensive creature so that the effects of Kloos's claimed allegiance to the poet could only be perceived as beneficial. Incidentally, the outcast status of the poet who in life has to endure, like Christ, 'der burgren hoonen' (l. 13) and the 'dwazen [...] die smaadden' (vIII. 2) would become the leitmotif of the plangent and self-aggrandising Binnengedachten which began to appear in unstoppable numbers since 1924. Pairing himself with Shelley, Kloos lifts his 'klein-persoonlijk Lijden' (X, l. 10) to a higher plane, giving it a catharsis-like significance. It is hardly a coincidence that K.H. de Raaf's monograph on Kloos, written in close consultation with the poet-critic himself, opens with a motto from Shelley's semi-autobiographical poem Julian and Maddalo: 'Most wretched men / Are cradled into poetry by wrong. / They learn in suffering what they teach in song.' This ties in with the underlying philosophy of the sonnet cycle: Kloos discerns in Shelley's martyrdom and subsequent canonisation as a poet of world stature a foreshadowing of his own fate.

'U moet wel heelemaal in Shelley's bestaan U hebben ingeleefd, om den Dichter zoo voor U te zien, hem tot U te hooren spreken.' Such were De Raaf's admiring words after his reading of the cycle. I would suggest that the sonnet sequence shows above all Kloos's skills as a transcendental puppetmaster pulling the strings of his own carefully cast mannikin. Granting Shelley's spectre the faculty of speech Kloos objectifies his personal conviction of his own superior qualities as a poet. Shelley has in effect become the vindicator of Kloos's artistic calling and of the way in which he responds to it. I have argued in the previous chapters that time and again, Kloos's instinctive urge to identify with Shelley necessitated a suppression of certain aspects of Shelley's life to which his own nature was averse. Now the reader seemingly has Shelley's own words to take into account. The second sonnet of the apparition sequence opens with the bold and revealing assertion: 'Zóó voelde ik: Shelley zeide 't' (vII, l. 1). In other words, Shelley has been fully absorbed by Kloos and turned into his mouthpiece. Similarly, the sonnet in which the indistinct image of Shelley informs Kloos of his redemption, despite the unhappy fate lying in store for all future poets, starts with the phrase: 'Doch Shelley's

16 K.H. de Raaf, Willem Kloos: De mensch, de dichter, de kriticus (Velsen: Schuyt, 1934).
17 Unpublished postcard by K.H. de Raaf to Kloos, dated 24 November 1921 (R105 B1).
stem zei' (XI, l. 1). The emphasis on the audible rather than on the visual aspect of the visitation is significant: like the ill-fated nymph Echo in Greek Antiquity, the historical Shelley is deprived of his bodily self to become the sounding board of Kloos's authoritarian voice.

When 'Shelley snellijk tot [hem] trad' (VI, l. 1), Kloos does not need to see in order to comprehend what befalls him ('ik zag hem nauw' (VI, l. 2)). As a matter of fact, he feels so akin to Shelley that he instantly knows who or what he has before him during the Annunciation. He shows no signs of fear or even surprise. This suggest that all along Kloos had been waiting in silent anticipation for Shelley's spirit to reveal itself. Clearly, Kloos's Shelley simulacrum can be interpreted as a subdivision of his own self, speaking in accents which bear every stamp of Kloos's typical diction and ideological make-up. The identification is made apparent by the poet's posture in the first sonnet when he spreads his arms to take to the skies, thus imitating Shelley's pose when the waters are closing above him. In addition, Kloos, who desires 'Beide armen ijlings voor zich op te strekken / [...] 'of [hem] vleuglen dekken' (I, ll. 6-7), mirrors Shelley's 'hand, / Als vogel-zelf, zich zwierend naar den hooge' (II, ll. 7-8) in the sonnet on the opposite page.

Even the spatial element which Kloos allows the apparition to traverse reflects the former's monopolistic intentions. From the start, Kloos makes it quite clear that Shelley is now residing in that starlit abode where the eternal are. Yet, in order to observe these heavenly constellations, it does not suffice to raise one's eyes at night. In an astonishing act of interiorisation, Kloos turns his vision inwards. His train of thought seems to be that 'als men diep in zijn gedachten klimt / Naar de aan het zwarte azuur te ziene plekken' (I, ll. 1-2), to the realm 'waar aan verdre kim 't / Paleis komt rijzen en onsterflijk wonen' (I, ll. 8-9) all those who 'schiepen wat niet kan vergaan' (I, l. 11), then one may be granted the same astral vision he has been privileged to see. Having invested Shelley with his own beliefs, Kloos looked for Shelley inside himself and effectively found him present there, not only as a burning beacon, but as the 'Ziel van [z]ijn Ziel'. His idol Shelley has been turned into an eidolon, a mirror showing to the reading public Kloos's psychological likeness as a reflection of Shelley's artistic identity.

As if to account for his privileged relation towards 't goddelijk genie' (II, l. 14), Kloos asks Shelley's spirit whether he, perhaps 'in vroeger Zijn', with him 'als makker / [...] vrij door 't Engelsch heuvelenland [heeft] gezwierd?' (IX, ll. 11-12). Preposterous as these lines may sound, it would be a mistake to think that Kloos was not in complete
earnest. They are indicative of his genuine desire to be seen by the public as an artist whose being was physically and spiritually interconnected with Shelley’s life and works. Kloos was well aware that Shelley had the reputation of being a poet’s poet: his own self-advertised affinity with the English writer would lift him to the same literary heights. The lines may also help the present-day reader to comprehend the marked intolerance Kloos showed towards anyone who seemed to pose a threat to the exclusivity of his personal ‘friendship’ with Shelley. The informal word ‘makker’ shows at once the degree of familiarity Kloos allowed himself in order to render his intimate bond with Shelley totally explicit. Kloos wrote many sonnets as tributes to deceased friends, including the composer Alphons Diepenbrock, the painter and photographer Willem Witsen, and the critic and poet Hein Boeken. By writing a poetic in memoriam for his ‘makker’ Shelley, Kloos clearly sought to incorporate the poet among the pantheon of his close personal friends.

After the grim depiction of the fate of future poets I have quoted above, Shelley’s spectre suddenly appears to be in a similarly congenial mood. The apparition urges Kloos:

“O, vlieg, vriend, met mij mede, als lichte veder.
Hierboven is het zalig, waar in wijden
“Kring alle blauwingen zich om ons breiden!”

(XI, ll. 12-14, italics mine)

Like Matthew Arnold’s ‘ineffectual angel’, or like his own his air-borne sky-lark, Shelley is portrayed as most at ease in the aethereal heights of heaven, far away from the dealings of ‘t Menschdom (XI, l. 9 and l. 12). Kloos has here rendered most literally the image of Shelley as he had painted him in the preface to De Raaf’s Alastor, namely as one who had lived ‘veraf van de wereld’, and had looked upon it ‘heel uit de verte’ (p. 10). The sonnet cycle therefore represents Kloos’s ultimate translation of Shelley. Not restricting himself to the textual level as his literary rivals had done in the past, he has seized on Shelley’s persona as the subject of his translation activities. Whereas, according to Kloos, Verwey and Gutteling had failed spectacularly to grasp ‘den geest van [Shelleys] werk’ in their translations, Kloos will now capture ‘den geest’ of Shelley himself in his.\(^\text{18}\) In the

\(^{18}\) See Kloos’s critique of Gutteling’s Prometheus ontboeid in De Nieuwe Gids, May 1912, pp. 901-11 (p. 902).
OED, ‘to translate’ is also defined as ‘to remove the dead body or remains of a saint, or, by extension, a hero or great man, from one place to another’, and more specifically as ‘to carry or convey to heaven’; this is exactly what Kloos has done here. However, since Kloos’s heaven, or ‘zwarte azuur’ (I, 1. 2) exists only within his ‘gedachten’, the ‘translation’ becomes paradoxically a more radical interment than before. Like another Ariel, Shelley’s servile sprite is firmly locked within the confines of Kloos’s manipulative mind, waiting to execute its master’s commands.  

In a poetic account such as Kloos’s, the writer is of course entitled to some poetic license. Yet Kloos’s approach in his literary critiques to the life and works of Shelley does not differ in any respect from his approach in the cycle. In his sonnets, Kloos wanted the reader to take the statements of both protagonists at face value, even if one spoke from the grave. As Kloos was well aware, Shelley’s tomb stone at the Protestant Cemetery in Rome was inscribed with the following words, suggested by Leigh Hunt and taken from Shakespeare’s The Tempest:

Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.

There could be no more appropriate paraphrastic translation (in its conventional sense) of Kloos’s cycle in which the sea has been made to give up its dead, and the mortal clay changed into an unearthly spirit rich with qualities quite strange to the historical Shelley.

The picture of an otherworldly, endearingly absent-minded poet pervades the entire cycle, but is most outspoken in the sonnet which describes the actual collision at sea. Though the tempest is gathering in strength, threatening to topple the boat, ‘lang-uit lag / Shelley en las’ (IV, ll. 1-2). While his companions Edward William and the boatswain

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19 Two years after Kloos’s sonnet sequence, André Maurois published his Ariel, ou la vie de Shelley (Paris: Grasset, 1923) which contains such phrases as: Shelley ‘avait acheté une maison dans la charmante bourgade de Marlow. Ariel consentait enfin à habiter une demeure humaine’ (p. 214); ‘Le Roi des Elîs mari[a] [...] la très réelle Mary [Godwin]’ (p. 248); ‘Jane et Edward [Williams] étaient Ferdinand et Miranda, le beau couple princier, et Shelley leur fidèle Ariel [...] l’esprit captif et pur’ (p. 273); ‘Quittant la terre pour un monde de formes plus fluides et plus pures, il avait rejoint ces beaux fantômes, ces cristallins palais, ces transparentes vapeurs qui avaient longtemps été pour lui la seule réalité’ (p. 301). The fairy tale approach to Shelley’s life is made even more specific in the title of the English translation of Maurois’s work: Ariel: A Shelley Romance, translated by Ella D’Arcy (London: The Bodley Head, 1924). Both the French original
Charles Vivian are in utter distress trying to steady the vessel, Shelley is engrossed in his self-centred activities. These in turn can be interpreted as a translation away from the sphere of reality into the ideally, and even solipsistically, fictional: 'Hij las maar, las, totdat hij niets meer zag' (IV, l. 8). It is with equally blissful composure that Shelley finally embraces the luxury of death.

I have shown in the first chapter how the supramundane quality as well as the sentimentality evoked by Kloos in his representation of the English poet’s final moments pervade many nineteenth-century Shelley hagiographies. Nevertheless, Kloos was by no means the only writer in the twentieth century to depict a wistfully acquiescent Shelley in the face of death. Timothy Webb, in his study *Shelley: A Voice not Understood*, quotes a few lines from Thom Gunn’s *Fighting Terms*, a collection of poetry published in 1954: ‘Shelley was drowned near here. Arms at his side / He fell submissive through the waves’. Though Kloos’s Shelley, in accordance with Christian iconography, has his arms outstretched after the boat is rammed, the gesture of resignation, or even eagerness to be engulfed and erased for ever, is very similar. Webb’s observations on Gunn’s account are therefore equally applicable to Kloos’s representation:

Such a death and such a posture imply an unwillingness to bare the knuckles, to counter the assaults of life in vigorous fighting terms. Where Thom Gunn suggests Shelley lacked the pugilistic muscle which might be expected of a true poet in a violent time, the nineteenth century critics spoke of his effeminacy and his ‘lack of robustness’.

To interpret Kloos’s collusive Shelley image as a belated exponent of nineteenth-century mawkishness would be too reductionist a reading though. When George Bernard Shaw, one of the more recalcitrant members of the Shelley Society fulminated against the ‘conspiracy’ and disingenuous attempts by many of his contemporaries ‘to make Shelley a saint’, his aim was to expose the ideological differences between the bourgeois values of

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most of the members and Shelley's political radicalism. Yet, if Kloos can be seen as heavily drawing on the Victorians' conception of Shelley as a quixotic sprite or 'ineffectual angel', the fallacy of his representation served a far more significant and personal purpose. It was inconceivable for Kloos to tolerate a blot on Shelley's reputation because he identified so strongly with his idol. If he represented Shelley as a seditious troublemaker, Kloos would by implication lose the respectability for which he had battled since his release from the Utrecht asylum in the 1890s. He would also be forced to concede a major, irreconcilable difference in character between the English poet and himself, which would render the identification an impossibility. Consequently, Kloos had no choice but to manipulate, misrepresent or withhold essential facts during his careful reinvention of Shelley.

2. The prose commentary

This sanitisation process is perhaps most conspicuous in the concluding paragraph of the prose commentary following the sonnet cycle, which I also quoted and analysed in Chapter One. It is the passage in which he admits that Shelley, as a young man, had embraced revolutionary ideas, but only for a short period, and before he really committed himself to 'de studie en de kunst' and jettisoned his radical principles:

Shelley, die in zijn eerste jeugdjaren zelf revolutionair was, al bedoelde die revolutiezucht iets geheel anders als de tegenwoordige, iets meer redelijks en oirbaars, Shelley, zeg ik, tot bewustzijn gekomen en de menschheid in haar waren aard, in de excessen van haar onverstand gezien hebbende, trok zich al spoedig terug uit de politiek en wijdde zich sinds zijn 23e aan de studie en de kunst. [...] En dus beeldde hij voortaan zijn binnenste, de heerlijkheid van zijn idealisme tot de plastische muziek zijner onsterfelijke scheppingen en werd een der grootste dichters, ja voor talloos velen de allergrootste der 19e eeuw. (pp. 718-19)

Pace Kloos, it is beyond dispute that during 'no period in his life was Shelley completely indifferent to political issues and events'. One does not need a keen historicist eye to contest Kloos’s outrageous claims: a cursory glance at a list of Shelley’s works, written after 1815 and chronologically arranged, is more than sufficient. Even if the most overtly political poems, such as ‘The Mask of Anarchy’ or ‘Song to the Men of England’ were not published during Shelley’s lifetime, they were readily available to Kloos in any edition of the collected works.

It is possible to distinguish between three main parts in Kloos’s commentary: the first deals with the alleged murder of Shelley at sea (pp. 710-11), the second — like Kloos had done in the preface to De Raaf’s Alastor translation — contrasts ‘knappe verzenmakerij’ (Byron) and ‘wezenlijk-poëtische dichtkunst’ (Shelley) (pp. 712-17). Finally, Kloos presents his own sonnet cycle as an example of this ‘wezenlijk-poëtische dichtkunst’, ending with the sanitised picture of Shelley as a ‘droomer’ retreating from the realities of life (p. 717).

‘Shelley’s tragic death has been much mythologised,’ Michael O’Neill concludes in his critical biography containing the reference to Thom Gunn, and what many seem to have conveniently forgotten, and Kloos is one of them, was that Shelley’s death ‘occurred while he was returning from a visit whose purpose was to help establish The Liberal’. To the last, the English poet was acting in accordance to his passion for reforming the world. Bent on convincing his readers of Shelley’s rarefied sensibilities and delicate constitution instead, Kloos uses the lengthy ‘Commentary’ which follows the sonnets to ‘translate’ Shelley once more from ‘’t gezelsschapsleven’ which was to him, at best, ‘een onvermijdbare gruwel’ (p. 715). By dint of this radical displacement, Kloos hopes to assume absolute control over Shelley’s insubstantial world, ensuring that nothing in this realm exceeds his capacity of endurance. The poet’s favourite pastime, so the reader is informed, was ‘eenzaam rond te dwalen’. At this point in the epilogue, Kloos describes yet another Shelley apparition. ‘Ik zie den grooten kunstenaar zoo duidelijk voor mij, zooals hij daar moet gelegen hebben [onder een boom]’ (p. 715) reposing after his solitary wanderings. This mental picture reminds Kloos of some eighteenth-century engravings

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waar een ideale herder op een fluit ligt te spelen eveneens onder een boom aan den
hellenden oever een rivier. Den breeden zonnooid heeft hij afgeworpen: deze ligt
naast hem in het gras, en op de muziek van zijn lippen en handen, die de fluit
hanteeren, houdt hij de schaapjes om zich heen (p. 715).

The idyllic atmosphere evoked by this pastoral tableau is again grossly misleading: it
suggests Shelley’s almost intentional seclusion from the political turmoil in his country
which, in reality, proved to be the germ from which some of his greatest poetry had
sprung. Kloos’s mental picture is nonetheless reminiscent of an existing Shelley portrait
made by Joseph Severn, who had nursed John Keats in Rome. The sentimental painting,
entitled ‘Shelley composing Prometheus Unbound in the Baths of Caracalla’ shows the
poet among the ruins of the Baths in a rather languid, meditative pose, his large straw hat
resting on the gnarled roots of a picturesque tree. The representation, however, is as
imaginary as Kloos’s, for Severn painted it in 1845, twenty-three years after Shelley’s
death. Moreover, for Shelley, the decaying piles of Caracalla not only provided a tranquil
nook for writing poetry, but above all proved a concrete and vivid externalisation of the
idea he had expressed in his Ozymandias sonnet: Imperial grandeur will eventually
crumble to nought. The transience of autocratic power is indeed also one of the main
themes in Prometheus Unbound, which Shelley composed at the place.

Severn’s prettified portrait would leave few to suspect how awkward the start of
his acquaintance with Shelley had actually been. Back in 1817, his introduction to Shelley
had made for a memorable evening at Leigh Hunt’s Hampstead cottage. At this meeting,
Severn had sided himself with the painter Benjamin Haydon in a passionate defence of
Christianity against Shelley’s outpouring of abuse on ‘that detestable religion’. When in
his preface to Adonais, Shelley referred to ‘Mr Severn, a young artist of the highest
promise’, Severn’s family were absolutely ‘horrified to find his name in the writings of
that “atheist, republican and free-liver”’. Severn had a difficult time afterwards trying to

24 The oil painting is now kept at the Keats-Shelley Memorial House in Rome. The central scene
has graced the cover of several imprints of Thomas Hutchinson’s edition of Shelley’s Poetical
Works for Oxford University Press.
25 Quoted from Richard Holmes, Shelley: The Pursuit (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson,
1974), p. 361. For Severn’s later reinterpretation of this incident, see William Sharp, The Life and
26 Sheila Birkenhead, Illustrious Friends: The Story of Joseph Severn and his Son Arthur
reassure his kin that Shelley's ideologies had no effect on him. To convince the world of Shelley's, and indeed his own, respectability, Severn produced a very inoffensive picture indeed. Little can be less threatening than the effeminate, innocent-looking youth in his painting. This ought to be seen in the larger context of Severn's determination to suppress the more militant sides of Shelley's character. The similarities between his and Kloos's image-management are plain. What distinguishes both Kloos and Severn from all those others whose 'obsessive retelling of Shelley's life [...] operates [...] insidiously as a censoring or silencing of his work' is that their motives to do so were primarily based on self-preservation.

In 1876, Severn urged Harry Buxton Forman to include the portrait in his edition of Shelley's collected works, at the same time assuring the editor that Shelley was 'the only really religious poet of the age'. He therefore hoped that Buxton Forman would 'omit [the Notes to Queen Mab] for they do not contain anything but blasphemy of the most virulent nature'. By then, Severn had already been engaged in a religious make-over of Keats, who had frustrated all attempts at conversion on his death-bed. In his 'On the Adversities of Keats's Fame' (1861), Severn recorded how he, during the poet's final days, had 'Prayed by him'. Twelve years later, in 'My Tedious Life' (1873), this had become 'Prayed with him'. Likewise, Severn appears to have offered his tendentious painting to Buxton Forman in order to gloss over Shelley's heterodox beliefs.

Besides Severn's canvass, Kloos's pastoral description seems to drawn on another fanciful source: 'Men kan die beestjes [i.e. schapjes] wegdenken als men wil, indien men dan daarvoor in de plaats neemt de waarlijk-grandiose verbeelding van Shelley's hersens, die om hem moeten gedwaald hebben' (p. 715). It is not unlikely that this refers to a passage in Adonais, where Shelley mourns for Adonais's quick Dreams,

The passion-winged Ministers of thought,

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Who were his flock, [and now] [...] 
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain 

(Adonais, ll. 73-75, 78)\textsuperscript{30}

Just as Shelley perpetuated the image of Keats in his Adonais as the frail poet-boy killed off by some acerbic reviews, Kloos presents a vision of Shelley as a martyred, introspective lyricist in his fictionalised elegy. Shelley deployed his homage to Keats in order to shame the hostile critics of whose abuse he himself had first-hand experience. He flouted their admonitions to abandon all literary pursuits by producing a substantial poem in what is arguably the most poetic of English metres: the Spenserian stanza. Kloos used his sonnet cycle to deride his critics by transforming their blunt attacks into marks of distinction: the wounds to be inflicted by the critics' vicious '[geweerkolven' will be turned into venerable stigmata, similar to Shelley's 'ensanguined brow' in Adonais, and mark Kloos as one of the blessed (p. 305).\textsuperscript{31}

3. Kloos and spiritism

In order to appreciate fully the underlying aspirations of the sonnet cycle, we ought to look somewhat closer at its transcendental postulates. What could it have meant to Kloos himself to communicate a supernatural visitation to his readership? The ramifications of such a disclosure become evident in the light of an incident which is purported to have happened when Kloos was in his early twenties and still on friendly terms with Jacques Perk. There are three separate accounts of the incident, but I have chosen to quote from Kloos's own version. On 26 January 1924, Kloos wrote a letter to Mrs A.M. Smit Kleine-Fastré (1856-1924) from which I lift the following extensive passage:

Slechts één keer in mijn nu 64 jarig bestaan heb ik iets beleefd, wat gezegd kan worden vaag heen te wijzen naar de mogelijkheid dat de mensch, na zijn lichamelijk dood, nog voortbestaat. Het begon als volgt. Op een avond van het jaar

\textsuperscript{30} In Hein Boeken's unpublished and undated translation, these lines are rendered as follows: 'De vlugge Droomen / Hartstocht-gewiekte handlangers der Gedachte, / Die waren zijne kudden, [zij] [...] / Zwerven niet meer van ontbrandend brein tot brein'. The manuscript of Hein Boeken's partial Adonais translation (stanzas 1-11) is kept in the Literary Museum and Documentation Centre in The Hague, collection number B663 H.1 2700.

\textsuperscript{31} Though strictly speaking Shelley wrote about the 'ensanguined brow' of a 'Stranger' (l. 303), it is generally accepted that this passage in Adonais can be read as a self-portrait.
1880 zat ik met mijn vriend Jacques Perk op diens kamer te praten; zoaals jongelui
dat kunnen doen, discussieerden wij over de persoonlijke onsterfelijkheid. Ik betuigde
mijn twijfel, en hij evenzeer, maar daar zijn Vader predikant was, voelde hij zich,
door zijn religieuze opvoeding en omgeving, meer geneigd dan ik, om aan een eeuwig
leven te geloooven. Op eens zei hij toen tegen mij: Weet je wat, Willem, zullen we een
afspraak maken? Ik zal wel het eerste van ons tweeën doodgaan, want ik heb het aan
mijn longen. Welnu, als ik merk dat ik dan in een ander leven ben gekomen, dan zal
ik je daarvan een teeken geven. Ik zei toen: dat is goed, maar dan moet je mij niet
persoonlijk verschijnen, want daar houd ik niet van. Neen, zei hij toen, ik zal het wel
zoó doen, dat je niet schrikt. Een jaar later werd hij inderdaad doodelijk ziek aan de
tering. Dat duurde een paar maanden. Eens op een nacht lag ik in mijn bed te
studeeren, zooals ik toen altijd deed. Mijn jongemans-domicilie bestond uit een
studeerkamer met twee ramen aan de straat, en daarnaast een slaapkamer met één
raam. Terwijl ik daar zo lag en aan niets anders dacht dan aan den inhoud van het
boek, dat in mijn hand was, hoorde ik plotseling op de tusschendeur kloppen die van
mijn zitkamer naar mijn slaapkamer leidde; ik kijk op mijn horloge, het was 3 uur 's
nachts; niet begrijpende dus, wat dat kon zijn, terwijl iedereen in huis sliep, stap ik
uit mijn bed, doe de tusschendeur open, en roep de donkere zitkamer in, is hier
iemand? Ik ga toen de kamer in, klop hard aan de deur, die toegang gaf tot de kamer,
waar mijn hospes met zijn vrouw sliepen, en vraag: Meneer, juffrouw heeft U
geklopt? Maar daar achter hoor ik mompelen: 'Gaat U maar slapen meneer! iedereén
slaapt nu, U heeft gedroomd.' Ik natuurlijk weer naar bed, niets ervan begrijpende.
Den volgende morgen liep ik, op mijn weg naar de Universiteit, zooals iederen dag,
langs het huis der familie Perk en opkijkend zag ik dat alle gordijnen neêr waren. Ik
schel zacht aan, en de meid opent de deur voor een kwart, en zegt mij: Ja, meneer, de
Jongeheer heeft het vannacht om 3 uur afgelegd. Ik herinnerde mij toen op eens wat
er dien nacht gebeurd was, en eveneens onze afspraak, en vond het geval
allerzonderlingst.32

If there was one person who could vie with Shelley for Kloos’s undevoted attention, it
was Jacques Perk. There are in fact many parallels to be drawn between Kloos’s

32 Harry G.M. Prick, ‘Kloos-ups van tijdgenoten 3’ in: Juffrouw Idastraat 11, 2 Nos 2-3,
December 1973, pp. 6-8 (pp. 6-7). De Raaf gives an account of the same incident in his Willem
Kloos: De mensch, de dichter, de kriticus, pp. 30-31, and Jeanne Reyneke-van Stuwe devotes a
paragraph to the event in Het menselijke beeld van Willem Kloos, Nederlandsche
Monographieën 7 (Lochem: De Tijdstroom, 1947), pp. 69-70.
arrogation of both Perk’s and Shelley’s achievements and literary reputation: both were ‘discovered’ by Kloos and ‘rescued’ from artistic oblivion, both had found their tireless ‘champion’ in the Dutch poet-critic, and both would posthumously be ‘honoured’ with Kloos’s jealous devotion. Garnt Stuivelng has debunked many a myth about the relationship between Perk and Kloos, and it is now well documented how the latter desperately tried to hide the fact that a widening rift between both friends had eventually resulted in a painful separation, with Perk even refusing to see Kloos altogether. The dramatic story of the poltergeist phenomenon associated with Perk’s death was ideal to bridge the chasm, not only between life and death, but especially between two alienated bosom friends. Jeanne Reyneke-van Stuwe, for instance, in her hagiographic Het Menschelijke Beeld van Willem Kloos, cites the event as ‘het treffende bewijs […] hoezeer er een mystiek verband bestond tusschen de onbewustheden der beide vrienden, dat afstand, scheiding en dood kon weerstaan’ (p. 69). Is it not possible, therefore, that the 1921 sonnet cycle was meant to send out a similar message of a spiritual rapport between Kloos and Shelley?

Kloos’s Shelley visitation acquires additional significance when read against W.M. Rossetti’s Memoir of Shelley and H.F.B. Brett-Smith’s Peacock’s Memoirs of Shelley (Appendix 2, items 57 and 48). Both biographies were in Kloos’s possession and contain a fairly detailed account of a peculiar event which took place in the Spring of 1822, a few months before Shelley’s death. The many pencil marks in the margin and the heavily underlined sentences in both works testify that this section left a great impression on Kloos. This is how the incident is related by W.M. Rossetti:

On the 6th of May [1822] Shelley and Williams were walking on the terrace of the house in a moonlight evening, when the poet grasped his companion’s arm violently, and stared hard at the surf, exclaiming, “There it is again — there!” He ultimately “declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me [Williams], a naked child rise from the sea, and clasp its hand as in joy, smiling at him.” This child was Byron’s natural daughter Allegra, who had died of fever in the Convent of Bagnacavallo on the 19th of April.31

31 W.M. Rossetti, A Memoir of Shelley, p. 120. The marked passage in Brett-Smith’s edition of Peacock’s Memoirs of Shelley is on p. 79.
Could this account of a smiling figure emerging from the waters have provided Kloos with some of the material for his sonnet cycle? Did, in fact, his identification with Shelley go so far that he wanted to emulate the English poet’s ‘psychic’ experiences? When, in the fifth sonnet of his cycle, Kloos described the assassin’s vision of Shelley’s ghost standing in the corner, accusing the dying man in silence and measuring the distance which separates him from the death-bed as if preparing — Il Commendatore-like — to drag the criminal into perdition, did he (unconsciously) recall another ‘spiritistic’ occurrence in W.M. Rossetti’s biography?

On the 23rd of June [1822] he [i.e. Shelley] was heard screaming at midnight in the saloon. The Williamses ran in, and found him staring on vacancy. He had had a vision of a cloaked figure which came to his bedside and beckoned him to follow. He did so; and, when they had reached the sitting-room, the figure lifted the hood of his cloak, disclosed Shelley’s own features, and, saying “Siete soddisfatto?” [“Are you satisfied?”] vanished.\(^\text{34}\)

A description of the same incident was published in the Dutch periodical *Het Toekomstig Leven* in March 1902, though the words uttered by Shelley’s *Doppelgänger* were interpreted as ‘hoe lang denk je nog zoo tevreden te blijven’, words, the periodical argued tendentiously, without any ‘verschrikking’ and which were certainly no ‘voorboden […] van het naderende onheil dat hem overkwam’ (i.e. Shelley’s imminent death).\(^\text{35}\)

What is beyond any doubt is Kloos’s interest in, what would now be called, parapsychological phenomena. In the description of her husband’s personal library, Jeanne Reyneke van Stuwe mentions a ‘groote kast’ filled with works ‘over occulte wetenschappen’. She further specifies the contents as

\(^{34}\) W.M. Rossetti, *A Memoir of Shelley*, pp. 120-21. One hundred and thirty years later, Shelley’s ‘ghost’ began to make regular appearances at the Casa Magni, showing, as in Kloos’s sonnet cycle, a particular interest in beds. An Italian newspaper reported in May 1952 that a ‘few days ago Mr. Ratti during a night of strong sirocco wind, woke up suddenly and saw that a long white evanescent form was slowly entering the door. This phantom took definite shape as a tall human being (it is known that Shelley was slender and very tall) and approached the bed and leaned on it’. Quoted from Sylva Norman, *Flight of the Skylark: The Development of Shelley’s Reputation* (London: Max Reinhardt and Oklahoma University Press, 1954), p. 256.

werken over theosophie, anthroposophie, Christian Science, Methode Coué, enz.
Over spiritisme, met Lodge, Myers, Kingsford, Tenhaeff, enz. enz. Over Occultisme,
met Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Olcott, Annie Besant, enz. Een enorme verzameling
boeken over spiritisme, over geesten, spoken, enz.36

This is no exaggeration: one of the thirteen sturdy volumes making up the catalogue of
Kloos’s library lists hundreds of books on spiritism and related subjects (which, judging
from their appearance in the catalogue, Kloos apparently took to include the works of
Freud and Jung). Kloos was not a unique case, of course. From the early beginnings of
De Nieuwe Gids, Frederik van Eeden, in his capacity as medical practitioner, had reported
regularly on spiritist research.37 Though he does not give any proof to back up his claim,
Garnt Stuiveling maintains that these ‘opmerkelijke medisch-wetenschappelijke studies
[...] het aanzien van het jonge tijdschrift zeer ten goede kwamen’.38 In a review which
appeared in De Nieuwe Gids of 1908, Kloos felt it nevertheless necessary to deny the
claim by Adama van Scheltema that he was a spiritist.39 After all, a spiritist is someone
‘die deel neemt aan spiritistische séance’s, en als onomstotelijk-waar beschouwt, wat
door het spiritisme wordt geleerd’ (p. 778). Kloos assures Adama van Scheltema that he
‘nooit bij zoo’n séance aanwezig [was]’ and that ‘geen enkele spiritist’ ‘[hem] persoonlijk
bekend [is]’ (p. 778). Nevertheless, he feels ‘als vele verstandige menschen van heden,
ten volle het recht-van-bestaan der wezenlijk-wetenschappelijke spiritistische
onderzoekingen’ just as he recognises those ‘der physische en chemische’ sciences (p.
778). It is his ‘stellige overtuiging, dat er in het echte gedeelte der spiritistische
verschijnselen een belangrijke kern van waarheid schuilt, welke die kern dan ook moge
zijn’ (p. 778). Even if he was not a staunch defender, Kloos, who in his own words
‘gaarne [a]s [...] van de pogingen der spiritisten om achter het levensmysterie te komen’,

37 In De Nieuwe Gids of April 1887, Van Eeden published his comments on ‘Een boek over
spiritisme en magnetisme’ (pp. 111-18), followed in June 1890 by a long treatise on ‘De
spiritistische verschijnselen’ (pp. 231-70). The subject was taken up again the following year in
December 1891 with an article on ‘Lombroso over de spiritistische verschijnselen’ (pp. 265-74).
38 Garnt Stuiveling, De Nieuwe Gids als geestelijk brandpunt, Synopsis, 3rd edn (Amsterdam:
De Arbeiderspers, 1981), p. 60. Another highly ‘respectable’ writer of the period dabbling in
spiritism is, of course, Louis Couperus. See Karel Reijnders, ed., Als ik, bij voorbeeld, de geest
van mijn moeder op den rand van mijn bed zag zitten. Occulte teksten van Louis Couperus
(Utrecht and Antwerp: Veen, 1986). Marcellus Emants too was not indifferent to the subject, see
was at least sympathetic to spiritist research. The reader may remember that Kloos had on one occasion publicly expressed his hope, perhaps half jokingly, that 'de spiritisten het bij het rechte eind [zouden] hebben' so that he could castigate Alex. Gutteling 'over den rand van het stille graf heen' for his allegedly inferior translation of *Prometheus Unbound.* At any rate, spiritism was certainly no improper topic of conversation for Kloos. For instance, the ever-sensitive poetess Hélène Swarth, who was a regular correspondent of Willem and Jeanne Kloos, wrote to them on 1 March 1924: 'Als ik weer in Den Haag woon moesten we toch eens samenzééne sàncàe probeeren!' Fate would have it that in 1938, shortly after Kloos's death, Swarth reportedly heard the poet's voice call out her name, an incident which inspired her to write 'Roepstem', the first stanza of which runs:

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Op de viersprong van de dreeën,
'k Hoorde een stem, die zacht mij riep —
'k Luisterde en mijn hart ging beven.
Kwam die stem van verre zweven,
Als een droomstem, wen ik sliep?
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This 'droomstem' seems not that dissimilar from the 'Muziekvolle ademing uit beetre sferen' of Kloos's vision (XII, l. 10). Be that as it may, speculation about the exact nature of the Shelley visitation, or rather Kloos's auditive sensation of hearing Shelley's voice, needs must remain a futile exercise, even if a letter marked 'confidentiëel' and written to Frederik van Eeden on 23 October 1886 seems strangely prophetic:

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Plotseling scheen het mij, of alle geluiden, dichtbij en verra fijnde, een anderen klank kregen, of zij meer verwijderd werden en een ondertoon deden hooren, die iets spottends, iets 'kicherns' had. [...] [Ik heb toen] opgemerkt, dat ik in mijzelf een hoop doorenwarrelende geluiden verneem, die toch geen geluiden zijn, en die zich telkens tot mensenstemmen ontwikkelen, die toch niet spreken, schreeuwende, scheldende, vragende, vermanende mensenstemmen zonder woorden. [...] [De] laatste aanval was zeer sterk, d.w.z. ik werd mij duidelijk bewust, wat ik eigenlijk
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voelde, en tevens kreeg ik een vage voorstelling, dat, als het nog heel veel sterker werd, ik hallucinaties zou krijgen. Dit laatste vermoeden is echter misschien zonder grond.\footnote{Letter written by Kloos and reproduced in G.H. ‘s-Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van De Nieuwe Gids*, pp. 209-210.}

It would be wrong to take this letter as evidence to sanction a reading of Kloos’s later Shelley cycle as a mere psychopathological document. The cycle, I believe, served a number of specific purposes and clearly fits in Kloos’s larger scheme of generating an appropriate persona for himself. It can be seen as the culmination of a life-long process of grandiose self-promotion in which factual truth and reality played only a subordinate role. Even if Kloos was careful in public not to seem too enthusiastic about spiritism, the fact that it was for many a legitimate field of study added extra credibility to the Dutch poet’s appropriation attempts.

4. Kloos as the incarnation of Shelley

After the publication of his sonnet cycle, Kloos could claim some success. As mentioned earlier, De Raaf wrote to him in person to congratulate him on his achievement. It is, of course, very difficult to measure accurately the impact of the sonnet cycle on Kloos’s literary reputation. Perhaps an implicit reference to the series of Shelley sonnets can be found in August Heyting’s article which appeared a few months after the poet’s death. If this is the case, it is clear that the cycle did little to persuade Heyting of Kloos’s literary importance in the twentieth century: ‘[Kloos] vond zijn mediamiek-automatiche sonnetenkalkerij heel prettig en schreef maar door, nu en dan een goeden regel zoowaar, enkele goede woorden ertusschen door, en voor de rest verzen, verzenleuterij zonder zin en bekoring’.\footnote{August Heyting, ‘Willem Kloos in de lijst van zijn tijd’, Offprint by the Genootschap Willem Bilderdijk from *Dietbrand*, June-July 1938, p. 19.} Then again, the only Dutch Shelley biographer to date had no problems drawing on Kloos’s cycle as an objective source for his study.\footnote{In the final chapter of his Shelley biography, Keunen refers explicitly to Kloos’s sonnet sequence and takes on the notion of Shelley’s life ‘als een waan’, ‘afgezonderd’, ‘alleen met zijn verheven kunstenaarschap van ideëele [sic] schoonheid en ontroering’. J. Keunen, *P.B. Shelley. Bij den honderd vijftigste verjaring van zijn geboorte 1792-1942*, Keurreeks 31 (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1944), p. 221. See also pp. 118 and 120.} The same suggestion of scholarly objectivity can be found in the Amsterdam-based journal *English Studies*,

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which, in its number devoted to the centenary of Shelley’s death, listed Kloos’s sonnet cycle among dozens of scholarly books and articles. With Kloos’s acquisition of the Shelley letter and the subsequent report in the *Times Literary Supplement*, the British also became rather intrigued by this Shelley enthusiast in the Netherlands. For instance, John Foxworthy, a minor Glaswegian poet, paid Kloos a visit in The Hague and wrote a sonnet on the occasion: ‘Shelley: Written After Seeing Mr. Kloos’ Study’. In it, he seems to have adopted the same spiritistic overtones of the Dutch sonnet sequence and endorses retrospectively the past communication ‘Beyond all life’ (l. 4) between the ‘Godhead’ Shelley (l. 4) and ‘Friend’ Kloos (l. 1):

Most love their poets: but one Friend I knew  
Loved nigh to ecstasy this Spirit pure  
Of fire Promethean: a love to endure  
Beyond all life, love for a Godhead due.  
The portrait there! enshrined in sadness rich,  
With just at hand a letter proudly hung,  
Writ by this deathless hand, featured among  
A facade set in books: a sainted niche,  
Hallowed beside an oracle of prayer.  
Around there seemed to burn a rubrious light,  
Imaging the portrait in a feeble gloom,  
Which seemed to lean so sad unto the air,  
Longing to whisper to this acolyte,  
That all seemed sanctuary and not a room.

More than thirty years earlier, Shaw had warned against the ‘conspiracy’ to ‘make Shelley a saint’. Not only has Foxworthy done just that, but he allows Kloos to bask in the serene aura of the English poet’s holiness. It must have been with immense

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46 This Shelley portrait can be seen on a photograph of Kloos’s study kept in the Kloos Collection in the Literary Museum (K533.2.50). The portrait in question is a framed reproduction (reduced in size) of the famous oil painting by Amelia Curran, begun in 1819 and finished after Shelley’s death. It is generally believed to be a very bad likeness. The original is now part of the collections of the National Portrait Gallery (London).
satisfaction that Kloos had Foxworthy's sonnet printed in *De Nieuwe Gids* as an endorsement of his self-proclaimed status of Shelley devotee.

As mentioned in the second chapter, James Anderson Russell dedicated his study on the Dutch ‘romantic’ revival to Kloos’s memory. Russell too was prone to having visions, so it seems:

I was privileged to enjoy friendship with [Kloos] right up to the time of his death [...]. I see him yet. He stood in that long, double, book-lined study in which his days were passed, just beside his innumerable English editions and the letter of Shelley’s [...] of which he was so justifiably proud — a tense, waiting, almost sinister, figure in the shadows. Then I caught the light shining in those eyes, wild yet reflective; and I knew immediately that here was the almost traditional poet and seer. It was not Shelley any longer, of course, that I could detect in him — he was too old, too subdued, too sage-like for that; there was but one poetic figure to whom I felt I could truly liken him — and that was the venerable, the laureated, Wordsworth.47

If Kloos was capable from the hereafter to cast his eyes on Russell’s labour of love, he may have been unable to suppress a contented smile. Perhaps he did not quite leave the sublunary world as another Shelley, but a respectable, mature and level-headed Wordsworth will have struck him as no bad second choice.

Hubert Michaël’s study would have given even more cause for celebration since it presents the Dutch poet, almost without any reservations, as Shelley incarnate. Apart from their mental make-up, Michaël argues, ‘de uiterlijke verschijning’ of both writers were strikingly similar (*WKJL*, p. 58). Furthermore, they share the same (negative) traits: in ‘beider gedrag ziet men ook telkens weer een gebrek aan humor’ and ‘beiden [hebben] de mantel van kinderlijkheid en onvolwassenheid niet weten te verwisselen voor de toog van mannelijkheid’ (*WKJL*, p. 59). If these are mere details, they stem from an exceptional, even uncanny psychological resemblance:

Zijn [i.e. Kloos’] belangstelling voor deze dichter [i.e. Shelley] hangt samen met een gevoel van verwantschap. Eigenlijk geeft dit woord onvoldoende aan, wat er tussen Kloos en Shelley bestond: gelijkgemeldheid zegt dat al beter en gelijkvormigheid

gaat niet te ver. [...] De overeenkomst in aanleg, begaafdheid, belangstelling en
levenshouding tussen deze beide dichters moet opmerkelijk genoemd worden,
boeiend, bijna beangstigend. Vrijwel alles wat er van Shelley is gezegd, is
toepasselijk op Kloos. *(WKJL, pp. 57-58)*

Clearly, such an assessment is based more on Kloos's own pronouncements than on an
objective comparison between the characters and works of both writers. Bearing in mind
that Michaël's evaluation was written several decades after the original conception of the
cycle and the publication of Kloos's other Shelley pieces, it can only be imagined how
persuasive the series of sonnets must have struck some of the contemporary readers in
Kloos's time who were far more exposed to his indoctrination tactics. Though Kloos
would reiterate many of his claims the next year (in 1922), it would be difficult to
improve on the seductively straightforward Shelley cycle.
Chapter Six: *The Cenci*

For a long time, *The Cenci* has occupied somewhat of a special position in the Shelley canon. Dealing with the horrors of torture, murder, and incestuous rape, the play was approached with much discomfort by early Shelleyites. From the start, the subject matter was deemed far too offensive to secure it a public staging. On 5 April 1820, Shelley informed his friend Leigh Hunt: ‘The very Theatre rejected it with expressions of the greatest insolence. I feel persuaded that they must have guessed at the author’ (*Letters*, II, p. 181). Indeed, Shelley had sent an anonymous copy to the Theatre Royal at Covent Garden because he feared that the stigma attached to his name would deprive his play of a fair assessment. Its poetic merit, however, was recognised fairly soon. The result was that of all of Shelley’s writings, this was the only work which went through an authorised second edition during the poet’s lifetime. Nonetheless, an official ban would prevent a mounting for many years to come. Then, in 1886, the Shelley Society was established; its main objective being a stage performance of *The Cenci*. Yet the Censor was unrelenting and the Society was forced to organise it as a private event. It was at this moment in time that *The Cenci* was really brought to the attention of critics and readers in the Netherlands.

In this chapter I will discuss the reaction of Dutch reviewers to the premiere of Shelley’s play in London. Given the severe criticism in Britain on the play’s first publication in 1820 and the apprehensive reception of its premiere decades later, I will demonstrate how De Raaf, who translated the work in 1908, was acutely aware of the potentially negative criticism his work could provoke. This awareness, I will argue, came to influence the material shape his translation was to take. It is in this context that the several defence mechanisms which he used to coax his readers, and later spectators, into critical approbation will be analysed. A comparison of a few passages in the original and *De Cenci* will expose how De Raaf’s approach resulted in a depoliticised and toned down version. Next, I will focus on Adriaan Roland Holst’s appraisal of *The Cenci* and Kloos’s reaction to it. Kloos’s response is consistent with his overall reinvention of Shelley as a non-political poet. It is also the underlying ideological issues which will be stressed in my analysis of the contemporary response to the Antwerp mounting of Shelley’s tragedy in
1929. In particular, I will challenge the widespread view that by the time of the centenary commemorations in 1922, ‘the moral conservatism of the nineteenth century’ responsible for the hostile reception of many of Shelley’s works, ‘had virtually disappeared’. Indeed, the Antwerp production calls for an adjustment of the idea commonly held that Shelley’s fame had by then sufficiently risen to procure *The Cenci* a wide appreciation. A final comparison between Kloos’s ‘use’ of the play as a upcoming critic of twenty and then again later as a middle-aged, established man of letters will illustrate how the shift in emphasis in his appreciation reflects his changed position in society which meant that he could no longer subscribe to Shelley’s anti-authoritarianism.

1. Dutch reactions to the London premiere of 1886

One of the first to react in the Netherlands to the memorable 1886 performance of *The Cenci* was A.S. Kok, the same critic who was to review De Raaf’s *Alastor* twenty years later (see Chapter Three). His article in *Nederland* starts off enthusiastically enough, dubbing the performance ‘een opzienbarend gebeurenis’ which could boast ‘[een] uitgelezen schare van toeschuowers’. The foundation of the Shelley Society, under whose auspices a Shelley concordance was being compiled, as well as the performance itself are seen as symptomatic of a renewed and encouraging interest in Shelley’s art. Yet he adds: ‘Natuurlijk gaat de vernieuwde bewondering niet zonder ernstige bedenkingen gepaard die niet alleen “De Cenci”, maar ook den dichter persoonlijk raken’ (p. 215). After listing a couple of seriously negative evaluations by commentators in the past, Kok feels compelled to ask the question: ‘hoe kwam een zoo teeder gestemd, een zoo fijn gevoelend Dichter als Shelley er toe, om dit onderwerp te kiezen?’ (p. 220). The reason is threefold, Kok argues. Apart from the source manuscript and the Beatrice portrait which ignited the creative spark (*infra*), the wish to put forward an indictment against ‘domestic and political tyranny’ was also a forceful motive for Shelley. The phrase is taken from the dedication to Leigh Hunt, the radical editor of *The Examiner* and close personal friend of Shelley. As we will see later on, the combination of ‘domestic and political tyranny’ was

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2 A.S. Kok, ‘Drie tooneelen uit Shelley’s treurspel *De Cenci*’ in: *Nederland*, 1888, pp. 213-245 (p. 213). Though written directly after the premiere, the article appeared with some delay because of an influx of copy material.
to prove too unnerving for the Dutch translator. With his usual sense of keen judgement, Kok throws in the remark that the most disturbing aspect may very well be the representation of Count Cenci, not as an atheist, but as a Catholic instead, escaping trial and punishment by bribing a corrupt Pope. Before reaching this conclusion, Kok had already given a rather ingenious twist to the problems encountered by the Shelley Society as it found itself faced with the Censor’s prohibition against a public mounting. In his perception of events, staging the play behind closed doors was a clever ploy, a ‘groote handigheid’ (p. 216), used with success to incite people’s curiosity for what was, after all, a play with a ‘weerzinwekkend onderwerp’ (p. 224). In spite of his favourable opinion of *The Cenci* as a work of art, he acknowledges that because of the allusions to incest and the insalubrious role of the papal government, it will always remain controversial.

Kok concludes his article with the translation of three scenes, taken from the fourth and fifth acts. The function of the three translated scenes following his discussion was mainly to underline the play’s redeeming features which he identifies as the Shakespearean form and language: ‘Ziedaar de betrekkelijke waarde van dit in ieder geval belangwekkend stuk aangegeven’ (p. 224). Kok requires three full pages to point out and marvel at many a ‘Shakespeariaansche trek’ in the play (p. 225). Of course, it is far from eccentric to read and judge *The Cenci*, as indeed any other English tragedy, in a Shakespearean context. His pairing of Shelley with the most canonical of English writers nevertheless belies Kok’s anxiety to redeem the play despite its subject matter. It could be argued that Kok singles out for praise what most effaces Shelley’s individuality as a poet.

As would be the case when he came to review De Raaf’s *Alastor* in *De Nederlandsche Spectator* of 27 January 1906, Kok was heavily influenced by what was said about Shelley’s work in the prefaces of the various editions issued by the Shelley Society. Kok certainly had the volume on *The Cenci* before him when he wrote the phrase ‘de vorm is Shakespeariaansch, en zoodanig is ook de taal’, which closely follows ‘the form is Shakespearean; and so very often is the language’ of the Shelley Society publication.

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3 The translated scenes are: IV, ii and iii (the preparations for and actual murder of the Count); and V, iii (final confrontation between Beatrice, her mother Lucretia and brother Giacomo, the last two just having confessed to the murder and implicated Beatrice).

Not everyone shared Kok’s respect for the august association and its activities. A notice in the *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant* derides the Shelley Society which had come ‘tot het noodlottig besluit’ to mount Shelley’s play.\(^5\) In a less condemnatory mode, the critic concedes: ‘volgens het onderwerp behoort er zeker veel moed toe, om het ten tooneele te voeren’. It was by no means the last time that this observation would be made. The London correspondent of the *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant* further voices his deep regret that so many visitors of youthful age were allowed to see a performance ‘waardoor de sluier werd opgelicht van vreeselijke misdaden, die beter voor hen onbekend waren gebleven’.\(^6\) It is with ill-concealed relief, therefore, that the journalist reassures his readers ‘dat er niet spoedig eene nieuwe opvoering van dit stuk zal plaats hebben’. Indeed, the English Censor did not allow a public stage performance to commemorate the centenary of Shelley’s birth in 1892. Theatre goers in Britain had in effect to wait until November 1922 (the centenary of Shelley’s death) for the first public mounting when the imposed one hundred-year ban, starting from the play’s publication in 1820, had expired.

In his review ‘Shelley’s treurspel *The Cenci*’ which appeared in the more progressive *Nederlandsche Spectator* of 10 July 1886 P.J. van Eldik Thieme cites the charges made by the *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant*, only to vindicate Shelley by maintaining that *The Cenci* occupies ‘een onvergankelijke plaats in de literatuur’.\(^7\) He refutes the idea that Shelley’s play is indecent, alleging that there is far more impropriety to be found in, for instance, Shakespeare’s *Henry V* (notably the epithet ‘soldier-breeder’ used by the king to refer to Katherine in V, ii). It is interesting that in Eldik Thieme’s

\(^5\) *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant*, 13 May 1886, as quoted by Van Eldik Thieme (see footnote 7).

\(^6\) As we shall see later in this chapter, such pronouncements are remarkably similar to the views of Shelley’s contemporary critics. For instance, an unsigned review in *The Edinburgh Monthly Review* of May 1820 refers to *The Cenci* in these terms: ‘In an evil hour does the pleasure of exhibiting might, first tempt the hand of genius to withdraw the veil from things that ought for ever to remain concealed’ (Barcus, p. 187). J.C.G. Grasé, a teacher of English, wrote from London to his friend Albert Verwey on 14 June 1886 (in flawed English): ‘You know I daresay, that I Cenci [sic] was produced here. Sorry to say, as I had been rather poorly the week before I had not seen the papers nor had I found an opportunity of securing seats. So I did not go. However, it appears that people did not appreciate it. As a drama as expression of the poets [sic] feelings a [sic] mastery of language it is of course simply beautiful [sic]; but why such a plot should be represented on a stage & in presence even of scores of young girls, I fail to see the reason. This criticism has passed in several instances into personalities [sic] & attacks on Shelley’. Quoted from Margaretha H. Schenkeveld and Rein van der Wiel, eds., *Albert Verwey: Briefwisseling 1 juli 1885 tot 15 december 1888* (Amsterdam: Em. Querido, 1995), p. 174.

\(^7\) P.J. van Eldik Thieme, ‘Shelley’s treurspel *The Cenci*’ in: *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, 10 July 1886, pp. 231-33 (p. 232).
opinion, the real nature of the objections may have more to do with the poet’s political and religious convictions, than with his work, and, for that matter, the theme of incest:

Ik houd het er voor, dat de wrevel [of certain reviewers and certain classes in society]
mee Shelley, den pantheist, gold, dan zijn werk. Deze dichter was nooit eene persona
grata voor zijne landgenooten; democraat in het hart had hij het volk te lief. (p. 233)³

Of course the political undercurrent of *The Cenci* is impossible to miss. As a modern critic put it, the Count, an absolute potentate who secured himself the protection of the Church, is ‘an apt Shelleyan symbol for the correspondence between paternal and political tyranny echoed in the play by the Pope (the Holy Father) and by God’.⁹ All power-relationships are seen in terms of father and obedient child: God is referred to as a being ‘Whose image upon earth a father is’ (II, i, ll. 17), the Pope refuses to act on Beatrice’s written indictment against her father because it would ‘weaken the paternal power’ which is ‘the shadow of his [i.e. the Pope’s] own’ (II, ii, ll. 55-56). For Shelley, a tiered society based on an unfair distribution of wealth, is the bane of mankind. The Cenci derives his power mainly from his status in a patriarchal system where a title and riches placed one above the dictum of the law and the precepts of morality. In one of his letters, Shelley wrote how an ‘empire of terror […] is established by Religion’, with ‘Monarchy [a]s it’s [sic] prototype’, and ‘Aristocracy […] symbolising […] its very essence’ (*Letters*, I, p. 126). *The Cenci* exposes how these forces depend on each other to maintain their tight

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grip on the people whose calls for reform and change are smothered in blood and violent oppression.

If Shelley’s life provided enough ammunition for critics unfavourable to the poet’s work, their disgust was not likely to be tempered by the contents of his tragedy. Leaving aside the play’s ideological dimension, Van Eldik Thieme defends *The Cenci* by claiming that ‘uit een oogpunt van fatsoen [...] er in de letterkunde heel wat op den index van verboden zaken [zou] dienen te worden geplaatst. Vooral [dan] de werken der groote meesters’ (p. 233). Such tolerance stood out at that time, for *De Nederlandsche Spectator* was quite happy to give less liberal-minded critics column space to promulgate their ideas. This is exemplified by the scathing attack on naturalist writing which, very poignantly, comes straight after Van Eldik Thieme’s review. This second piece starts thus:

De luis.... schrik niet.... de luis en de schurft.... schrik toch niet, ik stem u naturalistiesch.... de luis en de schurft en de syphilis en de hel hebben apologisten, dichters en loftuiters gevonden [...]. Apologisten van het “insect” Zola, Holland telde er twee. Nu stond een dichter op in den persoon van Frans Netscher, en stonk het Fransche naturalisme Nederland binnen.¹⁰

This indicates how remarkably ‘modern’ the preceding *The Cenci* review really was, with Van Eldik Thieme speaking out for a play in which a father confesses he ‘will drag [his daughter Beatrice], step by step, / Thro’ infamies unheard of among men’ (IV, i, ll. 80-81), until she will ‘be encrusted round / With leprous stains!’, leaving her ‘speckled like a toad’ (IV, i, ll. 129-30, 132). In 1912, Wismans still wrote in his *Overzicht der Engelsche letterkunde* of 1912: ‘Zijn [Shelley’s] treurspel *de Cenci* getuigt van ongemeene dramatische kracht, doch is wegens zijn weerzinwekkende inhoud — Beatrice Cenci vermoordt haar eigen vader — nooit opgevoerd’.¹¹ Advancing parricide (*pace* Sophocles, Euripides, and Shakespeare), and not incest, as the main impediment for a mounting, and keeping silent about its political and religious sediton, Wismans’s censoring of the play

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¹¹ J.H. Wismans, *Overzicht der Engelsche letterkunde* (Bussum: Paul Brand, 1913), p. 80. That Wismans was not familiar with the 1886 production by the Shelley Society remains possible, but is in my view unlikely.
was absolute: *The Cenci* was a dangerous work whose tenor was difficult to reconcile with the image of its author as a harmless visionary.

In his apologia of Shelley, Van Eldik Thieme also mentions with approval the ‘vermijding van alle noodelooze beschrijving’ (p. 233), precisely the feature that would make Roland Holst single out this work for praise in the whole of Shelley’s oeuvre thirty-five years later. This pithiness of expression is an important point to bear in mind when it comes to assessing De Raaf’s translation of 1908. Van Eldik Thieme concludes his piece by expressing the hope that the majority of the Dutch reading public will soon be enabled to delight in Shelley’s craftsmanship through a translation of the play by W. Gosler (1858-1921): ‘Ik hoop dat de heer Gosler nog eens tijd zal vinden, de vertaalde brokstukken van “The Cenci” die hij reeds in portefeuille heeft, tot een geheel te doen aangroeien; zij, onder ons, die geen Engelsch lezen, zouden hem dankbaar zijn’ (p. 233).

In spite of his friend’s summons to continue his labours, Gosler never entrusted his translation to the press. It is even doubtful whether he ever came to finish it. Nonetheless, together with Kok’s partial translation in *Nederland*, this is an important indication of Shelley’s growing popularity in the Netherlands at that time. More than twenty years before De Raaf’s *De Cenci*, and only a few months after the foundation of *De Nieuwe Gids*, two experienced men of letters already ventured independently to write a translation of one of the most substantial of Shelley’s works. This confirms once more how Kloos’s later claims to exclusivity as far as his adoration and understanding of Shelley is concerned ought to be taken with a grain of salt.

One would assume that such an important event as the London staging of *The Cenci* would have merited at least some critical appraisal in *De Nieuwe Gids*. Yet, when in 1886 the periodical announced the foundation of the Shelley Society, the imminent premiere was not mentioned, nor did it receive any coverage after its performance. The notice in *De Nieuwe Gids* about the newly founded Shelley Society refers to the poet’s dramatic works in general terms only: ‘Velen zeker zullen met genoegen vernemen, dat er te Londen een genootschap is opgericht om 1°. de kennis van Shelley’s werken en leven te vermeideren; 2°. Shelley’s drama’s te doen vertoonen’. Needless to say that the opening phrase (‘Velen zeker’), just like the early *De Cenci* translations, implies that

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12 I have not been able to ascertain whether Gosler’s translation has been preserved in manuscript.

13 Quoted from *De Nieuwe Gids*, April 1886, p. 159.
Shelley was far more popular in the Netherlands than Kloos was to make his readers believe in subsequent articles.  

2. De Raaf’s De Cenci

K.H. de Raaf must have been wary from the start of the play’s potential to affront public morality. This is borne out by the design of his dutchified version which appeared as an independent volume in 1908. With conscientious zeal, De Raaf produced a very complete translation of Shelley’s drama, including the dedicatory letter to Leigh Hunt, the Preface with Shelley’s description of his source material, the notes added by Mary Shelley in the posthumous 1839 editions, and the historical manuscript which relates the tragic calamities which befell the Cenci family in the sixteenth century. The inclusion of this last document is not as innocent as may seem. Significantly, the only overt ‘intrusion’ of the translator in the volume consists of a note justifying the presence of this narrative:

Hoewel in sommige uitgaven dit verhaal wordt weggelaten of kieschheidshalve slechts besnoeid wordt opgenomen, meende de Vertaler het in zijn geheel te moeten geven, niet alleen ter rechtvaardiging van de wijze waarop de Dichter zijn personen laat handelen, maar vooral ook omdat het Shelley’s uitdrukkelijke wensch was, dit historisch verhaal in de uitgave van The Cenci gedrukt te zien; zie o.a. den brief aan Peacock, gedateerd “Livorno, Juli 1819”.... The translation which I send you, is to be prefixed to the play, together with a print of Beatrice”. (p. 113)

As De Raaf probably intended, the insertion of the manuscript source forced the reader to recognise that The Cenci was not the product of a diseased imagination, but the literary

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14 As a matter of fact, another complete translation of The Cenci appeared in the August and October issues of Holland-Vlaanderen in 1889. It is truly extraordinary that this translation did not receive any critical attention. Because Van Heijningen’s translation did not play any role in the several debates discussed in this chapter, I will not refer to it any further. However, when I come to analyse De Raaf’s translation from a more technical point of view, I will cite the corresponding passages in the Holland-Vlaanderen translation in the footnotes to allow for a comparison between the two approaches. In almost all cases, the pairing will make De Raaf’s singular renditions all the more glaring. B. van Heijningen, trl., ‘De Cenci: Een Treurspel in Vijf Bedrijven van Percy Bysshe Shelley. Uit het Engelsch Vertaald’, in: Holland-Vlaanderen: Tweemaandelijksch Tijdschrift voor Noord- en Zuid-Nederland, 2, August 1889, pp. 35-85; October 1889, pp. 149-98.

rendition of historical facts. Clearly, Shelley had reasoned along the same lines when he explained to Thomas Love Peacock that no-one could object to the play’s subject, considering ‘that the facts are matter of history’ (Letters, II, p. 102). De Raaf, aware of how he himself might incur disgrace by attaching his name to a controversial work, felt the need to spell this out and by doing so fence off potential attacks on the poet’s alleged depravity which the play could otherwise imply.

In a predominantly protestant country, the Dutch translator could safely incorporate and leave untouched Shelley’s comments in the preface on the moral superficiality of (Italian) catholic worshippers. Yet, in the dedication to Leigh Hunt whom Shelley had characterised as his inspiring example in the battle against ‘domestic and political tyranny’ — a phrase singled out by A.S. Kok in 1886 —, De Raaf felt the need to make a slight but significant alteration: the second adjective of Shelley’s phrase was translated as ‘maatschappelijk’ (p. vi). In 1913, five years after De Raaf’s De Cenci had rolled off the press, the volume ‘M-Nymph’ of the Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal (WNT) was published. Its definition of ‘maatschappelijk’ demonstrates beyond doubt that the connotation as ‘soms bepaaldelijk in tegenstelling met politiek’, was by then firmly established. Thus the emphasis in De Raaf’s rendition subtly shifts from Shelley’s uncompromising support for the fight against repressive, autocratic forces towards a more civil concern for the plight of the underprivileged in society. The obvious result is an effacement of the power structures which Shelley held responsible for much of the social injustice and unrest among the working classes.

Politically sanitised, Shelley was now to be championed for having chosen such unorthodox subject matter. To this end, De Raaf attached a motto to his translation which he had picked from the works of the much revered nineteenth-century critic and poet Potgieter (1808-1875). It reads: ‘Wat vraagt ge of de ijslijkheid geen dichterlijke zijde, / ‘t Ontzettend niets aandoenlijks heeft?’’. This quotation, taken from such an unimpeachable source, acts as a self-sought seal of approval for a daring enterprise. It has to avert potentially harmful criticism directed both at the author of the original work and the translator. Just as Kok drew on Shakespeare to vindicate Shelley as an artist, De Raaf chose to force on Shelley’s text the name and reputation of a truly unassailable

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16 In the brief notice in Het Vaderland of 12 December 1908 (brief because ‘Voor een beoordeeling van dit bloedig drama is het thans hier de plaats niet’), the motto is explicitly mentioned.
writer. If Shelley had conceded in the introduction to *The Cenci* that ‘anything like a dry exhibition of [the play] on the stage would be insupportable’, meaning that the actors had to dress up the words and action, it is obvious that for both Kok and De Raaf the work needed an additional set of borrowed clothes to make it appear more decent in the reader’s eyes (SPP, p. 239). Furthermore, because of its prominent position on the title page, Potgieter’s tag is not only likely to be interpreted as a reassuring *nil obstat*, but also as a paradigm of the play’s main message. Hence, the ‘dichterlijke zijde’ and ‘[het] aandoenlijk[e]’ of *The Cenci* seem to be advanced as its chief *raisons d’être*, thereby disregarding the play’s ideological thrust.

Conforming to Shelley’s own intentions, De Raaf’s volume opens with a reproduction of the oil painting then ascribed to Guido Reni (1575-1642) and believed to represent Beatrice Cenci. As Kok had pointed out in his article covering the 1886 premiere of the play, this particular portrait had been one of the creative sparks which had fuelled Shelley’s imagination and made him sit down to write his tragedy. Shelley had admired it immensely during his visit to the Palazzo Colonna in Rome. He acquired a copy of this painting and it was his express wish to have the portrait reproduced as the frontispiece to the printed edition of his tragedy. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the attribution to Reni had become dubious, and even the identity of the portrayed figure was subject to doubt and controversy. De Raaf nevertheless decided to comply with Shelley’s wishes. The degree to which De Raaf faithfully followed Shelley’s original instructions for publication is exemplary. In its design, his *De Cenci* betrays the influence of the 1886 facsimile edition as issued by the Shelley Society to concur with the world premiere of the play. It had been this edition, and more precisely the editor’s preface therein, which Kok had used when he reviewed the first London performance in *Nederland*. De Raaf may have modelled his volume after this prestigious *The Cenci* publication, hoping that his translation acquire a stamp of respectability. In the end, De Raaf’s precautions paid off for no-one in the literary press took umbrage at the publication of his *De Cenci* in 1908. Actually, it did not inspire much excitement either

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17 The painting was well known in the nineteenth century. It features largely in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel *The Marble Faun* of 1860. In a letter to Carel Vosmaer of 25 November 1881, Kloos refers to Dora Jaspers, with whom he had had a brief liaison, as ‘mijn arme, kleine Madonna-af. Zij geleek zeer veel op het traditionele portret van Beatrice Cenci, dat u wel zult kennen’. Quoted from Garmt Stuiveling, ed., *De Briefwisseling Vosmaer-Kloos* (Groningen, Batavia: J.B. Wolters, 1939), pp. 94-96 (p. 96).
and there was certainly no indication of the furore De Raaf's undertaking would cause twenty-one years later.

It is striking that Kloos did not provide an introduction to the translation as he had done in 1905 for de Raaf's dutchified Alastor. Apparently, Shelley's drama did not hold the fascination over him which other works by Shelley were able to generate. Perhaps it is exactly the lack of lyricism, a feature Van Eldik Thieme had applauded, which impeded Kloos from admiring the drama unreservedly. He nevertheless must have suggested several alternative readings to De Raaf shortly after the publication of the first act in De Nieuwe Gids for the translator wrote on 16 July 1907 in a private communication: 'Ik dank u wel bizonder voor Uw vriendelijkheid; ik hoop van Uw varianten nog een goed gebruik te maken'.\(^1\) Kloos's letter with suggestions appears not to have been preserved; but they were probably very similar to those he made in an article discussed later in this chapter. On the instigation of Van Looy, De Raaf did not immediately proceed with the publication of the entire translation as an independent volume. According to Van Looy, the reading market had shown signs of saturation and belles-lettres did not sell very well at the moment. As a result, De Raaf offered Kloos some more fragments for publication in De Nieuwe Gids first; something which Kloos, for reasons unknown, must have turned down for no more extracts appeared in the journal.\(^2\) He did refer very briefly to De Raaf's rendition in his periodical when he came to write a more general piece on Shelley. On that occasion, and like Kok decades earlier, Kloos emphasises The Cenci's 'tragische realisme, dat [...] niet minder pakkend dan dat van Shakespeare moet heeten', thereby lifting the status of Shelley's work to safe, unassailable heights.\(^3\)

A very short but revealing critique of De Raaf's translation appeared in Museum: Maandblad voor Philologie en Geschiedenis in October 1909.\(^4\) The piece was written by Verwey and is especially interesting in view of Kloos's later criticism of Gutteling's Prometheus onthoooid. Verwey comes straight to the point: 'Indien vertalers eens

\(^{18}\) Unpublished letter by De Raaf to Kloos, kept in the collections of the Literary Museum and Documentation Centre in The Hague (R105 B1).

\(^{19}\) 'De uitgever Van Looy is van zijn plan, het [i.e. De Cenci] uit te geven, teruggekomen: de kooplust van 't publiek was zoo flauw, schreef hij mij. Kan u wanneer Van Looy er geen bezwaar tegen heeft, wellicht nog een paar fragmenten van De Cenci gebruiken voor de N. Gids?'. Cited from the same letter mentioned in the previous footnote.


\(^{21}\) Albert Verwey, 'De Cenci' in: Museum: Maandblad voor Philologie en Geschiedenis, 17, October 1909, p. 58.
begrepen *que c'est le ton qui fait le poème* — zij zouden dan niet meenen dat een gedicht vertaald wordt door overzetting volgens het woordenboek*. The second part of Verwey’s opening statement is a pertinent reminder of the antagonism that existed between the editors of *De Nieuwe Gids* and *De Beweging*. The ‘overzetting volgens het woordenboek’ recalls Kloos’s admission, in his ‘Literaire Kroniek’ of May 1909 which promotes De Raaf’s ‘prijzenswaardige [*Cenci*] vertaling’, of how he had had to struggle to master the English language: ‘Zoo herinner ik mij van mijzelf, dat ik na gelukkigvolbracht eind-examen Hoogere Burgerschool 5-jarigen kursus, met voldoende cijfer voor ‘t Engelsch, toch geen gewoon boek kon begrijpen, zonder telkens een woordenboek op te slaan’ (*De Nieuwe Gids*, May 1909, p. 663). Kloos had indeed bared a vulnerable spot and Verwey now seized the opportunity to condemn De Raaf, and implicitly Kloos, for their ‘bookish’ reading of Shelley.

A few years later, in 1912, Kloos would in turn charge Gutteling with having been content to use the first translation listed in the dictionary for some problematic words in *Prometheus Unbound*, even if the context required another solution, whereupon Verwey was to sneer at Kloos’s need for a dictionary to understand Shelley’s verse. The word ‘dictionary’ seemed to have worked as a red rag to all parties involved, explaining the ferocity of the denials and counter-attacks. As I have argued in the previous chapters, it is obvious that there exists a tight dialectical relationship between the Shelley critiques written by Kloos, Verwey, and their respective associates. What has not been sufficiently recognised before is how many of these reviews ought to be read in a particular significatory matrix in which seemingly neutral phrases become charged with new meanings and associations. Below the surface of seemingly straightforward critical interactions an extremely personal battle was being fought. From laying bare the mechanics behind this altercation, it emerges that it was not always Kloos who was on the offensive, and that both sides deployed the same strategies in attacking one another.^^

Verwey’s phrase ‘Indien vertalers eens begrepen *que c’est le ton qui fait le poème*’ is yet another instance in point. The reader will recall Gutteling’s phrase in his

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^22 Toon Naaijkens has illustrated this by comparing what the *De Nieuwe Gids* and the *De Beweging* camps deemed the chief quality which a good translator should possess. Both argued that the foremost demand in this respect was for the translator to be a natural poet. Though the same critical principle is embraced by Kloos and Verwey, opposing names are advanced as men of letters meeting this specific requirement. See: Ton Naaijkens, ‘De slag om Shelley: Over de autonome vertaalopvattingen van Willem Kloos’ in: Dirk Delabastita and Theo Hermans, eds.,
Prometheus ontboeid preface which was written around the same time as Verwey's *The Cenci* review: Gutteling had advanced the idea that ‘Wie eenmaal Shelley’s toon met den zijnen heeft weten te benaderen [...] mag zich menige vrijheid veroorloven’, implying that he had successfully adopted as his own the mode and mood of the source text. Kloos had taken great exception to this statement and had flown into print to demonstrate that Gutteling had failed dramatically to reproduce the ‘toon’ of Shelley's lyrical drama. Perhaps the editor of *De Nieuwe Gids*, when writing his attack, was also thinking about what Gutteling had proclaimed about the Shelley translations of De Raaf. Gutteling’s review in *De Beweging*, in which De Raaf’s *Alastor* and *De Cenci* were jointly judged, contains the following accusations: De Raaf ‘[heeft] de toon geheel veranderd’ (p. 233), especially *De Cenci* contains many a ‘vergrijp tegen den toon’ (p. 233); in short ‘de toon [is] bij deze vertolking geheel veranderd’ (p. 236; *Gutteling’s emphasis*). This attack on the labours of his loyal friend may have provoked Kloos to write his spiteful review of Gutteling’s *Prometheus ontboeid*. However, punishment in like followed soon. When Verwey came to review De Raaf’s translation of Friedrich Hebbel’s tragedy *Gyges en zijn ring* in 1916, lamenting that ‘ze niet gedragen wordt door gevoel voor toon’, it is difficult not to regard his statement in the larger context of the battle for critical hegemony between *De Beweging* and *De Nieuwe Gids*.

3. *De Cenci*: An analysis

The above debate leads directly to the question: how did De Raaf acquit himself of the enormous task of rendering Shelley’s blank verse in Dutch? In Chapter Three, I have shown which literary devices De Raaf drew on to ‘poeticise’ his Shelley translations. In his *Alastor*, De Raaf’s fondness of archaisms, both lexical and grammatical, was a distinct feature, and *De Cenci* is no exception in this respect. Was this, however, the most appropriate way of translating Shelley’s tragedy? Consider the following extract from *The Cenci*:

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I know two dull, fierce outlaws,
Who think man’s spirit as a worm’s, and they
Would trample out, for any slight caprice,
The meanest or the noblest life. This mood
Is marketable here in Rome. They sell
What we now want.
(III, i, ll. 233-38)

In his review of De Raaf’s Alastor and De Cenci translations, Gutteling quoted the Dutch rendition of this passage after the comment: ‘Is het volgende niet die “al te gezocht en geleerde woordenkeus” die Shelley in zijn inleiding voor dit onderwerp afkeurt’.

Twee boeven ken ik,
Dom en onstuimig, die een menschenziel
En die eens worms gelijk van waarde achten,
En om de kleinste gril zijn zij gewoon,
’t Eêlst leven te vertrappen of ’t geringste.
Dees aard is gangbre koopwaar hier in Rome.
Zij bieden veil wat thans ons dient.
(p. 43, Gutteling’s italics)

Indeed, Shelley had proclaimed in his preface: ‘I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description’ (SPP, p. 24). The italicised phrases in De Raaf’s text can hardly be called the ‘language [...] as would bring [the story] home to [the countryman’s] heart’ which Shelley had set himself as target (SPP, p. 239). It is reasonable to assume that with his stylistic approach, Shelley had purposed to increase the play’s accessibility and make its message intelligible for as wide an audience as possible. De Raaf, in contrast, detracts from the directness of the original.

26 B. van Heijningen: ‘Twee / Bandieten ken ik, ruwe wreedaards, die / Eens mensen ziel niet hoefer schatten dan / Die van een worm, en ’t minste of ’t edelst leven / Om de geringste gril vertrappen zouden. / Zoo’n aard is hier in Rome een marktwaar. Zij / Verkoopen wat wij nu behoeven’ (pp. 74-75).
through stylistic alienation. Gutteling rightly professed: 'Een van de grootste
schoonheden van dit geweldige drama is de taal, die eenvoudig, natuurlijk, maar toch in
overeenstemming met de ernst van het stuk is, zooals [zodat?] de verzen, hoezeer ook
naderend tot het gewone spreken, nergens de hooge deugd verliezen, schoone verzen te
zijn' (p. 235). The shortcomings in the Dutch version as cited by Gutteling are by no
means confined to this one fragment alone. Below is another example which highlights
the discrepancy in register between source and translation:

I love
The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,
When this shall be another’s, and that mine.
And I have no remorse and little fear,
Which are, I think, the checks of other men.
This mood has grown upon me, until now
Any design my captious fancy makes
The picture of its wish, and it forms none
But such as men like you would start to know,
Is as my natural food and rest debarred
Until it be accomplished.
(I, i, ll. 81-91)

De Raaf renders this is follows:

Ik heb lief
Het zien van doodstrijd, en 't gevoel van vreugd,
Als 't eerste is eens anders, en dit 't mijne.
Ook heb ik geen berouw en weinig vrees,
Die wis de breidels zijn van andre mannen.
Dees aard heeft me overgroeid, tot nu elk plan
Dat mijn onrustige verbeelding maakt
Tot schildring van zijn wenschen, en geen vormt ze
Of uws gelijken hoorden 't met ontzetting,
Is als onthouding van nooddruft en slaap
Aleer ‘t is uitgevoerd.
(p. 6, italics mine)\textsuperscript{27}

‘Eens anders’ is not only stilted and awkward, but is very likely to cause confusion as it can easily be misread as meaning ‘different for once’. ‘Wis’, ‘uws gelijken’, and ‘Aleer’ are unnecessary archaisms which only arrest the flow of the original. Inaccurate are ‘onrustige’ for ‘captious’ and ‘me overgroeid’ for ‘grown upon me’. Incidentally, Kloos was not happy either about the phrase ‘Als ‘t eerste is eens anders en dit ‘t mijne’. He suggested in a ‘Literaire Kroniek’: ‘Als ‘t eerste is van een aër, en dit het mijn’.\textsuperscript{28} Rhythmically more correct, this version is as laboured as De Raaë’s and demonstrates that Kloos did not heed Shelley’s intentions either as set out in the introduction. Much in Kloos’s spirit, De Raaë highlighted the poetical Shelley to the detriment of the educator or moral legislator. All this is borne out by the excerpt below:

It is indeed a most desired event.
If when a parent from a parent’s heart
Lifts from this earth to the great father of all
A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,
And when he rises up from dreaming it;
One supplication, one desire, one hope,
That he would grant a wish for his two sons,
Even all that he demands in their regard —
And suddenly beyond his dearest hope,
It is accomplished, he should then rejoice,
And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,
And task their love to grace his merriment,
Then honour me thus far — for I am he.
(I, iii, ll. 21-33)

\textsuperscript{27} B. van Heijningen: ‘k Bemin den aanblik / Van jammren, en ‘t gevoel van blijdschap, als / Een ander onder d’eerste krimpt en ik / Het tweede mij voel kittelen. Ik mis / De wroeging gansch en voel maar weinig vrees, / En juist die twee beteuglen, denk ik, andren. / Dees aard wies steeds in mij, totdat nu eindelijk / Elk oogmerk, waar mijn grillig brein zijn wensch / Mee afbeeldt (en het vormt er geen, dat niet / Elk mensch als gij deed siddren zoo hij ‘t kende) / Voor mij, zoolang tot het bereikt werd, als / Onthouding is van spis en rust’ (pp. 38-39).

It may be safely argued that De Raaf's translation belongs very much to Kloos's aestheticist 'school' in which the artistic impression on the reader — the result of a rhythmical reproduction of a sensual experience — takes precedence over ideational enlightenment. De Raaf's translation, at times, almost reads as an attempt to improve on the source text. The didactic dimension of Shelley's play, emphasised by the poet's linguistic self-restraint, is sacrificed in favour of a more blatantly poetic diction which drags the attention away from the meaning behind the words.

As demonstrated earlier by his use of the phrase 'maatschappelijk', De Raaf was not averse to censoring Shelley's anti-authoritarian attacks. In what follows, I will illustrate that further skewed readings of the original led to a sanitised translation. For instance, the opening scene of the play informs the spectators about the Pope's readiness,

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As demonstrated earlier by his use of the phrase 'maatschappelijk', De Raaf was not averse to censoring Shelley's anti-authoritarian attacks. In what follows, I will illustrate that further skewed readings of the original led to a sanitised translation. For instance, the opening scene of the play informs the spectators about the Pope's readiness,
despite some perfunctory protestations, to leave Count Cenci’s crimes unpunished for financial gain. Cardinal Camillo reports on his audience with the Pope:

he [the Pope] said that you [Count Cenci]
Bought perilous impunity with your gold;
That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell
An erring soul which might repent and live
(I, i, ll. 5-9)

De Raaf’s translation reads:

want gij kocht
Gevaarlijke strafloosheid met uw goud,
Zoo zeide hij; en zonden als van u,
Eens, tweemaal, goedgepast, steunden de Kerk;
En redden van de hel verdoolede ziel,
Die nog berouw kon hebben, leven kon
(p. 3)

As Shelley had already canvassed at length in Queen Mab, excessive wealth engenders corruption and oppression. He makes it plain in this particular passage that institutionalised religion does in fact nothing more than stoop to the god Mammon. The uncompromisingly straightforward ‘Enriched’ finds only a very feeble equivalent in De Raaf’s ‘steunden’. The verb ‘to compound’ further emphasises that it is through a financial transaction that the course of justice is perverted, a connotation completely lost in De Raaf’s ‘goedgepast’. Also, the rendition of ‘crimes’ (offences punishable by law) as ‘zonden’ (a breaking of a religious or moral code which does not necessarily constitute a misdemeanor from a legal point of view) sanctions a reading in which the Count’s wrongdoings are seen as transgressions in the private sphere rather than as crimes against

bloedverwanten / En vrienden, en belast hun liefde met / d’Opluistering van zijn vreugdetoon. — Welaan, / Bewijst gij allen mij die eer — want ik / Ben zulk een vader’ (pp. 45-46).

30 B. van Heijningen: ‘want hij zeide / Dat met uw goud gij een gevaarlijke / Strafloosheid kocht:
dat eeuweldaan als de uwe / Zoo één- of tweemaal geldelijk geboet, / De Kerk verrijken, en der
Hel een ziel / Ontrukken, die verdwaalde, maar kon beetren, / Indien zij tijd hield tot berouw’
(p. 36, italics mine).
A similar collapsing of Shelley’s insurrectionary design occurs in the Dutch translation of this passage:

A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal,
And live a free life as to wine or women,
And with a peevish temper may return
To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;
Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.
(I, ii, ll. 75-79)

De Cenci has:

Een man doorsteekt zijn vijand of zijn knecht,
Leeft vrij wat wijn of vrouwen aanbelangt,
Keert in een booze bui naar ‘t saai tehuis
En gaat dan kijken op zijn vrouw en kindren.
Dit heet dan snood geweld bij vrouwe’ en dochters.
(p. 11)

The phraseology of this speech is linked directly to the dedication where Shelley had claimed to stand up against all ‘domestic and political tyranny’. The Cenci shows how violence on a private, domestic level is mirrored in the power-structures at large. That is why the story of the Cenci family is a metaphor for the abuses of autocratic patriarchy which rapes the people it is meant to protect and nurture. Paradoxically, De Raaf’s ‘snood geweld’ for ‘tyranny’ narrows down the political scope of the text through lexical overgeneralisation.\(^{32}\) In a society where inequality is rife, humane ideals have no chance

\(^{31}\) B. van Heijningen: ‘dat een man zijn vijand / Of knecht verslaat, waar ‘t wijn en vrouwen geldt / Het vrieste leven leidt, en dikwijls geemlijk / Terugkeert naar een saai tehuis en daar / Zoo oud als jong eens doomeemt, noemen dochters / En vrouwen een afgrijsbre dwinglandij’ (p. 44, italics mine).

\(^{32}\) The same happens in Beatrice’s speech during the banquet scene in which Count Cenci announces and celebrates the deaths of his two sons Rocco and Christofano. Beatrice pleads to the assembled noblemen to protect her and her kin from the Count’s depravity, and in the process, establishes a direct link between the words ‘tyranny’ and ‘father’: ‘tyranny and impious hate / Stand sheltered by a father’s hoary hair’ (I, iii, ll. 100-101). De Raaf translates: ‘geweld en goddelooze haat / Beschermd [...] door eens vaders grauwe haar’ (p. 16). B. van Heijningen manages to place the two words next to each other: ‘Wijl ‘t grijze haar eens vaders dwinglandij / En goddeloozen haat tot schild verstrekt’ (p. 49, italics mine).
of survival, hence Shelley’s use of the word ‘vassal’ in the above speech which explicates the feudal system as endemic of all tyranny. Significantly, the first time the word ‘vassal’ crops up in the play is in the context of Franscesco Cenci’s bribery of the Pope to cover up the murder of someone who tried to bring the Count to justice: ‘no witness [...] shall see / That which the vassal threatened to divulge / Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward’ (i, i, ll. 21-23). De Raaf renders this as ‘Geen tuige [...] zal voortaan / Zien wat de schobjak dreigde te verklikken, / Wiens strot met slijk verstikt werd tot zijn loon’ (p. 4).33 The term ‘schobjak’ obfuscates the hierarchical explicitness of Shelley’s lines which underscore how the weak have to suffer the omnipotence of the financial, political, and religious elite.

A final example will corroborate the above argument. The prelate Orsino is speaking: ‘Cenci must find me here, and I must bear / The imperious inquisition of his look’ (III, i, ll. 274-75). In the context of Count Cenci’s self-proclaimed pleasure in torturing his victims, the many references to ‘the rack’, ‘the wheel’ and ‘the engines [of torture]’ in the final act (V, ii, ll. 72, 182, 192), and the pervading religious phraseology, the term ‘inquisition’ is invested with additional meaning. The action, as Shelley specifies, is set ‘During the Pontificate of Clement VIII’, i.e. in the period 1592-1605 when much of Europe groaned under the tyranny of the catholic Inquisition (SPP, p. 243). Again Shelley forces his audience to recognise that the Church and the aristocracy (exemplified by Count Cenci) are inherently despotic.34 De Raaf translates this passages as: ‘Cenci vindt me hier / En ‘k moet ‘t gebiedend vorschen van zijn blik /[...] doorstaan’ (p. 45).35

Gutteling’s dissatisfaction with the tone of De Raafs translation shows that he too was in essence concerned with stylistic effects only. Moreover, he makes the rather infelicitously worded claim that the phraseology in The Cenci proves that ‘Shelley als een

33 B. van Heijningen: ‘Voortaan zal geen getuige [...] / Aanschouwen, wat de afhangeling, wiens strot / Tot loon met zand verstopt is, dreigde rond / Te schettern’ (p. 36, italics mine). As the translator made clear in the list of errata on p. 198, the phrase ‘afhangeling’ is a correction of ‘afhank’lijke’.
34 ‘Cenci’s power is presented in the play as being co-extensive with the Papal tyranny of the Counter-Reformation, a system of government that continued to extinguish liberty in Italy right up to the time of Shelley’s residence, and beyond’. Alan M. Weinberg, Shelley’s Italian Experience, Macmillan Studies in Romanticism (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 81-82.
35 B. van Heijningen has opted for the same translation: ‘Want Cenci vindt mij hier; / En ‘k moet den blik doorstaan, waarmee gebiedend / Hij vorschen zal naar wat mij hier deed komen’ (p. 76, italics mine). No easy solution presents itself in Dutch; perhaps ‘En ‘k moet het scherprecht van zijn blik doorstaan’. 
God zijn onderwerp beheerschte'.\(^{36}\) This is followed by the question: ‘Wat is verrukkelijker dan een gedicht waarin het ontzettende geheven wordt in de sfeer der Schoonheid (Sofocles, Shakespeare, Baudelaire, en ook The Cenci), maar wat afschuwelijker dan een waarin het vreeselijke zonder die wijding verschijnt?’ He concludes: ‘En zoo is Dr. De Raafs vertaling geworden’ (pp. 235-36). The question reads as a paraphrase of Potgieter’s line which De Raaf used as the motto for his translation (‘Wat vraagt ge of de ijslijkheid geen dichterlijke zijde, / ‘t Ontzettend niets aandoenlijks heeft?’), but with the addition of the triumvirate ‘Sofocles, Shakespeare, Baudelaire’ summoned to shoulder Shelley’s work. For Gutteling, as for Wismans, and, indeed Kloos, ‘de sfeer der Schoonheid’ still remained of primary importance. Later critics have looked with more sympathy on De Raafs De Cenci. For instance, in the preface to his own translation which was used as the acting copy for the 1995 production by Het Zuidelijk Toneel, Brick de Bois wrote: ‘De [Raafs] vertaling uit 1908 heett een monumentaliteit die die van het Engelse origineel sterk benadert’.\(^{37}\) No-one will dispute that De Raaf’s rendition is monumental, but it has not always kept intact what makes Shelley’s tragedy so momentous.

4. Roland Holst–Shelley–Kloos

It took more than a decade after De Raaf’s translation for Shelley’s The Cenci to become the subject of some further critical attention in the Netherlands. Prompted by the centenary of Shelley’s death, which had already occasioned many articles concerning the poet’s life and literary achievements, Adriaan Roland Holst (1888-1976) contributed to the commemorations with a personal account of his relationship with Shelley’s poetry. The fairly short piece which appeared in De Gids of July 1922 is entitled, undoubtedly with tongue in cheek, ‘Shelley, een afscheid’.\(^{38}\) It deals not so much with Shelley’s premature and tragic adieu to the world one hundred years ago, as with Roland Holst’s own farewell to ‘den tijd toen mijn liefde zich voortdurend in Shelley wilde verliezen’ (p. 93). It seems already more than a century ago, the Dutch poet claims, that he spent


that 'gouden grooten zomer' (p. 93) at the English seaside (Lynmouth, Devonshire), living in a cottage for several months where Shelley once resided with Harriet Westbrook and Elizabeth Hitchener in 1812. Yet, gone are the days of adolescent idolatry. In this respect, Roland Holst’s piece has become above all a valediction to youth as epitomised in the figure of Shelley the poet.

If his piece opens with the statement that his veneration for Shelley has now become a portion already dead in him, Roland Holst also refers several times to Shelley’s death by drowning with which sentimentalised, iconographic representation he had become familiar during his years as a student in Oxford. From August 1909 till December 1910, Roland Holst stayed in Oxford reading Celtic literature and taking advantage of the vast library collections to acquaint himself with the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, D.G. Rossetti, Morris, Wilde, Yeats, and many more. Though his lectures took place at Exeter College, he only had to turn a corner to go past the facade of University College, where Shelley had once taken up lodgings before being expelled by the University authorities and where a statue was erected to commemorate the rehabilitated alumnus. The marble, executed by Onslow Ford, was commissioned by Lady Shelley, the wife of the poet’s son Percy, and donated to the College. Few would argue with Newman Ivey White’s denunciation of the work as ‘the record of a sentimentally false idea’, bearing ‘its part in preserving the misconception of Shelley as a beautiful, ineffectual angel’. Shelley’s elongated body in this over-mannered marble may have led Roland Holst to write about Shelley’s ‘lichaam dat de schoonheid der engelen verwant schijnt te zijn geweest’ (p. 93), and the ‘snelle, rijzige, een engelen gelijkende gedaante, een hemeling welhaast’ (p. 101). One may conjecture about Roland Holst having witnessed, or at least having described to him, the popular student prank which, over the

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40 In his sonnet ‘Aan Shelley’, the South-African poet Theo Wassenaar recalls his visit a couple of years later to ‘Geleerd Oxford, oud in diens van wysheid’ (l. 1) where ‘rus in marmer ‘n ontslapte rigter, / ‘n Jongling edel, geest`lik reeds die vader / Van verre toekoms. Heilig is die digter!’ (ll. 10-12). Theo Wassenaar, Gedigte (Bloemfontein, Kaapstad and Port Elizabeth: Nasionale Pers Beperk, 1938), p. 5. The sonnet is followed by another in which Shelley is depicted as residing with ‘blonde Skoonheid self’ (l. 4), p. 6.

years, had turned into an annual tradition, and which consisted of chopping off the statue’s genitalia. It is therefore not so extraordinary that Shelley’s name became associated in the poet’s mind with carefree youthfulness. The nature of the statue, with its typically Victorian mawkishness, may also account for the characterisation of Shelley’s poetry in his ‘Een Afscheid’.

In a nutshell, for Roland Holst, the ethereal fluidity of Shelley’s writing can only be admired during one’s adolescence, until maturity comes which requires more substantial stuff to gratify the aesthetic faculties and intellect. There is also an important ethical dimension in Roland Holst’s criticism. He believes that Shelley ‘meende [zijn medemensen] te beminnen in zijn van weenen en jubelen stralend en onaandachtig voorbijgaan’ (p. 93, italics mine), whereas in fact ‘[hij hen in] zijn hemelsch ongeduld […] voortdurend voorbijzong’ (p. 98). Shelley, so he argues, is too much carried away by his untameable lyricism and his poetry therefore lacks concentration and ‘weight’. Roland Holst favours Keats to Shelley who, in such mature works as the Spring odes of 1819, appears to him less diffuse and more profound in his directness and economy of language. As such, Roland Holst’s criticism is very similar to Matthew Arnold’s well-known objections, something which Kloos also pointed out in his reply to Roland Holst’s confession. Yet the deep sympathy and subdued admiration which pervade Roland Holst’s piece indicate that his adieu is certainly not as radical and irreversible a gesture as may appear at first sight. It takes a considerable amount of esteem and reverence to phrase one’s critique in such terms as in the following extract:

Het gevolg [of this unbalanced lyricism] is, dat zijn edele liefde, hoewel zij onvergetelijk blijft, geen vaste woning vindt in het menschelijk hart, dat zijn Idee der Geestelijke Schoonheid, hoezeer vervoerd, geen wortel schiet in menschelijke aarde,

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43 Parenthetically, it is rather surprising to find that Kloos familiarised himself with Arnold’s utterances about Shelley at a relatively late age. In June 1917, when he was fifty-eight years old, he wrote to his brother-in-law, Co Reynèke van Stuwe, in London: ‘Matthew Arnold heeft een studie geschreven over Shelley, waarin hij, naar wat ik ervan hoorde, heel erg moet afgeven op dezen grooten poëet. Kan jij nu ook te weten komen of die essay nog in den handel is?’ Unpublished letter, part of the uncatalogued material of the Kloos collections in the Literary Museum and Documentation Centre (K533). Three weeks later, Kloos received Arnold’s collected essays from Co, with a carefully annotated list of all places dealing with Shelley.
dat zijn rhythmie, hoewel voortdurend en onvermoeid bewogen door de liefde der natuur — die wellicht toch zijn meest onmiddellijke liefde was — maar zeer zelden verdiept tot die bewogenheid, waardoor het stroomend hartebloed zich onderscheidt van de rivier [...] (p. 96)

Regrettably, Shelley’s deeply humane ideals are suffocated by an overlanguaged diction, leading to the ultimate failure of such ambitious poems as *The Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound*. Revelling in the euphonious and plastic qualities of his verse, Shelley detracts from the desired impact of his messages by his typically kaleidoscopic approach. As a result it was felt that there was often a lack of intellectual rigour in his writing.

It is incongruous, therefore, that the Dutch poet, who laments the unsubstantiality of Shelley’s verse, should write that ‘een kunstenaar voor allés de vormer van een wereld en niet een hervormer van déze wereld heeft te zijn’ (p. 100). Perhaps, he merely wanted to express how Shelley’s lack of concentration made it difficult for the poet to deal with and make sense of concrete reality.

In all its subjectivity, and though flawed by its overemphasis on the poet’s lyric exuberance, Roland Holst’s piece in *De Gids* contains some very astute observations. It is far aloof from the fits of near hysteria and awkward verbosity which so often encumber Kloos’s Shelley articles. How else can one describe Kloos’s reaction to Roland Holst’s essay?

Voor wie Shelley echter waarachtiglijk kent, want wie Hem niet alleen maar, zooals Holst zegt, dat hijzelf gedaan heeft, om den zwierenden gang zijner rhythmien bewondert, neen, wie dat uit ‘s Dichter’s Psyche gerezene geluid, zoowel als diens als uit de Achterdiepte des Aanzijns gestegene Verbeeldingen heeft leeren doorproeven met zijn eigene Psyche, als de verzinnelijking van een hoogen en wijden Geest, die de
The value of Roland Holst’s remarks, which Kloos unfairly disparages or simply ignores, lies, as he points out himself, in the motivation of his change in appreciation: ‘Het bepalen der oorzaken [...] van dit voorbijgaan [...] leidt zonder omwegen tot de kenmerken van [Shelley’s] werk’ (p. 94).

In his ‘Eenige Opmerkingen over Shelley’s Geestelijken Inhoud en Beteekenis’ from which I quoted the long extract above, Kloos ripostes that Roland Holst has ill understood Shelley’s works and intentions. Shelley does possess superior powers of reasoning which crystallise, without the slightest effort, into bold fantasy and delicate music. According to Kloos, this occurs so unobtrusively that superficial readers, like Roland Holst, mistake his work for effusions of a shallow mind wanting in acumen and maturity. Kloos argues how he too, his ‘heele bestaan door, hoofdzakelijk innerlijk [heeft] geleeft’ (p. 706). Inevitably, many more mundane people find in such a comportment, which they cannot understand, grounds for mockery: ‘Hierin, als het niet te pedant klinkt, om dit te zeggen,’ he adds, ‘stem ik met Shelley overeen’ (p. 706). The ‘maatschappelijk-conventioneele, oppervlakkige praat-meneer’ Roland Holst portrays Shelley as a ‘zinledigen speler met klanken’ (p. 710). Yet, *Prometheus Unbound, Epipsychidion*, ‘en een twaalftal andere groote dichtwerken [zijn] vol diepe zin’, Kloos assures his readers (p. 704). More precisely, in his writings, Shelley attempts to fathom ‘het Zijnsmysterie en het Staatsmysterie en vele andere even zware onderwerpen’ (pp. 705-706). How he did this, to what end, and with what results, Kloos does not care to explain. Instead, Roland Holst is derided several times for adhering to Matthew Arnold’s blinkered views on Shelley. Kloos suspects — ‘omdat [hijzelf] nu eenmaal altijd een psycholoog [is]
geweest' — that 'Arnold het ook niet goed kon uitstaan, dat zijn groote Landgenoot, in
diens ziel, altijd los was gebleven van de belangrijke Abstracties, die hij, de brave
Matthew, zelf voor de hoogste hield, n.l. de Engelsche Staatskerk, en de officiëele
Britsche politiek' (p. 707, italics mine). Needless to say that it is very disingenuous to
portray the poet as detached from religious and political concerns. Reproaching his
countrymen for their indifferent, non-committal attitude, Shelley never stopped
vigorously attacking the religious and political authorities, not the least in The Cenci.
Kloos's pronouncement is yet more compelling evidence of the never-ending sanitisation
process to which he subjected Shelley's character and work.

However, for Roland Holst there was one work in the totality of Shelley's oeuvre
which did not suffer from the usual defects of linguistic excess or want of ideas. Kloos,
with questionable intellectual integrity, failed to point out Roland Holst’s qualification to
the readers of De Nieuwe Gids. This censoring, I believe, is also indicative of Kloos’s
unease with the work in question. The composition Roland Holst praised as the highlight
in Shelley’s career is also rated as one of the finest achievements of nineteenth-century
English (dramatic) literature. This is what he wrote:

Steeds weer ontdekt men het te midden van zijn werk, alsof men in een uitgestrekt en
verlaten gebied van landschappen, duistere en lieflijke, met hier en daar wilde
bouwvallen, groot en overwoekerd door bloeiende gewassen, plotseling om de bocht
van een steil rotspad zich gekomen ziet voor een open hoogvlakte, waarop een
burcht, onvergaan, norsch en vast van bouw, staat. (p. 98)

This solid, almost impenetrable construct, towering above the luscious lowlands of his
other works, is indeed Shelley's first full-blown attempt at drama, The Cenci. According
to Roland Holst, its irrevocability and its stern beauty turn The Cenci into Shelley's
sublimest and most perfect creation. It resembles only his other works in that nobility of
spirit and soul which is the drive behind his never-ending fight against hatred, betrayal,
corruption, and the obscenity of tyranny. Roland Holst’s words are remarkable enough to
be quoted in full:

[...] niettegenstaande alle onderscheid in taal, vorm, ontroering, gedachte, ontstaat
toch ook dit treurspel uit wat voor hem [i.e. Shelley] levend beginsel was: de
verheven adel van ziel, komend in onverzoenbaren tegenstrijd met een wereld of
Roland Holst greatly approves of Shelley’s endeavour, as outlined in the preface, to eschew detached similes and isolated descriptions, and he admires the consistency with which Shelley succeeded in refraining from writing ‘what is commonly called mere poetry’ (SPP, p. 241). Roland Holst’s enthusiasm for the play was so great that in September 1923, one year after ‘Een Afscheid’, he informed his uncle about his intention to translate Shelley’s *The Cenci*: ‘Ik sta op het punt het besluit te nemen om weer eens ‘n groot werk te vertalen, misschien weer iets van Shakespeare, misschien ook Shelley’s Cenci. Het is “manly work”’. He was apparently unaware of the existence of De Raaf’s version. Richard Roland Holst, his uncle, must have mentioned De Raaf’s volume, which annoyed Adriaan considerably: ‘Ik foeter nog steeds in mijzelf tegen dien vervelenden de Raaf met zijn Cenci-vertaling; nu ga ik eerst maar dagenlang Shakespeare lezen om tot een andere keuze te komen; het is verdomd vervelend.’ Unlike Albert Verwey who had had ulterior motives for producing a rivalling Dutch *Alastor*, Roland Holst did not think it opportune to emulate De Raaf’s efforts. He finally opted for *Richard III*, a translation of which appeared in 1929. This would also turn out to be a crucial year for the reception of Shelley, and more precisely, for his *The Cenci*, in the Low Countries.

5. The 1929 performance in Antwerp

In September 1927 the Antwerp Koninklijke Nederlandsche Schouwburg (KNS) issued its prospectus advertising a performance of ‘*De Censi*’ [sic] for the near future. The

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45 Quoted from: Erik Menkveld and Margaretha H. Schenkeveld, eds., *A. Roland Holst: Briefwisseling met R.N. Roland Holst en H. Roland Holst-van der Schalk*, Privé-Domein 153 (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1990), pp. 295, 296. In a footnote on p. 297, the editors erroneously give the date of publication of De Raaf’s *De Cenci* as 1911 instead of 1908.

46 André Jolies responded to Roland Holst’s ‘Afscheid’ with an article in *De Gids* in which he attempted to account for ‘het ontoereikende van zijn [i.e. Shelley’s] dichtkunst’. The deficiencies of Shelley’s works find their origin, Jolies believes, in the grotesque tradition of the gothic novel. See ‘Shelley’s pad naar de dichtkunst’ in: *De Gids*, 1922, pp. 457-80, reprinted in *Bezieling en vorm: Essays over letterkunde* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1923), pp. 164-89 (p. 189).
shaky accuracy in spelling is a telltale symptom of the relative obscurity to which the play had been condemned in this part of Europe at that time. After the announcement, still more than one year elapsed before De Raaf, on 27 December 1928, received a letter from the theatre director, Oscar de Gruyter (1885-1929), asking him whether his translation could be used for a stage performance of Shelley’s play.\(^\text{47}\) De Gruyter was a passionate anglophile who had already translated, as well as directed, plays by Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw. In the past, he had also been responsible for a couple of highly acclaimed Shakespeare productions. De Raaf was thrilled about the plans and consented to the director’s request. Yet, since De Gruyter had become too ill to take on the task of directing *De Cenci* himself — he would die in the month following the production — the dilettante Dick Van Veen was commissioned to do the job. Apart from being in charge of the direction, the lighting and décor, it was also agreed he should play the part of Count Cenci.

In his admirable study *Shelley’s ‘Cenci’: Scorpions Ringed with Fire*, Stuart Curran devotes an entire chapter to the various performances of Shelley’s drama throughout Europe and America.\(^\text{48}\) Starting with the first, private staging in 1886 by the Shelley Society, Curran gives further accounts of various productions between 1891 and 1959. The Antwerp mounting, however, does not feature in his overview. Gerlof Janzen, relying on Curran’s authoritative work, is guilty of the same regretful omission: ‘Tussen de twee wereldoorlogen kende het werk opvoeringen in Coburg, Praag, Moskou en, in 1923, in Rome [...]. Voor 1995 zette in ons land [the Netherlands] het Zuidelijk Toneel het werk op zijn programma.’\(^\text{49}\) However, the Antwerp staging is important in its own right as it compels us to modify certain received ideas about the development of Shelley’s fame abroad. I will now concentrate on the six performances at the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Schouwburg in mid-January 1929 which, contrary to what Curran’s and Janzen’s oversight seems to suggest, received a fair amount of attention in the local papers. The reviews, when read alongside Kloos’s (brief) critical evaluation of the play


and De Raaf’s translation, shed more light on the development of Shelley’s status in the Low Countries as a poet and political radical, and on Kloos’s efforts to influence this process.

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned how, in 1886, the Opregte Haarlemsche Courant had commented on the courageous decision by the Shelley Society to mount such an unconventional play. Though De Raaf’s excitement about the Antwerp enterprise is unmistakable, it was mingled with a sense of apprehension. This can be inferred from the programme in which he wrote a synopsis of the play. It concludes with an already familiar phrase: ‘Hulde aan de Directie […], die den moed heeft gehad, het unieke en eenige treurspel van den Engelschen dichter voor het eerst in de Nederlandsche taal voor het voetlicht te brengen’. Did he perhaps fear that the public in conservative, catholic Flanders might be ill-disposed towards the whole enterprise? De Raaf’s premonitions were right: with all his enthusiasm, Van Veen could not prevent the production from becoming a financial fiasco. In a total of six public performances, stretching from 12 January till 17 January 1929, De Cenci drew hardly 1700 spectators, two thirds of the number present at the single private performance back in 1886. On the last night, the cast had to play for a virtually empty house: only one hundred and thirty people had found their way to the KNS. The substitution of Van Veen for De Gruyter had hugely diminished the professional cachet of the production and might thus, in part, account for the disappointing figures. In its report on the performance, Het Tooneel provides its readers with the following anecdote:

Verleden week stond een atheneumleeraar — en geen van de minste! [sic] — voor een plakbrief van “De Cenci”. Toen hij las, dat de heer Van Veen optrad en de regie deed, zei hij luid op: [“]Nu ga ik zeker niet naar de schouwburg![“]. Dat wij waarheid spreken, zal de heer Van Veen wel ondervonden hebben nu hij […] voor half-ledige zalen zijn kunstenmakerskuren uithaalt.

I am grateful to Mr Dirk Hellemans of the ‘Dienst Dramaturgie’ of the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Schouwburg in Antwerp for sending me a copy of this programme.

To put things into perspective, several months later, a production of The Merry Wives of Windsor drew an audience of nearly 7500 spectators. I am indebted to the staff of the Antwerp city archives for granting me access to their collections and allowing me to consult the KNS account books. In the latter, I found the table listing the exact number of performances, attendance figures and ticket prices which I have reproduced in Appendix 5.

Nonetheless, there were more elements at play. This becomes evident when reading contemporary reviews in the daily press. In the issue of the theatre journal *Het Tooneel* that appeared on the day of the opening performance, Th. de Ronde dutifully prepared the theatre-goer for Shelley’s ‘moreel anarchisme’ and ‘ploertigste aanvallen tegen Rome’. He explained how the poet had consorted with ‘de minst betrouwbare der [...] revolutionnaire droomers’, and how he had launched, with ‘visionnaire vernielingszucht’, a ‘kruistocht tegen troon en kerk’.\(^3\) It is true that a far less condemnatory note is struck when De Ronde remarks on Shelley’s gifts as a poet, yet this hardly compensates for the preceding character assassination. Subsequent reviewers were to take their cue from De Ronde’s piece, and this irrespectively of any artistic considerations. Soon, the seditious quality of Shelley’s play was the subject of relentless attacks, initially in a fairly covert way, though the critics’ underlying political motivation in the reports is all too clear:


The correspondent of the *Gazet van Antwerpen* had indeed looked in vain for some uplifting instruction and had left the theatre with feelings of ‘bitterheid, ontevredenheid, ongenoegen, zwartgalligheid’. He therefore found himself compelled to advise his readers not to waste their time by going to a play from which they would fail to benefit, either intellectually or morally. This failure to produce an uplifting experience or to put on an unambiguous celebration of bourgeois class values was unpardonable for the majority of genteel reviewers: ‘Tooneel moet opbeuren, verheffen, beschaven, opvoeden. In “De Cenci” ontwaren wij niets van dit alles’. Making allowances for Shelley’s rich poetic powers, *Het Handelsblad* thought the subject equally depressive, with the sheer dimensions of the play stifling any recreational pleasure. Amidst the ‘verrottende

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\(^3\) Th. de Ronde, ‘Voor het doek opgaat: *De Cenci*, Percy Bysshe Shelley’ in: *Het Tooneel*, 12 January 1929, pp. 1-3 (pp. 2, 3).

helleuitwasemingen' the spectator was forced to witness 'een walgend zegevieren van de perversiteit'.

The phrasing and argument in the above extracts, in which De Raaf must have seen his worst fears materialised, are not unlike what the anonymous reviewer of *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences* had had to say on the subject in April 1820:

> We protest most solemnly, that when we reached the last page of this play, our minds were so impressed with its odious and infernal character, that we could not believe it to be written by a mortal being for the gratification of his fellow-creatures on this earth: it seemed to be the production of a fiend, and calculated for the entertainment of devils in hell. (*Barcus, p. 164*)

Once century later, Shelley's play had lost very little of its inflammatory power for the Flemish reviewers. *De Nieuwe Gazet* pronounced *De Cenci* to be little else than a 'gewrocht' and an unsavoury, vulgar farce. It was also quick to point out that Shelley must have taken great relish in his depiction of a corrupt Pope: 'Het spreekt vanzelf dat Shelley de rol van den Heiligen Vader niet schooner gemaakt heeft'. Though no exact reference is given — a very significant fact in itself — it is passages like the following which will have caused particular offence. Count Cenci is presented as basking in self-confidence, thinking himself invincible:

> No doubt Pope Clement,  
> And his most charitable nephews, pray  
> That the apostle Peter and the saints  
> Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy  
> Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days  
> Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards  
> Of their revenue  
> (I, i, ll. 27-33)

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56 RIP, 'De Cenci' in: *De Nieuwe Gazet*, 14 January 1929.
The term ‘nephews’ is a familiar euphemism for the Pope’s bastard sons. As a matter of fact, the play’s very opening lines are categorical about the turpitude of the See of Rome. The first scene starts with Cardinal Camillo assuring Count Cenci that he need not fear prosecution for his latest crime, provided he is willing to give up a substantial part of his possessions:

That matter of the murder is hushed up
If you consent to yield his Holiness
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate. —
(I, i, ll. 1-3)

In a country where the vast majority of people were practising catholics, as opposed to the protestant Netherlands where the translation had first appeared, *De Cenci* was bound to strike a sensitive chord, even if papal infallibility, which the play presents as a shambles in the reign of Pope Clement VIII, did not become a dogma until 1870, when decreed so by Pius IX. By highlighting the implied attack on catholicism, it is very likely that the reviewer had exposed the soft underbelly of the whole enterprise. Much would be made indeed of the tragedy’s irreverence towards orthodox religion and the authorities representing it. In the process, the abuse poured over Count Cenci’s head and the nature of the attacks on Shelley’s personality suggest that, in some reviewers’ minds, both figures were hardly distinguishable from each other. Such a reaction had not been exceptional in the early critiques either: the English reviewer from *The Literary Gazette* had opined on the play’s first publication that

the whole design, and every part of it, is a libel upon humanity; the conception of a brain not only distempered, but familiar with infamous images, and accursed contemplations. [...] Count Cenci, an old grey haired man, a horrible fiendish incarnation, [...] who delights in nothing but in the wretchedness of all the human race, and causes all the misery in his power; who [...] is, in short, such a miracle of atrocity, as only this author, we think, could have conceived. (*Barcus*, pp. 164, 165)

Though the historical sources used by Shelley during the composition of his tragedy all suggest that Count Cenci was an atheist, Shelley turned his male protagonist into a catholic, as had been pointed out earlier by Kok in *Nederland*. I agree with Alan
Weinberg that the English poet may have ‘adjusted his source to achieve greater historicity’ in that Shelley’s ‘experience of Italy [where everyone was ‘tainted with religion’] had taught him that, more likely than not, Cenci was a religious man’.57 I would add that the change was also deeply subversive, as Count Cenci can now (and does) call on God to aid him in his evil schemes. The fact that Cenci’s prayers in which he asks for the death of his two sons seem to be answered and his crimes sanctioned by the Church’s unwillingness to intervene implicates the entire religious establishment and challenges the existence of a benevolent God. That Kloos should refer to Shelley when he briefly discusses De Raaf’s De Cenci translation in his ‘Literaire Kroniek as ‘een wezenlijk-christelijk zachtmoedig, ultra-idealistisch anarchist’ can therefore mean only two things: either he did not really appreciate Shelley’s attack on religious institutions, or he wanted to present the English poet in a favourable light by proclaiming Shelley’s harmless intentions.58

When they came to review the Antwerp mounting, the professional theatre press were in no doubt about the pernicious qualities of play and playwright. After having given Shelley the epithets of ‘volslagen godloochenaar’ and ‘priesterhater’, Het Antwerpsch Tooneel characterises his play as an immature ‘studententreurspel’ and a ‘massieve dramatische plumpudding’ in which only people ‘in de gevangenis’ or those confined ‘in een sanatorium’ may occasionally show some interest.59 Again there is an uncanny resemblance with what one English reviewer, back in 1820, had claimed about the insanity of the play’s ideological drift: ‘[Shelley’s] precepts are conveyed in the cries of Bedlam’.60 What is noticeable is how the strong centrifugal pulls by which the Flemish critics jolted Shelley out of the literary epicentre into the social periphery also affect the focal point of many of the reviews themselves. Though the reviewers’ derisive vocabulary leaves little room for misinterpretation, the subversive forces inherent in The Cenci are approached in a strikingly circuitous way: the play’s disruptive potential is dealt with by implication only. For instance, instead of concentrating on specific passages in the text to

57 Alan M. Weinberg, Shelley’s Italian Experience, p. 83.
58 Kloos’s statement would be less problematical if ‘wezenlijk-christelijk’ were read as meaning ‘humane’. However, in 1893, Kloos had denounced both as contemptible and ‘onwaar’: ‘O, de humaniteit, wilt gij weten, waar ze vandaan komt? ’t Is de idee van het Christendom. Wij meenden er nu eindelijk voorgoed van verlost te zijn, en daar komt het weer dood-bedaard op in de hoofden der menschen en grijnst ons tegen als de Humaniteit’. Quoted from H. Wismans, ‘Over Shelley’, p. 13.
60 The unnamed critique appeared in the May issue of The London Magazine (Barcus, p. 195).
account for his consternation, the critic of Het Antwerpsch Tooneel prefers to dwell with considerable gusto on the sorry aftermath of the publication of The Necessity of Atheism, Shelley’s elopement with Harriet Westbrook and her subsequent suicide (‘wat ook al moeilijk als een recommendatie voor zijn karakter te aanvaarden is’), as well as the futile attempts of this ‘volslagen godloochenaar’ to secure guardianship over his children. It is meaningful that not a single Flemish reviewer provided his readership with even the smallest of quotations from Shelley’s text. This is all the more remarkable since its versificatory qualities were never called into question; on the contrary: they were sometimes openly praised. Apparently, and because of the ideologically charged subtext, the play was denied any real, tangible existence and no residual proof, through citation, was allowed to help materialise the dreadful spectre which Shelley’s text had conjured up in the critics’ minds.

More concerned with the artistic merits of the play, Het Tooneel, the theatre journal in which De Ronde had earlier published his blinkered piece, argued that any scenic representation of The Cenci needs must shed a most unfavourable light on its ‘tallooze fouten — zoo psychologische als technische —’. It also emphasises the anti-papal nature of the work, but for once, this does not degenerate into a character assassination. The subliminal message of this review seems to be, however, that in his cumbersome play which deals with cruel tyranny and oppression, Shelley has been untrue to his quintessentially lyrical, and as a consequence, inoffensive self. That is why people who were familiar with the content and tenor of The Cenci, as opposed to those ‘die Shelley [enkel] kenden uit zijn lyrische gedichten’, ‘hun hart vast[helden]’ on seeing the advertisement of the KNS. Perforce, by unduly directing the attention to what was seen as a marginal work in the Shelley canon, the poet’s rebellious nature becomes suddenly foregrounded. Twelve years earlier, Wismans had already deplored Shelley’s repeated transgressions of the lyrical in favour of the political:

Telkens keert hij de stralende engelen der scheppende verbeelding en der dichterlijke ontroering, die hem zoo trouw terzijde staan, den rug toe, om zijn spot te richten tegen het heiligste. En dan vloeien over de lippen, die nog druipen van muziek, de vloekstrofen van den haat. Dan wordt hij blind voor de schoonheid van het leven, dan wordt zijn oog beneveld door den hartstochten en ziet hij niets dan vlekken en wanschappenheden. Dan wordt al het dramatisch talent, al de kracht en de teederheid van “the Cenci” verspild aan een weerzinwekkend onderwerp, dat hij, alleen uit zucht
om de tyrannie te onmaskeren en aan de kaak te stellen, en niet uit schoonheidsdrang, tot stof voor dit treurspel heeft uitgekozen.\(^6\)

Again we find Wismans sharing Kloos's preoccupation with 'schoonheidsdrang' (see also Chapter Two), yet at the same time boldfacing what he saw as Shelley's treacherous sedition. Shelley's 'zucht om de tyrannie te onmaskeren' is scorned as something totally illegitimate; it is an urge irreconcilable with any artistic sensibility. Kloos, in contrast to Wismans's recognition of The Cenci's anti-authoritarianism, pretended to discern in the play nothing more than 'tragi[sch] realisme'. Together with his refusal to inform the readers in De Nieuwe Gids about Roland Holst's estimation of Shelley's tragedy, this is further evidence of Kloos hushing up what many perceived as Shelley's nefarious insurrection. That Kloos did so deliberately I will demonstrate later on.

If Wismans appraised The Cenci as typical of Shelley's ideological and artistic eccentricity, others were keen to stress the play's unique position in Shelley's oeuvre. The KNS programme itself does so in phrases with a very familiar ring:

Men behoeft Shelley's werken slechts oppervlakkig te kennen, om te weten dat zijn treurspel De Cenci daaronder een geheel afzonderlijke plaats inneemt. Het doet aan als iets geheel onverwachts, zooals een enkel, op zich zelf staand, huiveringwekkend rotsgevaarte in een liefelijk, paradijsachtig eiland met bloemen en beken.

The above extract sounds very similar to Roland Holst's characterisation of the play as a 'burcht, onvergaan, norsch en vast van bouw' amidst 'een uitgestrekt [...] gebied van landschappen'. What is more, it is striking how the description of the existing Cenci castle which Shelley had visited in May 1819 and which the poet included in his preface to the drama, has affinities with Roland Holst's and De Raaf's characterisation of the play itself: 'The Cenci Palace is of a great extent; and though in part modernised, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy' (SPP, p. 242). It can be argued that, somehow, Shelley assimilated and inscribed his impressions within the lexical level of the play. This accounts for the distinct lack of florid lyricisms to which the Flemish critics expressed themselves more accustomed. Instead of a 'lieflijk[e]', 'paradijslijk[e]' Shelley with lips

'druipen[de] van muziek', they were confronted with something far more unsettling and 'gothic'.

The critics’ hostility towards a mode of writing in which no compromises were made to mitigate the work’s subversive contents, can be set against Kloos’s extraordinary statement in the ‘Literaire Kroniek’ of May 1909. Briefly referring to De Raaf’s recently published *De Cenci* he expresses his desire to see the play mounted on the stage:

Het is te hopen, dat deze vertaling nog eens gespeeld moge worden, want al is zij, zooals ik reeds opmerkte, goed, op die manier slechts zou zij kans hebben, spoedig uitverkocht te worden, en de schrijver krijgt dan de gelegenheid, een paar verbeteringen aan te brengen, die op haar, als op ieder menschelijk werk, te maken zouden zijn. (p. 663)

This almost cynical statement evinces Kloos’s obsessive preoccupation with the textual level, disregarding the play’s capacity to educate the audience through the usual cathartic process. It is clear that the quality of the translation (form) is far more important for Kloos than the ideological message (content). Any future staging is made subservient to Kloos’s sense of aesthetic decency: the play is a vehicle, not for instruction, but for linguistic delectation instead.

As we have seen so far, when the wished-for mounting did take place, it was met with a chorus of disapproval in the Flemish press. There rose, however, one feeble but defiant voice. Having a distinctive agenda of its own, the local newspaper *De Schelde*, bent by habit on extolling Antwerp as a centre of high culture and commerce, was particularly over-enthusiastic and did not recoil from adding some fanciful embellishments to its coverage. It is ironic, therefore, that a poignant slip of the pen in its very first announcement anticipated the severe verdict in other papers where the distinction between Count Cenci and the dramatist re-enacting the former’s atrocities became rather blurred. The reviewer of *De Schelde* wrote: ‘De centrale figuur is graaf Francesco Shelley [sic], een monster van perversiteit, die [...] een leven van losbandigheid en misdadige

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62 For instance, *De Schelde* asserts that the public was much taken in by the performance. Yet, a notice in *Het Handelsblad* (13 January 1929) challenges this claim, stating that ‘het publiek aarzelde of het al of niet toejuichen zou’, a view shared by *De Nieuwe Gazet* (14 January 1929). The *Gazet van Antwerpen* (14 January 1929) even records: ‘Ook waren er niet weinig tusschen de toeschouwers, die het, na het 3e of 4e bedrijf niet meer konden volhouden, en heel eenvoudig weggingen. Zulks is gemakkelijk te begrijpen’.
uitspattingen [leidt]. On 12 January, *De Schelde* still advertised the performance as the very first on the Continent and believed this would guarantee considerable interest from abroad. This claim to exclusivity, withdrawn in its subsequent coverage, was contradicted in the programme by De Raaf himself. The translator made specific reference to the performance in the Milanese Manzoni theatre of 1924 and was quick to point out that it 'grote indruk [had gemaakt]' and that it was 'goed ontvangen'. The interest abroad in the Flemish staging as forecast by *De Schelde* with boisterous confidence did certainly not extend to England's shores. Actually, the only foreign paper of importance which devoted a column to the Antwerp enterprise was the Dutch newspaper the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*. Its disinterested account may serve as a useful corrective to some of the more biased reviews in the Flemish papers. Tolerably positive about the performance, the anonymous correspondent understood that in order to appreciate Shelley's achievement, one must 'zich boven godsdienstige, in casu, katholieke eenzijdigheid [...] verheffen'. The reviewer cannot help fearing that the average Antwerp theatre-goer may fall somewhat short of such equity: 'Dat de Antwerpenaars van den Vlaamschen Schouwburg zulk een publiek zijn, zou ik niet graag beweren'. It is in this context that the KNS is praised once again for putting on Shelley's play: 'Er hoort moed toe, *De Cenci* voor te zetten aan een gewoon schouwburgpubliek'.

If the plot of *The Cenci* met with fierce criticism, the mounting itself did not fare any better. Trying at all costs to protect people from the doctrines of a insurgent 'priesterhater', no trouble was spared to downgrade the actual performance itself. Though the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* thought the setting, costumes and lighting more than adequate, one Flemish paper considered the décor 'pure krankzinnigheid', made up of 'allerlei lappen en lorren', as well as 'drie ophaalijzers en een schouw van de Congoboot' (*De Nieuwe Gazet*). The reviewer in *Het Tooneel* (19 January) expressed his strong dislike for the 'heel sobere' and 'schematisch[e]' settings. Especially the banquet scene in the first act, which was played on a virtually empty and sparsely lit stage, was singled out by many reviewers as too radical a transgression of the historical-realist tradition. *Het Antwerpsch Tooneel* (19 January) deplored the lack of props 'in weelderigen Italiaanschen Renaissance-stijl' and even recognised in the overall lay-out of the setting 'bolsjewistische amok-makerij'. This remark goes to the heart of the matter. In

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an extraordinary way, the reviewer seems to have associated the anarchy he witnessed on the stage with the rebellious disposition of Shelley who ‘had in zijn jeugd veel wat hem in onzen tijd de reputatie van “bolsjewiek” bezorgd zou hebben’. The reviewer’s apparent horror for anything smacking of non-conformity reflected badly on Dick Van Veen, who was condemned for ‘al zijn modernistische en simplicistische woede’ in matters of setting and lighting. Stretching the reviewer’s sense of propriety in content and form to the full, *De Cenci* must indeed have appeared a very bewildering experience.

This brings us to the acting itself, which, in general, was described as dramatically inadequate, and this despite the contention in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* that it was a brave and worthy effort. In the Flemish papers, Van Veen’s impersonation of Count Cenci was castigated as an instance of severe over-acting.65 *De Nieuwe Gazet* observed in his performance the antithesis of elegance, played as it was with ‘voeten als ovenbeesten en al de intonaties van een verroesten pompzwengel’, whereas *Het Antwerpsch Tooneel*, in utter outrage, likened his declamation to ‘het gehinnik van een bronstigen hengst’. One can imagine the exasperation of the unsuspecting reader of these reviews. Having been painted in colourful language the offensive contents of the play, followed by an extremely biased account of the playwright’s disreputable life, the reader’s sense of decorum was now put even further to the test with charges of lewdness in the dramatic execution. Clearly, the Antwerp staging was deemed to have crossed too many boundaries of decency, so much so that it was not even allowed to develop into a *succès de scandale*. Ida Wasserman, in the role of Beatrice, got more positive reactions. From the occasional references to her graceful attitudes, reminiscent of statuary (*Het Handelsblad* and *Het Antwerpsch Tooneel*), it can be inferred that she brought a markedly static quality into her performance. According to *Het Antwerpsch Tooneel*, it was precisely the ‘grandezza’ of her acting which compensated in part for ‘dit ontstellende gebeuren’ brought on stage. It would appear that these instances of speechless non-action, in which Shelley’s words and dramatic narrative are momentarily suspended, were considered the most successful part of the production.

It is intriguing how this critical upheaval reads as a carbon-copy of the moral outrage which *The Cenci* had caused among English reviewers on its first publication.

65 An exception should be made for *Het Handelsblad* and the *Gazet van Antwerpen* whose more positive estimation of Van Veen’s capabilities as an actor ran counter to the vicious critiques in other papers. The marked discrepancy in appreciation between the various papers seems to corroborate the existence of a hidden agenda behind some of the most damaging reviews.
Just like these earlier critics ‘saw with striking perception exactly what they were dealing with’, namely a work of art with ‘a social force’ mounting to sedition, so their later Flemish counterparts were seriously alarmed by the play’s potential to corrupt the spectator. The play therefore needed to be banished, back to the privacy of the reading room and as far away as possible from the public eye. It was essential, after its recent ‘exhumatie’ to rebury it in a ‘museum [...] om niet ... een kerkhof te zeggen’ where it belonged (Het Antwerpsch Tooneel), and from where the KNS ‘[het was] gaan opdelen’ (Gazet van Antwerpen). The critics had already made a start of this process by linguistically interring the text through the palimpsest of their quotation-free reviews.

Unfortunately, no record exists of De Raaf’s reaction to the Antwerp production, though he may have guessed at its hostile reception in some conservative and catholic circles. His outspoken praise for the management’s courage and his seemingly off-hand remark about the Milanese performance and its positive reception betray at least some anxiety on his part as to the success of the Dutch premiere. He must have realised that in the Antwerp mounting of De Cenci, Shelley’s combative streak would come to the surface and be subjected to a critical onslaught. The disappointingly low attendance figures and the play’s subsequent withdrawal from the stage after only six performances meant that the outraged critics could claim victory. Marcel Kessel’s statement, made in 1960, that Shelley’s tragedy ‘so far as has been recorded has never failed’ is therefore in need of some revision.

6. Emants-Shelley-Kloos

I have devoted so much attention to the Antwerp staging for several reasons. Ignored by Shelley scholars, the mounting calls for an important qualification of some received ideas concerning Shelley’s reputation on the Continent. The event also confirms that Kloos was not alone in his inability to reconcile the images of Shelley as a lyrical poet and a radical.

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66 Stuart Curran, Scorpions Ringed with Fire, p. 5.

67 On 9 January 1929, De Raaf wrote to Kloos that he would attend the opening performance: ‘Zaterdag, den 12en, wordt in de K. N. Schouwburg te Antwerpen (Dir. Dr. de Grujter) de Cenci van Shelley gespeeld in mijn vertaling. De première zal ik bijwonen, in gezelschap van een vriend, Mr. Boogman, en Maurits. Ik vind het natuurlijk heel aardig, dat mijn werk op deze manier nog weer zijn nut heeft, maar hoe zal de opvoering zijn. Laten we ‘t beste hopen.’ Unpublished letter kept in the De Raaf collections in The Hague (R105 B1).

agitator. Yet, the Flemish critics, unlike the Dutch éminence grise, had no reason to hold back and disregard the latter image. Kloos, on his part, was forced to keep silent about the ideological purport of *The Cenci* so as not to undermine his carefully crafted portrayal of Shelley as the artistic and spiritual *beau ideal* to which he, as his own writings proudly proclaimed, had successfully aspired. Kloos never referred to the Antwerp staging, but it must have seemed like a justification for his manipulative attitude towards Shelley. It will have strengthened his resolve that no good could come from focusing on Shelley’s rebellion against the establishment, be it political or religious. Yet, at the same time, the response to the production indicates that he had not been entirely successful in sanctifying his idol. It is very unlikely that Kloos would have read the review in *Het Antwerpsch Tooneel* which remarked on Shelley’s ‘reputatie van “bolsjewiek”’. Otherwise, he would have had to face the fact that the English poet had been turned into his worst possible adversary. We may recall how, according to Kloos’s own beliefs as expressed in his 1921 Shelley sonnet cycle, the poet’s spirit had descended from the celestial spheres to warn mankind:

“Dra zullen dichters wonen in barakken,
“Waar, als zij daags hebben gespit, gedolven,
“Zij worden heengedreven door de kolven
“Van vunze Bolsjewistische Kozakken.
(XI, ll. 5-8)\(^{69}\)

In some Flemish reviews, Shelley himself was now portrayed as the arch enemy trying to bring down civilised society.

The scarcity of the number of references Kloos made to *The Cenci*, I suggested, may be the result of the play’s ideological and linguistic candour which were difficult to circumvent. That Kloos had once been less troubled about its ideologically charged subtext can be inferred from the article which marks his debut as a literary critic. In 1879, Kloos had leapt to the defence of Marcellus Emants whom Charles Boissevain had accused of blasphemy. The attack had been prompted by the publication of *Lilith* which features an immoral, lustful God who rejects his companion, the eponymous heroine, for

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having aroused his lust. Though set apart in time by exactly half a century, there are many parallels to be drawn between the reactions of the Dutch press to Emants's epoch-making poem and the critical response to the Dutch premiere of Shelley's play. In his review for *De Gids*, Boissevain attested to the 'weerzinwekkenden indruk' which his reading of the work had left behind: he called *Lilith* 'heiligschennend', and accused Emants of a 'cynisch misbruiken van God's naam'; vices with which Shelley's play would be charged in 1929. The matter was so grave that Boissevain felt it necessary to warn his readers in the following terms:

Daar ik enige regels uit het gedicht moet aanhalen, om mijn bewering te staven, zullen zij [i.e. moeders] beter doen met dit nummer van *De Gids* niet te laten slingeren in de huiskamer. Ik acht enige waarschuwing noodig, omdat ik iedereen den schok zou willen besparen, welken ik heb ondervonden bij 't lezen van dit gedicht.

A similar shock probably caused critics of the 1929 *Cenci* production to obliterate Shelley's text in their quotationless reviews. Significantly, twenty-year-old Kloos reacted to Boissevain's critique in these terms: 'hij [slaat] nu alarm, en roept, als weleer de engelsche conservatieven tegen Shelley en Byron: "The wapen! te wapen! hier wordt de zedelijkheid vernietigd, de jeugd bedorven, de godsdienst aangerand".' This reference to Shelley (and Byron) is, of course, very ambiguous. On the one hand, it highlights the heterodoxy of Shelley's writings, pairing it with the seditious *Lilith*. On the other, Shelley seems to be held up as an example of a poet whose literary greatness was eventually recognised and celebrated. The ambiguity increases when Kloos makes a comparison between the image of God as portrayed in the Old Testament (which he calls a 'sprookje') and the figure of Jehovah in Emants's poem. The crux is whether God foresaw Adam's fall: if he did not, then he cannot be called omniscient and thereby loses

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71 Compare to what one critic wrote after having read Shelley's *Queen Mab*: 'we cannot quote the shortest passage [...] which is not so awfully horrible in its blasphemy, that even to transcribe it for the mere purpose of holding it up to the execrations of mankind, must be in itself a sin'. Quoted from Newman Ivey White, *The Unextinguished Hearth: Shelley and His Contemporary Critics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1938), p. 103.

his divine status; if he did, then his ‘non-interventionist’ stance means that ‘hij zich dus vertoonde als een booswicht, een soort van voorhistorische Cenci, die zich vermeit in de kramptrekkingen zijner slachtoffers’ (p. 408). In contrast to this ‘de ware God van Genesis’, Kloos maintains that Emants ‘Jahveh zoo goed mogelijk uit zijn leelijke positie heeft zoeken te redden’ (p. 408). Having first invoked Shelley whose artistic mettle and respectability were vindicated by history, Kloos then turned to the work which generated some of the most negative reviews Shelley ever had to endure. The young Dutch critic appears to be saying to Boissevain that things could still have been much worse and refers to Shelley’s scandalous work as an example. It would seem that Emants is exonerated almost at the expense of Shelley’s reputation. Be that as it may, the nature of Kloos’s allusion to The Cenci presupposes an awareness that it is a provocative work, written by an author who, just like Emants, was not afraid to go against the grain.

In sum, Kloos’s article demonstrates that the young Dutch critic was far less squeamish to appear non-conformist and radical than in later years when he fought for Shelley’s and his own respectability. Shelley is presented as an ally of the Dutch avant-garde (embodied by Emants, the ‘Johannes Baptista’ of the ‘Eighties Movement’ to use Kloos’s famous phrase) and its discontent with the religious, political, and literary establishment. By the time De Raaf published his De Cenci, Kloos steered well clear from its subversive contents and only brought himself to suggest a far from inspired rendition of one particular line in the play. Though unpleasantly harsh, Alfred Kossman’s estimation of Kloos’s development from highly talented young man at the forefront of the artistic revolution in the 1880s, to ‘zelfgenoegzame arrivist’ cannot easily be brushed aside:

Maar al kan men dan de jonge Kloos bewonderen, de volwassen en oude Kloos niet, het is toch niet te ontkennen dat hij […] zijn ontwikkeling heeft voorgezet […] van revolutionair to conservatief, van bohémien tot burger, van nieuwlichter tot ere-doctor.\(^{74}\)

\(^{73}\) It is true that Kloos hid behind a pseudonym in De Nederlandsche Spectator, but he was soon to make far more radical and anti-religious statements signed with his own name in the first series of De Nieuwe Gids. In 1891, for instance, he famously wrote: ‘Omdat ik het christendom niet noodig heb, ik rijklevende, daarom haat ik het tot den dood’. Willem Kloos, ‘Verleden, heden en toekomst’ in: De Nieuwe Gids, April 1891, pp. 160-71 (p. 171).

A comparison of Kloos's brazen piece on *Lilith* with its reference to *The Cenci* and his much later pedestrian review of De Raaf's translation of the English play furnishes final proof that this fundamental change in Kloos's ambitions is both cause and effect of the consistent sanitisation process to which he subjected Shelley and himself.
Conclusion

In his review of Dekker’s doctoral dissertation *Die invloed van Keats en Shelley in Nederland gedurende die negentiende eeu*, J. Haantjes arrives at the conclusion that ‘Niet op de levende Shelley en Keats gingen de tachtigers terug, [...] niet op de Shelley en Keats van kort na 1800 [...], maar (het klinkt ietwat zonderling) op de Shelley en Keats, die hun tijdgenoten waren’.¹ In my study, I have investigated the procedures Kloos relied on to convey exactly this idea: that Shelley (and Keats) were allies in the aesthetic-individualist reforms of the Eighties Movement. Shelley was presented as a contemporary who actively influenced the course Dutch letters were taking from the moment Kloos had spotted a collection of Shelley’s poems in the window of an Amsterdam book shop.

In Chapter One I compared Kloos’s and Shelley’s views on the aims of literature and concluded that they were radically different. This difference, which Kloos implicitly accepted as can be seen by his efforts to play down Shelley’s radicalism, did not stop the Dutch poet from professing that their artistic sensibility and aspirations were in fact very much alike. I used the phrases ‘poetry of persuasion’ and ‘poetry of actuality and potentiality’ to describe Shelley’s attempts to enlighten and teach his readership. Kloos had eyes only for the ‘visionary’ aspects of Shelley’s writing, by which he meant the poet’s capacity to conjure up the inner beauties of the individual, poetic soul in startling imagery. According to Kloos, this aestheticised baring of the self was the ultimate goal of poetry. In this, the imagination was all-important, but whereas Shelley appealed to the readers’ imagination to improve them morally, Kloos believed that it was a mistake to impose ‘ethics’ on literature. Because of his bias, Kloos was not always aware that Shelley’s visions were designed to propagate his reformist political agenda. He therefore tended to see Shelley as an angel, an innocent, child-like being revelling in his own poetic fantasies. In his youth, Kloos seems to have been slightly more responsive to Shelley’s radical commitments. His ‘Aanteekeningen’ nonetheless

demonstrate that he, from the start, disapproved of his idol's 'rhetoric', a thoroughly negative term for Kloos that encompassed almost everything he rejected in poetry. In later years, Kloos would sweep Shelley's hortatory streak under the carpet and make the Romantic poet even more genteel and 'respectable'. I have demonstrated that this approach had also been typical of much of Victorian scholarship concerned with Shelley (W.M. Rossetti, Symonds, Dowden, Thompson). Kloos was well acquainted with the English literature on the poet, and he seems to have taken on board many of its pronouncements. Yet, by giving them an 'aesthetic-individualist' twist, he made them very much his own.

The second chapter put the spotlight on some of Kloos's contemporaries who had totally different views on Shelley. A number of them did not flinch from attacking Kloos for his skewed readings of the English Romantic. It is no coincidence that these included people who had once been co-editors of De Nieuwe Gids (Willem Paap, Frederik van Eeden) but who left the editorial board or were removed by Kloos because their political stance brought them into conflict with the wayward course he was taking. That Kloos was the only true champion of Shelley in the Netherlands, a claim he was eager to promote whenever the occasion arose, is also refuted by the appreciative poems written by other Dutch writers on the subject of Shelley's life and works. Also, when it comes to quality and substance, Kloos is easily outstripped by writers such as Herman Gorter and David Spanjaard whose contributions on Shelley try to portray the English poet in all his complexity. They are not afraid to tackle his seditious activities and look for traces of these in the poems. They also comment on Shelley's prose writings, which, apart from the Defence of Poetry were hardly ever mentioned by Kloos, even though he had once admitted in his 'Aanteekeningen' that in order to understand the poet, we must also study Shelley the prose writer. We have seen how Kloos was quick to attack critics claiming that Shelley was a mere word-jeweller with little of significance to say. Acknowledging its political subtext was out of the question, so Kloos just repeated that the subject of Shelley's poetry consisted of the exploration of the inner self in bold visions, thereby incorporating Shelley in the ranks of the Eighties Movement. However, when authors dealt with the radicalism embedded within the majority of Shelley's work, Kloos remained silent. This is all the more remarkable because he repeatedly stressed in his own pieces that Shelley's political radicalism had been a passing phase which left hardly any marks on the poet's mature productions. Apparently Kloos did not risk a direct confrontation
on the subject, which suggests that he realised he would not be able to explain away everything in Shelley's oeuvre that he would then be obliged to qualify as 'improper'. That is also why he did not refer to the political pamphlets, for their dates of composition would confirm that, throughout his career, Shelley had been preoccupied with political affairs. Despite all these different voices in the Netherlands proclaiming different opinions, Kloos's has had a great impact on later generations of writers. His continuous use of Shelley as the yardstick to determine the value of modern Dutch literature, as well as his public identification with his literary hero, would sometimes result in the perception that Kloos was in fact just a follower of the English writer. When this happened, as in Frans Coenen's book on the Eighties Movement, Kloos, for whom originality and individuality were paramount, was obliged to write a firm rebuttal, momentarily weakening the bond between himself and Shelley.

Chapter three focused on \textit{Alastor} and the translations by K.H. de Raaf (1906) and Albert Verwey (1909). I argued that Kloos's preface to De Raaf's rendition is teeming with ideological and confrontational statements. A declaration of Kloos's privileged relationship with Shelley, the preface upholds Shelley as the model all Dutch writers should aspire to. Yet in a curious circular argument, Kloos also managed to convey the idea that if Shelley were to be appreciated as an example for modern Dutch literature, it was only via the corpus of new works produced by the revolutionary Eighties Movements that the reader and aspiring writer could gain access to the splendour of Shelley's achievements. In his preface, Kloos presented Verwey as the antithesis of true (i.e. Shelleyan) artistic sensibility, so when the latter produced his own dutchified \textit{Alastor}, we can speak of a real translation battle in which rivalling translations were produced as reclamations of Shelley's artistic legacy. Another important point was that Kloos's preface and various other pieces on \textit{Alastor} (notably by A.S. Kok) revealed how influential the English Shelley Society and its publications were for the dissemination of Shelley's works in the Netherlands. Turning our attention to the translations themselves, a lexical analysis of Albert Verwey's rendition showed the markedly different road he had taken when compared to De Raaf's more conventional approach. Verwey had relied on the new idiom which had been created by 'impressionist' writers such as Lodewijk van Deyssel and Herman Gorter during the final years of the nineteenth century. Consequently, the second Dutch \textit{Alastor}, under Verwey's hands, succeeded in recreating the
sense of innovation which the English reading public had recognised (but not always appreciated) in the original. As was his usual procedure in his translations, Verwey actually attempted to turn his version into a new Dutch poem in its own right. When Verwey's translation was reissued in *English Studies* to commemorate the centenary of Shelley's death in 1922, Kloos must have felt that his rival had hackneyed the event. In a scathing review he accused Verwey of having imposed his own personality — which Kloos believed was distinctly lacking in artistic clout — on Shelley. Kloos had, of course, done exactly the same in his Shelley essays, so his antagonism was acute. When he was attacked for claiming once again that it was he who had first appreciated Shelley for the literary giant he was, Kloos disclosed the existence of his vast Shelleyana collection. It proved almost like a physical bulwark against the assaults, giving Kloos a self-styled vantage point: his Shelley library provided him with the ostensive authority to dismiss as artistically and intellectually inferior some of the greatest names in Dutch literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Conrad Busken Huet, E.J. Potgieter, Albert Verwey).

The fourth chapter concentrated on another Dutch translation, *Prometheus ontboeid* by Alex. Gutteling, Verwey's protégé. Again Kloos fell back on his Shelley library in his attempts to discredit what he saw as illegitimate annexation attempts by his literary rivals. The cause for Kloos's disparagement was a claim by the translator in the preface that despite freer renditions he had successfully reproduced the spirit of the original. Again Kloos's jealousy was fuelled. The whole logomachy surrounding the 'ravin-ruin' phrase in which Kloos even sought the approval of the distinguished Shelley scholar Harry Buxton Forman proved how much Shelley's oeuvre had become disputed territory in the Netherlands. It is a great irony that the altercation that pushed the poem's ideational enlightenment into the background reached its climax during World War I. I argued that, as far as phraseology is concerned, Gutteling's rendition shows in fact great similarities to the traditional idiom of De Raaf's *Alastor* translation. Since Kloos approved of De Raaf's version, it is difficult to detect any objective criterion underpinning his spiteful critique of Gutteling's *Prometheus ontboeid*. It is very likely that Kloos felt expropriated and that, as a result, he was led more by jealousy than by artistic considerations. I also demonstrated Kloos's apparent misunderstanding of one of Shelley's main themes in the lyrical drama: the need to overcome debilitating desolation and act on the passion for reforming the world. An analysis of Gutteling's
Prometheus ontboeid attested that there were also significant misreadings which nullified the political subtext. Yet, I believe that these were due to carelessness rather than a deliberate censoring of the original. Among Dutch writers, the fascination with Prometheus, and especially the figure as envisaged by Shelley in his poem, was widespread in Kloos's time. As a symbol of the noble rebel overthrowing tyranny, Prometheus appealed to writers who positioned themselves on the left in the political spectrum (Carry van Bruggen, Herman Gorter, H.P.G. Quack). These also demonstrate that, unlike Kloos, many writers were aware of the implications and didactic orientation of Shelley's lyrical drama.

As Kloos's reputation waned, so his admiration for Shelley became more and more public, culminating in the Shelley sonnet cycle of 1921 in which Kloos's struggle to attain literary recognition and his veneration for the English Romantic found a perfect union. Chapter Five examines the context of Kloos's acquisition of a precious Shelley manuscript in 1921. I argued that the event inspired him to write the series of twelve sonnets in which Shelley's ghost appears to the Dutch writer. A close-reading of the cycle revealed its bold message: Shelley descended from the heavens in order to inform Kloos, and the rest of the world, that the Dutch poet was proceeding with unflagging dedication towards literary excellence and (posthumous) fame. If Kloos had repeatedly advanced Shelley as the beau ideal for Dutch writers, these same writers were now being told by Shelley's spirit that the epitome of artistic superiority had already been reached by one in their midst, i.e. by Willem Kloos himself. In the prose commentary following the poems, Kloos continued his usual depoliticisation process, emphasising Shelley's desire for a life of solitude and passive contemplation. I described the poems and commentary as Kloos's ultimate 'translation' of Shelley, and compared the visitation of Shelley's ghost with Kloos's alleged Poltergeist experiences that coincided with Jacques Perk's death back in 1881. The two cases are analogous insofar as Kloos presents them as confirmations from 'beyond' of the existence of a psychological and artistic rapport between himself and the deceased poets. Though the sonnet cycle is an elaborate fiction, later commentators (Keunen, English Studies) took it very much at face value. With his acquisition of the Shelley letter — a transcript of which was published in The Times Literary Supplement — Kloos was also brought to the attention of British writers and scholars (Foxworthy, Russell) whom he was only too happy to receive in his Shelley 'sanctuary'.

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In Chapter One, we have seen that Kloos, in his youthful 'Aanteekeningen', was able
to register Shelley's political engagements albeit with unequivocal disapprobation. The final
chapter on The Cenci showed that Kloos's debut as a critic (1879), with its reference to
Shelley's tragedy, evinces the same awareness of the English poet's rebellious disposition.
Kloos suggests in his defence of Emants's Lilith that the controversial poem may well herald
a new era in Dutch literature in which traditional views of morality will be challenged, similar
to what Shelley (and Byron) had endeavoured to do sixty years earlier. However, when
Kloos was to review De Raaf's Dutch translation of The Cenci in 1909, he kept completely
silent about the play's seditious contents. Shelley's, and indeed his own iconoclasm typical of
the new generation which was to change Dutch letters for good, had become a thing of the
past. Again, the importance of the Shelley Society for the propagation of the English poet in
the Netherlands came to the fore in that its facsimile edition of The Cenci provided De Raaf
with a useful model for his translation. The Dutch translation, I argued, contains several
defence mechanisms (a misleading motto, an invasive footnote, dubious renditions of
politically charged phrases) designed to tone down the radical nature of the play. Yet, these
were of no use when the play was performed on the Antwerp stage in 1929. Especially
Shelley's attacks on the catholic Church were highlighted by the Flemish critics, as were his
— dubbed anachronistically — 'bolshevist' inclinations. The plea for a speedy reburial of
Shelley's play away from the public eye and the low attendance figures condemned the
Antwerp staging to an untimely end. The negative response by the Flemish reviewers was not
unlike the original reception by Shelley's contemporaries. I therefore argued for a
modification of the common view among scholars that Shelley's works abroad had ceased to
be controversial in the twentieth century.

In this dissertation, I have hinted several times at the passionate reactions Kloos's
career has provoked in the past. If Kloos is a controversial figure, it is because of his strong,
some might even say excessive, sense of self-preservation. Ultimately, it was his survival
instinct that was responsible for the many aggressive gestures of assimilation and
appropriation that form the subject of this thesis. The great irony of Kloos's life is that the
combative, belligerent nature with which he attempted to secure himself a place in the canon
of Dutch letters has harmed his reputation considerably. This is also the underlying idea of
the open letter to the reader in Aarts' letterkundige almanak voor het jaar 1985, half of
which is devoted to that magical moment one hundred years before when *De Nieuwe Gids* was founded. In his address the ‘Voorzitter van het Comité “Eerherstel Willem Kloos”’ assured the ‘heren cultuurvervalsers en modderruiten [...] bij de intieme lezertuin van [Kloos’] *Verzen*, het goddelijke beeld van Willem Kloos in al zijn luister [te zullen] herstellen’. In a way, this is a playful response to the prevailing opinion as expressed by Jan Kal, who, on Christmas Eve 1969, wrote a sonnet entitled ‘Willem Kloos’. It laments in an equally playful way the waning of Kloos’s literary star after a brief spell of inspired poetry writing.

**Willem Kloos**

Zulke sonnetten schrijven als de uwe,  
O Willem Kloos, met zo’n beheerst gemak  
— van wat voor diepe dingen u ook sprak —  
kon u maar kort, en daarna werd het duwen.

Veertig jaar oud, toen deze eeuw aanbrak,  
werd u een keurig burger, door te huwen  
met Haagse Jeanne Reyneke van Stuwe:  
de regentessë* en het dichterwrak.

Ziel van uw ziel was een gevoelspoëet  
die helder straalde, Percy Bysshe Shelley,  
in wie u als uw voorbeeld bleef geloven.

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4 Reference to the couple’s postal address in The Hague: Regentesselaan 176. Jeanne also claimed to be of noble decent. (In her book *De waarheid* she gives the family’s motto as ‘Elck sein deel’). See
Troebele Tachtiger, als een komeet
schoot u omhoog, maar de komeet van Halley
zag nooit een sterpoëet zo pijlsnel doven.

The sonnet broaches on those two notions that, as I have argued, are inextricably linked in Kloos’s life: the talented poet whose growing urge for social respectability coincided with a dramatic loss of inspiration, and the idiosyncratic adoration of Shelley who represented the ultimate ideal of poethood. It will be clear that the Shelley in whom Kloos ‘als [zijn] voorbeeld bleef geloven’ was in fact a construct, a projection of his own artistic tenets. A political Shelley could not be reconciled with the idea of Shelley as the torchbearer of the Eighties Movement, so Kloos was forced to be very selective in his affinities towards the English writer. Just as the rhyme between ‘Shelley’ and ‘Halley’ in the above sonnet is perfect only when pronounced with a thick Dutch accent, I have shown that the temperaments and vocations of Shelley and Kloos need to be seen in the light of the Dutch poet’s own singular preconceptions in order to become a perfect match.

Appendix 1: Kloos’s early Shelley ‘Aanteekeningen’

The six notes below are the most interesting of the set Kloos made during his reading of Shelley in the first half of the 1880s. Apart from the long fragment on Zastrozzi (Note No. 6), all notes were made on lined paper from an exercise book. The material is kept in the Kloos Collections at the Literary Museum and Documentation Centre in The Hague (K533 H3, ‘Aante[e]keningen over Shelley’). Kloos’s spelling and punctuation have been reproduced throughout. In Notes Nos 1-5, editorial emendations are put between square brackets. The numbering of the notes is my own.

It is worth noting that the Willem Kloos Collections also holds a black notebook called ‘Bouwstoffen voor de studie over Shelley’ (K533 H3). This notebook contains references to A. Roland Holst and Kloos’s own Alkestis translation of 1920. All this, together with the (often illegible) style of handwriting suggests that the ‘Bouwstoffen’ were written at a much later stage. The passages dealing with Shelley are also very short and do not seem to hold much interesting material.

Note No. 1

Losse aanteekeningen

1. De Christenen willen Shelley tot een der hunnen maken: Shelley heeft Christus tot een der zijnen gemaakt in de Essay on Christianity.
2. In Byron’s gedichten wordt Shelley volstrekt niet genoemd: Peacock vermeldt hem ook niet in zijn Four ages. In de bekende plaats van Don Juan zelfs niet.
4. De questie van Platonische liefde is absurd in ‘t algemeen: in ‘t bijzondere geval van Shelley wordt zij door zijn eigen woorden op tal van plaatsen weêrlegd.
5. De eenige Nederlander met wien men hem zou kunnen vergelijken is Multatuli.
6. Shelley was niet altijd oprecht: zijn oordeel over Mrs de Boinville en dat over Christus.
7. Shelley is een uitzondering op den regel van Spruyt, dat alle zoologisten goede mathematici zijn. De reden er van ligt hierin dat hij niet zozeer philosoof, als geloovige was.
8. Shelley's ware overtuiging is moeilijk in bepaalde woorden weer te geven.

1. omdat hij minder denker dan ziener was.
2. dat zijn verschillende perioden ongemerkt in elkander loopen.
3. dat hij, zooals hij zelf zegt, niet altijd streng zei, wat hij meende, doordat zooals hij in de Essay on Christianity zegt: If we would profit by the wisdom of a sublime and poetical mind: we must beware of the vulgar error of interpreting literally every expression it employs (in verband met nr 1).

9. Mrs Shelley was niet sterk in de orthographie, getuige haar transcript van the Witch of Atlas.


11. Hij zegt herhaaldelijk, dat de kleinste verandering ten goede een heuchelijk teeken is.

12. Hij was een socialist: maar hechtte in tegenstelling van de tegenwoordige aan de material pursuits slechts zooveel waarde als zij dienen, om te kunnen leven: voor het overige moest de mensch slechts voor virtue ans knowledge werken. zie Essay on Christianity pag. 367.

14. [sic] Om zijn politieke dogma's te begrijpen, moeten wij den politieke toestand na de Fransche revolutie in aanmerking nemen.

15. In tegenstelling van Rousseau gelooft hij aan den vooruitgang. De menschen waren in den beginne als wilde beesten. Maar dit is in strijd met andere van zijn uitingen.

16. The idola specus, en wat volgt als uitgangspunt nemen.

Note No. 2

Queen Mab is een “bewildering” product. 't Is onleesbaar: men wordt op die lange, rollende perioden, vol uitoepsteekens, rhetorische figuren en adjectiven en kraftwörter willoos meegesleurd, totdat men op 't laatst bij de monotonie dier rhetorische passie in slaap valt: Men moet zich een draad verschaffen door dit labyrinth waar men telkens op dezelfde plaatsen terugkomt, elkander kruisend of geheel diametraal tegen overgestelde richtingen ingaat, en de pen in de hand bij het eind van iedere alinea, uit die overladene en langwijlige declamatie, dadelijk in korte woorden den zin opschrijven, of men raakt het spoor bijster en blijft eindelijk steken. De poezie er van is, op enkele korte beschrijvingen na, execrabel: die eentonige donder der verontwaardiging is een tooneeldonder: Want hoe Shelley 't ook meende, zijn eigen taal had hij nog niet gevonden [deleted: en zijn dictie is
een]. Voor gevoel geeft hij rhetoriek, voor verbeelding conventie, dat er ook niet veel logica in is, moet de volgende analyse bewijzen.

Queen Mab is algemeen bewonderd, als men Shelley noemt, noemt men in een adem ook Queen Mab; 't is dus misschien niet geheel nutteloos eens na te gaan, wat dat eigenlijk is. Shelley zelf keurde het af. Zijn geest moge mij vergeven, dat ik zoo begin, daar het toch dient, om een juister inzicht te geven in hem en zijn werk.

Wel is een verademing om van het gedicht over te gaan op de aanteekeningen, die beruchte aanteekeningen. Alles wat daar, rhetorisch, duister, opgeschroefd, verward en onwaar was, is hier eenvoudig, duidelijk, juist, klaar en onwederlegbaar. Dat komt wijl zij slechts 1° negatief 2° redeneerend, niet lyrisch zijn.

De studie van Queen Mab is nuttig voor de kennis van Shelley's beeldspraak; tal van beelden, hier gebruikt, zijn in latere werken weer door hem opgenomen en volmaakt.

De eerste zang is een mengsel van de leegste rhetoriek en iets beters: 't is misschien een omwerking. Ianthe zou dan Harriett [sic] Grove zijn (in verband met de dedication).

Note No. 3

Verspreide aanteekeningen

3. Dr. Lind in Athanase en L. & C.
6. Over Shelley's connectie met slangen ibidem[?] xxiii.
7. De Speculations on Metaphysics, On Life, etc. kunnen niet tot 1815 behooren, volgens de Hymn on Montblanc.
8. Het is merkwaardig, zoo weinig als Shelley zelf door zijn enthousiastenen met aandacht gelezen is, en vooral vergelijkend. Men herhaalt nog steeds beweringen, die als Reliquien [sic] van den een op den ander overgaan, die bij een nader onderzoek blijken door Shelley's eigen uitingen wederlegd te worden. Wij zullen in de volgende bladzijden dikwijls gelegenheid hebben, dit met voorbeelden te staven. Vooral zijn prozawerken zijn
weinig bestudeerd, terwijl zij toch onmisbaar zijn om zijn verzen te begrijpen. Formans editie ervan staat verre beneden die der Gedichten (Voorrede).

9. Ach waren alle menschen wijs
   En wilden daarbij wel - etc.

10. Shelley heeft een atmosfeer om zich van light en love.

11. Noot over den vertaler van Hyperion: to throw over their bright etc.

12. Shelley heeft zooveel vreemds en tegelijk zooveel eigens voor ons.


15. Volgens Symonds is the great bulk of his poetry immature, zijn opinies zijn niets waard en hijzelf soms gek. Maar een Christen.


17. Jan. 26. 1819. to Peacock. I consider poetry very [deleted: inferior] subordinate to moral and political science and if I were well, etc. overeenkomst met Multatuli: waarschijnl. in dien tijd de fragmenten geschreven.

18.

5 Juni 1810 Zastrozzi
17 Sept. 1810 Victor en Cazire
17 Nov. 1810 Margaret Nicholson
18 Dec. 1810 St Irvyne
9 Maart 1811 A poetical Essay on the Existing state of Things
25 Februari 1812 Adress [sic] to the Irish people
2 March Proposals
29 Juli Letter to Lord E.

Note No. 4

An Address to the Irish People

Shelley karkateriseert zich zelf goed: hij had a passion for reforming the world. De wereld nu is gebleven zooals zij is, maar die passie heeft een werk voortgebracht, de Prometheus, dat voor velen geen onbelangrijk stuk van hun leven is geworden, en hen beter en wijzer heeft gemaakt. Daarin zijn zijn ideeën en plannen daaromtrent het volledigst neergelegd
en gecorrigeerd door meerdere[?] rijpte van jaren. Maar reeds jaren vroeger had hij in hoofdzaak dezelfde ideeën er over, die hij ook meermalen heeft geuit: Zijn Iersche pamfletten zijn vooral belangrijk, omdat hij ze daarin het eerste heeft ontwikkeld. Wij zullen dan Prometheus beter begrijpen, als wij nagaan in hoeverre en hoe hij de ideeën ervan reeds vroeger had uitgedrukt. Geschiedenis van zijn Dublinsche reis volgens McCarthy.

[deleted: Maar waarom ging hij naar Dublin toe? Hij zal het ons zelf zeggen. De stijl is populair]


Maar waarom kwam S. eigenl. in Ierland? Een onderdrukt volk te bevrijden is stellig een goed ding, maar eigenlijk het werk van de mannen van de dood. Van een philosooph en poëet verwachten wij iets anders. Shelley zal het ons zelf zeggen in zijn Postscript. I have now been [MS torn]

Shelley kan zich niet tevreden stellen met een zoo praktische en nabijliggende zaak. En het vervolg der brochure zelf zou het ons geleerd hebben. ‘t Is of we na al de verstandige, gemodererde en bereikbare raadgevingen van de eerste helft in eens in een andere wereld worden gezet als wij plotseling hooren: And now Irishmen, another aim more etc., en dan krijgen [we] een weliswaar nog altijd populaire en gemoedelijke voordracht over den tegenwoordigen toestand der wereld pag. 243 en 44. die toestand zal beter worden en I am anxious that you shall deserve etc. Middelen om daartoe te geraken. Maar daarna komt hij weer op de zaak terug en bespreekt de mogelijkheid en het recht van zulk een verleeniging. Zijn oordeel daarover. Als litterair product heeft het niet te veel waarde. De naïeve eenvoudige toon, die echter wel eens verlaten wordt voor rhetoriek, zooals Shelley’s verheven stijl toen was, is op den duur vermoeiend, omdat men voelt, dat hij aangenomen is: herhalingen en bruske [sic] overgangen.

Uit een praktisch oogpunt ook niet goed: begint met een depreciatie van het Catholicisme evenals in de speech: de schrijver bekent zelf, dat hij niet gelooft, dat alles dient niet, om zijn lezers voor hem te stemmen. Het wijzen op een wijder hervorming was ook zoo onpraktisch mogelijk, daar begrepen de Ieren niets van en gaven er niet om. The catholic cause is subordinate: Maar verstand, al is het geen praktisch, zit er veel in. Zijn raadgevingen zijn inderdaad de eenige, die men geven kan, en die wat zouden kunnen
helpen, als de menschen maar beter waren. Dat hij ook niet zoo dom was, als Mrs Shelley beweert, om zijn hervormingen dadelijk te zien doorgaan, blijkt uit de Address op twee plaatsen.

Note No. 5

Zastrozzi

Het citaat uit Milton op den titel van Zastrozzi schijnt te bewijzen, is in tegenspraak met de tendenz van de novelle. Dit maakt het waarschijnlijk, dat het een afterthought is, toen Shelley's ideeën omtrent verschillende dingen reeds veranderd waren, en hij de novelle toch wou uitgeven. Uitgegeven 5 Juni 1810 (MCarthy [sic])

7 Mei 1809 schrijft hij, dat een groot deel af is. In dat jaar zijn dus zijn opinies veranderd. Volgens Medwin werd het gerecenseerd en veelbelovend genoemd. Forman. Prose I. xii.

houdt Zastrozzi voor een navolging, daar de passie te sterk is voor een jongen van 17 jaar.

Dat Shelley toen vroom was, blijkt b.v. uit: chapter

... for in proportion as human nature departs from virtue, so far are they also from being able clearly to contemplate the wonderful operations, the mysterious ways of Providence.

Dikwijls zijn zijn personen: unable to bear the acuteness of (their) sensations (she hastily returned to the castella) en loopen weg. Wij meenen Shelley zelf te zien in later [sic] leeftijd (chapter x)

Her symmetrical form. Chapter xvi

Margaret Nicholson.

see Mcarthy pag. 32-40.


St. Irvyne

Zoowel als Z. in vele opzichten een zeer vreemd produkt. Hysterie, gekken [?], casquet and jewel, etc. Forman zoekt het te verklaren b.v. Possession, which, when unassisted by
zeal, intellectual love, clogs man, increases the ardent, uncontrollable passions of woman even to madness.

Veel herhaling van Zastrozzi.

't Is een fragment. Hoofdstuk v en vi ontbreken, juist voordat de nieuwe draad begint (??)

plaats betrekking hebbende op een vriend 190

vertaling in het duitsch I fear me

Uitval tegen de libertines pag. 193

Over het huwelijk pag. 217

hetzelfde base arguments genoemd pag. 196

Voor Shelley ontwikkeling nuttig pag. 199

[torn] verzen nog slechter dan in de Fragments

uitgegeven 10 Dec. 1810

remmescenties [sic]. Queen Mab. Shakespeare.

Over Zastrozzi en Irvijne's verdiensten zie Symonds p. 21

Note No. 6

The following have been used to facilitate the reading of this sizeable fragment:

< > : replaces gaps in the text caused by tears; where possible the lost text has been reconstructed between the brackets

[Ø] : indicates a blank in the manuscript

[?] : follows an uncertain reading

{ } : editorial emendations

De 5\textsuperscript{en} Juni 1810 is een niet onmerkwaardig datum in de geschiedenis der letteren. Op dien dag mocht men voor het eerst in een openbare aankondiging den naam van den man lezen, die thans vrij algemeen erkend wordt als een dier weinige g<roo>te geesten, wier invloed zich niet binnen de spanne hunner eigen eeuw bepaalt. Het waren nog slechts de initialen wel is waar, die de “Times” vermeldde, en zij scholen bescheidenlijk weg onder den volklinkenden titel, die de nog niet achttienjarige schrijver voor zijn eerste proeve gekozen had. This day is published, stond er, Zastrozzi: a romance by P. B. S. Die P. B. S. is Percy Bysshe Shelley, en omdat Zastrozzi zijn werk
is, is het aan een vergetelheid onttrokken, waarvan geen god het anders had kunnen redden. Ja, daarom verdient het zelfs een aandacht, die in elk ander geval den gewone
lezer misplaatste en verloren moeite zou schijnen. Ook het jeugdige gestamel van een
groot man moeten wij liefhebben, zooals wij de herinneringen uit onze eigene jeugd
bewaren en dat niet alleen om den wille van ons gevoel. Want wij ontdekken in dien
gebrekkigen [Ø] dikwijls de chaos eener wereld van gevoel en verbeelding, die ons in de
rijpere werken tot bewondering harer schoonheid dwingt, en wij leeren den mensch en
denker beter begrijpen, als wij den gang zijner ontwikkeling tot in het donkere tasten van
het kind kunnen vervolgen. Laten wij dan zien, wat Zastrozzi, met dat doel bekeken, ons
leeren kan.

Men zegt, dat het oneerbiedig is in den voorhof des Tempels vroolijk te zijn, en
voorzeker voegt ons ernst nu wij ons aan de voeten zullen zetten van the poet, beloved
above all other poets, being beyond all other poets — in one word and the only proper
word — divine! Maar wie de pen opvat, om van Zastrozzi aan zijn lezers mede te deelen,
can toch moeielijk een zachten glimlach van schalkschheid weerhouden, een glimlach die
tefijner wordt als men tegelijkertijd bedenkt, wat majesteit en glorie eens zouden dagen
dezelfde ziel, wier eerste uiting zoo weinig van die eigenschappen met een zoo
vermakelijk surrogaat er van vereenigde. Het boek is een duodecimo deeltje van 252
bladzijden. Binnen dien kleinen omvang worden de lotgevallen verhaald van den
“deugdzamen” Verezzi, die voor eeuwig verbonden aan de vlekkelooze Julia, maar
belaagd door de hartstochtelijke liefde van de listige Mathilda, Contessa di Laurentini en
vervolgd door de wraak van den verschrikkelijken Zastrozzi, haar bondgenoot, eerst voor
gene bezwijkt en dan door de helsche plannen van den laatstgenoemde er toe gebracht
wordt zich dood te steken. Hetzelfde lot wedervaart Julia van Mathilda’s hand waarna de
beide overblijvenden in handen van het gerecht vallen. Dit alles is noch belangrijk noch
grappig, en het zou een even nutteloze als ongenadelijke arbeid zijn den draad van het
verhaal hoofdstuk na hoofdstuk voor den lezer te ontrollen. Intrigues als deze waren
gemeen goed, in die dagen, toen Anne [sic] Radcliffe met haar onderaardsche gangen
<elde; en het extravagante en absurde, dat Shelley’s eersteling tot een parodie <van> de
toenmalige romanlitteratuur schijnt te maken, ligt veelmeer in de karakterbeschrijving,
<> en het uitgewerkte bathos waarmede iedere scene, iedere volzin als het ware gedrenkt
<br> dan in eenige afwijking van het toen geijkte model, wat de “geschiedenis” betreft.

Een paar aanhalingen mogen voldoende zijn om van den stijl een denkbeeld <te
krijgen.> Mathilde is er eindelijk in geslaagd, den deugdzamen Verezzi zijn Julia te doen
vergeten; zij zweren elkander eeuwige trouw, en het rampzalige slachtoffer dringt aan om onmiddellijke voltrekking van het huwelijk: Mathilde exultingly consented tot soul-touching melody (Forman pag. 115). Smakelijk is ook het volgende beschrijvende brokje als Mathilde door 4 beulsknechts naar de pijnbank wordt gedragen:

Zoo is het geheele werk: het voortbrengsel eener in zekere richting rijpe, maar bedorven verbeelding, onttijdig ontwikkeld door slechte lectuur, en zich uitend in vormen, waar zelfs geen schijn van oorspronkelijkheid door de bordpapieren conventie gloort. Geen andere der twee dozijn werelddichters, waarop het menschelijk geslacht zich beroept, is zoo onbelovend opgetreden, als de man, dat [sic] slechts twee lustra later Prometheus Unbound en Epipsychidion scheppen zou. Leerzaam vooral, in dit opzicht, is het fragment van de Wandering Jew, een gedicht in 1809 door Shelley en zijn neef Thomas Medwin vervaardigd, waarvan slechts Medwin’s aandeel tot dusverre het licht heeft gezien, te vergelijken met de verzen, die van Shelley zelf uit dat tijdvak bekend zijn. Medwin wint het, en heeft nog zijn geheele leven door vele zonden in proza en rijm begaan. Maar toch zou zijn naam zelfs reeds vergeten zijn, als hij niet (in 1844) een (trouwens vrij middelmatige) biografie van zijn onsterfelijken vriend {had} opgesteld.

De schrijver zelf echter, schijnt niet zoo’n geringe gedachte van zijn werk gehad te hebben. Er bestaan drie brieven van hem (slechts een van deze heeft het licht gezien) waarin hij van de uitgave melding maakt: de eerste doet ons weten, dat op den 7 Mei 1809 reeds een groot gedeelte voltooid was, en dan 1 April 1810 beklaagt hij zich bij den uitgever, dat deze zich niet om de recensenten bekommert: hij zal daarom zelf zijn maatregelen nemen, dat deze zich niet om de recensenten bekommert: hij zal daarom zelf zijn maatregelen nemen, dat deze zich niet om de recensenten bekommert: hij zal daarom zelf zijn maatregelen nemen, dat deze zich niet om de recensenten bekommert: hij zal daarom zelf zijn maatregelen nemen, dat deze zich niet om de recensenten bekommert: hij zal daarom zelf zijn maatregelen nemen, dat deze zich niet om de recensenten bekommert: hij zal daarom zelf zijn maatregelen nemen, dat deze zich niet om de recensenten bekommert: hij zal daarom zelf zijn maatregelen nemen, dat deze zich niet om de recensenten bekommert: hij zal daarom zelf zijn maatregelen nemen, 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ware, de echte Shelley voor het eerst zijn eigene ziel in zijn eigene melodieën stortend,
zijne godheid zal openbaren aan een wereld die hem nog niet verstand.

Wij moeten daarom zien, welke bijdrage Zastrozzi kan leveren tot de kennis van
het inn<erlijke> leven des dichters. Ik verbeeld mij altijd, dat deze kunstmatige bloesem
van <zijn> jeugd ons een zeer stellig gegeven aan de hand doet, om te bepalen, op welke
wijze de schrij<ver> tot die bespiegelingen werd geleid, die hem bij zijn leven zoo
b<er>ucht, die hem <voor het> later geslacht des te dierbaarder hebben gemaakt. Het
werkje zelве is zedelijk en godsdien<stig> oo orthodox mogelijk. De hysterische
hartstochtelijkheid van de schoone Contessa di Laurentini, ofschoon wel wat al te
uitvoerig beschreven3, wordt door den rechtgeaarden schrijver bij monde van zijn toen
nog deugdzamen held, vergeleken bij de reine Julia, whose feminine delicacy shrunk from
the slightest suspicion, even, of indecorum, en zooals voegt, verworpen: ook wordt de
atheïst Zastrozzi met veel zalving [?] door hem terechtgezet, als de maat zijne
goddeloosheid tusschen beiden overloopt, en noch op het einde worden wij door
Mathilde's plotselinge bekeering gesticht. Maar het sterkste bewijs van des schrijvers
rechtzinnigheid levert ons de volgende zinsnede waar men ons verzekert: in proportion as
human nature departs from virtue, so far are they also from being able clearly to
contemplate the wonderful operations, the mysterious ways of Providence. Nog geen
spoor dus van eigenlijk ongeloof, maar wel een neiging om zich met theologische
vraagstukken bezig te houden en in de strijd partij te kiezen. Een toeval slechts — wat
meerdere ontwikkeling van het redeneerend vermogen — en de schaal zal naar de andere
kant overstlaan; en de jonge enthusiast zal vechten tegen, zooals hij het vroeger voor den
kerkelijken God had gedaan. Dé ommekeer nu moest ook werkelijk plaats gevonden
hebben, in het tijdstip tusschen de voltooiing [sic] en de uitgave van onze novelle. Op het
titelblad toch vinden wij een aanhaling uit Milton's Paradise lost (ten allen tijde een van
Shelley's geliefde boeken) dat in 4 regels de rechtzinnige strekking van het boekje geheel
omvergeworpen [sic].

That their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge.
Uit haar verband gerukt, zooals deze plaats daar staat, kan zij naar mij voorkomt, tot niets anders dienen, dan om al die “slechte menschen”, die de schrijver ten toonele brengt, te verontschuldigen, en alle schuld terug te werpen op God zelf, die hen geschapen heeft. Zoo zou de titel bestemd zijn, al van te voren een clementie te geven, aan al de theoriën [sic], die in het boek zelf beleden werden. Wij kunnen dus met eenige zekerheid besluiten, dat Shelley reeds voor hij zijn achttiende jaar intrad, begonnen was het smalle pad der rechtzinnigheid te verlaten voor den breeden weg eener vrijere levenbeschouwing [sic].

Dit is zoowat alles, wat Zastrozzi ons te zeggen heeft. Maar het jaar 1810 was een vruchtbaar jaar voor den dichter, al waren de vruchten niet van de beste. Nog voor zij 1811 schreef, zou de wereld een tweede novelle en niet minder dan twee bundels gedichten van den zelfden hand kennis kunnen nemen. Het waren Original Poetry by Victor en Cazire (tot dusverre niet teruggevonden) die den 14 Sept. het licht zagen, en nu dra met (?) snelle opvolgingen: The Posthumous fragments van Margaret Nicholson, and St. Irvyne or the Rosecrucian. Voor wij echter de beide laatstgenoemde werkjes bij den lezer inleiden, moeten wij een stap terugdoen, om in weinige trekken 's dichters jeugd te schetsen, zooverre dat voor ons doel, de kennis van zijn persoon en zijn werken, noodig schijnt. Geboren den 4 en Augustus 1792 uit den jongsten tak van een oud en adellijk geslacht, dat een tijdlang achterop was geraakt, maar door de rijke huwelijken van Percy's grootvader en vader, en door de welgeslaagde bemoeiingen <van> een baronetstitel {te verwerven}, tot hoger aanzien was teruggekeerd, sleet de dichter zijn eerste kindertijd in de ouderlijke huizinge. Wij hooren echter weinig of niets van hem vóór zijn < >de jaar. Toen werd hij op school gestuurd, naar Brentford te Sionhouse {read: Syon House} ontmoette <daar> zijn reeds genoemden neef Thomas Medwin, van wiens uitvoerige mededeelingen wij het volgende overnemen: zijn me<deleerlingen> waren meest zoons van Londensche winkeliers, wier ruwe jongensmanieren noodzakelijk in bot<sing moesten> komen met de meisjessachtigheid van een aristocratisch “moederszoontje” als de kleine, jonge S<helley>. Medwin geeft hoog op van het lijden, dat zijn jonge vriend, er moest verduren, en <vermoedt> dat de beperkte vrijheid van een kostschool, en de dagelijksche omgang met makkers, die hem v<erwe>ten, omdat hij hun wilde spelen niet deelde, een al te sterk contrast vormen, met de [Ø] en de behagelijke weelde der ouderlijke woning, dan dat een teer en fijn georganiseerd kind zich in die omgeving niet ongelukkig zou hebben gevoeld. Toch was het dat niet alleen, wat den dichter in latere jaren met afschrik op deze periode van zijn leven deed terugzien.5 {no footnote or other footnote references found}
het innerlijk leven en de hele opgewondenheid van zijn onttuikend kinderzieltje pasten niet in den sleur van een openbare school, en de pensieve en mijmerzieke [Ø] scheen onder de alledaagsche jongensnaturen van Sionhouse {read: Syon House} verdoold, als het zwanenjong onder het eendengebroed in het sprookje van Andersen. Hooren wij, hoe hij in de Dedication to Laon en Cythna (beter bekend als the Revolt of Islam) zijn gevoelens van die dagen beschrijft. {stanzas III-V}

Ik zinde op groote daden, o mijn vriendin, zoodra de wolken begonnen op te trekken, die de wereld verborgen voor de jugdighe ziel. O ik herinner mij nog de ure, waarop mijn ziel de banden van haar slaap verbrak: het was een frissche Meimorgen, maar ik trad naar buiten [Ø] het van d(’aard gras dat glinsterde van de dauw, en weende zonder te weten waarom: tot dat uit de [Ø] Helaas een enkele echo was het maar maar uit een wereld van ellende: scheldkrakeel van mijn tyrannen en mijn vijanden. En toen vouwde ik mijn handen en zag om mij heen — maar er was niemand in de nabijheid die had kunnen spotten om de tranen, lauwe druppels vallende op den zonnigen grond. Dus sprak ik zonder beven: Ik wil wijs en rechtvaardig worden, en vrij en zachtmoedig, indien de kracht daartoe mij gegeven is, want het walgt mij te zien, hoe zelfzucht en geweld reeds heerschappij voeren, zonder dat iemand hem door woord of daad verzet. Waarop ik mijn tranen bedwong, mijn hart sloeg kalmer en ik was zachtzinnig en stout [?]. En sinds die stonde begon ik met ernstig zin kennis te garen uit verboden bronnen van wetenschap, en van alles wat mijn tyrannen wisten en onderwezen, wilde ik niets leren, maar van dien geheimen schat smeederde ik een gemalied pantser voor mijn ziel, alvorens zij den strijd des levens te gemoed gemoed [sic] ging, {crossed out: die haar in de wereld wachtte:}

Deze regelen dateeren van 1817 en de dichter zag het verleden dus door den mist van seven jaren heen. Dat hij in de lesuren alles deed behalve luisteren, wordt echter bevestigd door het getuigenis van Medwin. De oude talen, en wel voornamelijk het latijn, leerde hij “als het ware bij intuïtie{”}, als men den biograaf gelooven mag, en kwam al zijn klasgenooten mettertijd vooruit, “want zijn geheugen was zoo vast, dat hij nooit meer een woord vergat, als hij het eens in den dictionnaire [sic] had opgezocht{”}. Het garen van de “verboden wetenschap” schijnt zich echter voorloopig nog bepaald te hebben tot het verslinden, de een na het ander van de zoogenaamde blue books.
Appendix 2: Willem Kloos’s Shelley collection

The final chapter of Jeanne Kloos-Reyneke van Stuwe’s hagiographic study *Het Menschelijke Beeld van Willem Kloos* is set up as a lengthy description of her husband’s library. It is with particular relish that she reproduces, as proof of his intellectual prowess, list after list of titles and authors which Kloos had collected during the years. This is what she wrote about his Shelley collection:

De eerste [Engelsche kast] bevat de unieke verzameling Shelleyana; edities en werken van Shelley zelf tellen in den catalogus 72 nummers, en de boeken over hem 55 nummers. Een geheele plank is gewijd aan degenen, die met Shelley persoonlijk in verbinding stonden: zijn vrouw Mary Shelley, met enige harer romans o.a. Frankenstein, […] hier eveneens aanwezig; zijn schoonvader Godwin, en de moeder van Mary Shelley, Mary Wolstonecraft [sic] … Dan staan hier ook de vertalingen van Shelley, en de deelen van het tijdschrift The Liberal (hoogst zeldzaam) […] Al Shelley’s vrienden zijn ook vertegenwoordigd: Thomas Lovell Beddoes, Leigh Hunt, Peacock, Trelawney [sic]…¹

We may recall Kloos’s own reference to his Shelley library in his response in *De Nieuwe Gids* of 1923 to an article by A. Bonger (see Chapter Three): ‘mijn verzameling Shelleyana, die meer dan 40 jaren lang allengskens door mij bieengebracht, tegenwoordig 110 deelen bedraagt’.² Luckily, Kloos’s own catalogue of his personal library, which is now part of the non-indexed material of the Kloos collections held in the Literary Museum and Documentation Centre at The Hague (K533), has been preserved. Harry G.M. Prick wrote about these:

Inderdaad bleven in het Nederlands Letterkundig Museum dertien (van de veertien) dikke gealfabetiseerde schrijfboeken bewaard — voor de Duitse, Franse, Engelse, Griekse en latijnse literatuur telkens een afzonderlijk deel, en zo ook voor

Philosophie, Théologie et Occultisme —, die samen de catalogus vormen van Kloos’ bibliotheek. Omdat al die delen zijn volgeschreven door Jeanne Kloos, helaas op volmaakt dilettantische wijze want met bijna consequent te noemen verwaarlozing van zelfs de meest elementaire regels van de titelbeschrijving, moet wel worden aangenomen dat het aandeel van Kloos in die liefdevolle zorg uit weinig anders zal hebben bestaan dan uit het aanreiken, en later weer terugzetten, van het door zijn vrouw te beschrijven boekdeel.3

In the volume entirely devoted to English literature, and as could be expected, the section on P.B. Shelley is by far the most comprehensive. Divided into works by and works on Shelley, the catalogue documents on a material level Kloos’s profound interest in the poet’s life and works. Though the catalogue contains fewer titles than recorded both in Jeanne’s study and Willem’s casual reference, the list still looks impressive enough. It is difficult to establish when Kloos started drawing up the catalogue as it is itself not dated. However, Jeanne refers to it in a letter of 1917 to her brother ‘Co’.4

Below, I have reproduced the titles in the same order as I found them in Kloos’s entrybook (list 1). Idiosyncrasies in spelling have been preserved, and apart from closing a few brackets, nothing substantial has been altered. I have prefixed each entry with a number which refers to the second list where I have tried to identify the work in question and reproduced any inscription present in Kloos’s copy (list 2). This is then followed by a few observations concerning, amongst others, the presence or absence of some particular items and their current whereabouts.

List 1: Shelley entries in Kloos’s library catalogue

P. B. Shelley:

1. Complete works (Buxton Forman) 8 dln.
2. Poetical works 5 dln. (Buxton Forman)
3. Poetical works (3 dln.) (W.M. Rossetti)
4. Letters (Roger Ingpen) 2 dln.
5. Poems 2 dln (C.D. Llocck)
6. Poetical works 2dln (Koszul)

4 This unpublished letter is also part of the non-indexed material of the Kloos collection (K533).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Poems, essays, letters (Mrs Shelley 1869)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Poetical works (Hutchinson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poetical works (Dowden)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Sensitive plant (Ill. Housman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Poems (narrative, elegiac and visionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Original poems by Victor and Cazire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Prometheus unbound (Scudder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Relics of Sh. (Garnett)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The best letters of ... (Hughson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Essays and letters (E. Rhys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Prose in the Bodleian manuscripts (Koszul)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lit: and philos: criticism (Shawcross)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>De Cenci (vert. de Raaf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Alastor (vert. de Raaf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>(Chandos Classics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>ausgewählte Dichtungen (Strodtmann)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sentences and maxims (George Shelley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Queen Mab (1857)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Selections from ... (Landels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Address to the people by the hermit of Marlowe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Selections from ... (M. Blind) (Tauchnitz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>A philos. view of reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Poetical works (Oxford Edition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Prosewritings (Shephard) by Ed. Woodberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Poetical works (Mrs. Shelley ed.) 3 dln.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Poetical works of Sh... (Rossetti) (1870) 1e druk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Poems (W. Raleigh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Poetical works (1853)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Essays, etc. (Mrs Shelley, 1852) 2 dln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Six hymns of Homer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Works (Ed. Shepherd) 5 dln.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Works (Ed. Herford) 3 dln.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>lost letters to Harriet (L. Hotson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Alastor (Sh. Society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Verse and Prose (Ed. by Sir John Shelley, Rolls and Ingpen)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Over Shelley:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Ed. Dowden: Life of Shelley 2 dln.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>J. Hogg: Life of Shelley and Sh. at Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Medwin Shelley's Life 2dln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; (2e druk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Middleton: Sh. and his writings 2dln.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Lady Shelley: Shelley memorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Peacock: Memoirs of Shelley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Trelawney: Recollections of Sh. and Byron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Mc.Carthy: Sh.'s early life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>F. Gribble: The romantic life of Sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Mc.Mohan: With Shelley in Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Todhunter: Shelley, a study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
54. Symonds: Shelley
55. Jeaffreson: The real Sh. (2 dln)
56. William Sharp: Life of Sh.
57. W.M. Rossetti: Memoir of Shelley
58. Garnett: Letters about Shelley
59. Brailsford: Shelley, Godwin and their circle
60. Dr. Polidori: Diary
61. The Liberal (2 dln)
62. J. Noel Paton: Compositions of Prometheus Unbound
63. Keats-Shelley Memorial-Souvenir
64. Een verzameling artikelen van de Shelley Society
65. Locock: An examination of the Sh. Manuscripts
66. Ellis: A lexical concordance to the poetical works of Sh.
67. André Maurois: Ariël (Fransch)
68. Huscher: Studien zu Sh’s Lyrik
69. Bulletin of the Keats-Shelley Memorial 1 en 2
70. R. Ingpen: Shelley in England
71. Peacock’s four ages of poetry etc. (Brettsmith)
72. Shelley, an essay by Jack
73. Shelley, an essay by F. Thompson
74. Miller: Leigh Hunt’s relations with Byron, Shelley, Keats
75. Mark Twain: In defence of Harriet Shelley
76. N. Davidson: Things seen in Oxford
77. Maurois: Ariël. A Shelley romance
78. E. Carpenter } The psychology of the poet Shelley
79. Peck: Shelley’s life and works 2 dln
80. Life and letters of Mary Shelley (Mrs. Marshall)
81. Letters of Hogg to Jane Williams
82. Alastor. An Odyssee of the soul (Hoffmann)
83. Berthelot: Poèmes de Shelley (imités ou traduits)
84. A. Glynn Grills: Mary Shelley, a biography
85. Benjamin Kurtz: The Pursuit of death. A study of Shelley’s poetry
86. Leslie Holdsworth Allen: Die Persönlichkeit P.B. Shelley’s

List 2: Bibliographical details of the Shelley entries in Kloos’s catalogue:

P.B. Shelley:


23. George Shelley, *Sentences and Maxims ... in Prose and Verse ... Containing a ... Collection of Copies of all Sorts ... for the Use of Writing-Schools* (London, 1712).


26. [P.B. Shelley], *An Adress to the People on the Death o f the Princess Charlotte. By the Hermit of Marlow* (London: Thomas Rodd, [1840?]).


Another copy: 1914


Over Shelley:


50. Denis Florence MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life from the Original Sources. With Curious Incidents, Letters, and Writings, Now First Published and Collected* (London: John Camden Hotten, [1872]).


52. Anna Benneson MacMahan, *With Shelley in Italy: Being a Selection of the Poems and Letters of P.B. Shelley which have to do with his Life in Italy from 1818 to 1822. With over Sixty full-page Illustrations from Photographs* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1905).


62. Sir Joseph Noel Paton, *Compositions from Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound'* ([London; 1844]).

63. ?

64. *The Shelley Society's Papers* (London: Reeves and Turner, [1886-1891]).


77. Ella D'Arcy, trl., *Ariel: A Shelley Romance* (London: The Bodley Head, 1924 [reprint]).


**Comments on Kloos’s Shelley collection**

It should be noted that the second list serves as a guideline only and is not to be considered a perfect reconstruction of Kloos’s Shelley library, because not all items have
been preserved in the collections of the Literary Museum. The catalogue contains a sufficient number of surprises. For instance, a copy of his *Queen Mab* print of 1857 (item 24) will be looked for in vain in the British Library or the Bodleian Library Oxford, which gives some indication of its rarity. His unequivocal dislike of the poem, apparently, did not interfere with his collector's instinct. Likewise, and as Jeanne pointed out in her survey, Kloos's copies of the short-lived *The Liberal* (item 61), a radical, literary periodical set up by Leigh Hunt, Lord Byron and P.B. Shelley at Pisa in 1822, were a real bibliophile gem which many Shellyites must have envied him. The *pièce de résistance* of Kloos's collection, not recorded in the catalogue, is, of course, the manuscript letter Shelley wrote to E.F. Graham in 1810 and which Kloos bought at an auction at The Hague on 22 March 1921 for five hundred and fifty guilders. Secured between two sheets of glass, the document adorned Kloos's study room (see Chapter Five). It is at present kept at the Royal Library in The Hague (signature 69 F 21).

As a rule, whenever Kloos's catalogue leaves some doubt about the precise edition of a given title, I have gone back to the earliest imprint. Despite my efforts, I have been unsuccessful in identifying a number of titles, notably items 25, 63 and 75. Item 63 may have been a small booklet or guide distributed as a memento to all visitors of the Keats-Shelley Museum at Rome which was bought by the Keats Shelley Memorial Association in 1907 and opened to the public two years later. Several of Kloos's acquaintances (e.g. David Spanjaard) are likely candidates to have brought such a publication, together with carefully dried leaves from Shelley's grave, on their return from Italy and presented it to Kloos. It had indeed become quite fashionable to undertake such a trip to the last haunts of the English Romantics and to imbue the spirit of their dwelling places.  

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5 See for instance: J. Veldkamp, 'A Pilgrimage to the Remains of Shelley and Keats (1822(1)-1922) in: *English Studies*, 1922, vol. 4, pp. 200-201. Kloos's collection of greenery culled from the Protestant Cemetery in Rome was rather considerable. On 26 July 1921, Orazio Penna sent 'un petit rameau du laurier qui orne cette [i.e. Shelley's] tombe'. On 1 September of the same year, Kloos expressed his gratitude in a letter to W.J. Koster of Hilversum for having sent him leaves from a wreath placed on Shelley's tomb stone. On 9 August 1924, Maria Favai (?) wrote to Kloos, whom she addresses as 'Meester', and enclosed with her letter a few box sprigs taken from Shelley's grave together with a leaf from the oak which stands between the resting places of Keats and Severn. Likewise, in October 1933, D. Spanjaard sent 'Bladeren van Shelley's graf te Rome'; 'Bloemen groeiden er in dit seizoen niet'. These letters and their botanical contents are kept at the Royal Library in The Hague, signature 69 F 21. In addition, Kloos possessed a handsomely crafted gold-rimmed medallion containing a few of said dried leaves (Kloos collection Literary Museum, K. 533 Voorwerpen I, 6. iv).
Kloos also kept several folders with newspaper cuttings and articles on Shelley. In the ‘Beschrijving van de Verzameling Willem Kloos’ at the Literary Museum, compiled in 1953, two such files are mentioned, though the contents are left unspecificed. At present, the whereabouts of these items, which were not included in the modern catalogue, are no longer accounted for.\footnote{See: ‘Beschrijving van de Verzameling Willem Kloos’, p. 55', nr. 16 (‘Enveloppe met brieven, kaarten, artikelen en persknipsels betr. Shelley en zijn tijd’) and p. 58', nr. 3 (‘De verzameling P.B. Shelley en de Engelse litteratuur van zijn tijd’). This handwritten compilation is also kept in one of the cardboard boxes containing the non-catalogued material of the Kloos collection (K533) and signed by P.J.H. Vermeeren and C.C. Spiering.} It can be safely assumed that many of the clippings will have come from English publications, cut out and sent to the Regentesselaan by ‘Co’ who resided in London:

\begin{quote}
Dit vind ik [...] zoo verdomd aardig van je, beste Co, dat je die excerpten van Shelley-brieven hebt willen maken, en mij sturen. [...] Ik vind het ook zoo almachtig hartelijk, dat je mij steeds zoo op de hoogte houdt van al die dingen omtrent Shelley: je doet er mij een heel grooten dienst mee!\footnote{Willem Kloos in an unpublished letter to ‘Co’ Reyneke van Stuwe, 31 March 1922, Kloos collection K533, non-catalogued material.}
\end{quote}

Exactly eleven years later, Kloos wrote to Co’s son Hans (b. 1912): ‘Het was ook aardig van je mij, die uitknipsels over Shelley te sturen. De uitgave waarover het gaat [not identified] is hoogst belangrijk en tante Jeanne heeft het voor mij besteld als een verjaardagscadeau’.\footnote{Willem Kloos to Hans Reyneke van Stuwe, 31 March 1933, Kloos collection K533, non-catalogued material.}

If we are to believe Kloos’s own account, then item 21 was the very first collection of Shelley’s poetry in his possession: ‘Ik liep [...] als negentienjarige jongen [...] langs de Amsterdamsche boekwinkels, en zag toen op het Rokin, bij de firma Kirberger en Kesper [...] een geelbruin boek liggen [...] - het was een deeltje der Chandos-Classics [...] waarop ik den titel: “Shelley’s Poetical Works” had zien staan.’ The volume opens with \textit{Queen Mab} which made a rather disappointing read: ‘Shelley stelde mij, bij den eersten inkijk, een heel klein beetje te leur’.\footnote{‘Percy Bysshe Shelley in Nederland’ in: \textit{De Nieuwe Gids}, September 1922, pp. 306-335.}

It was the publication of Todhunter’s \textit{A Study of Shelley} (item 53) shortly afterwards which brought Kloos to contemplate writing an extensive study on the English poet for \textit{De Nederlandsche Spectator}. Around mid-August 1880, Kloos makes it clear in
a letter to the editor Carel Vosmaer that it was essential for his purposes to have his own copy of the book: ‘De eenige plaats waar het hier te zien is, is het Leesmuseum, en voor naslaan, vergelijken, als anderszins is dit niet voldoende’. In his answer a few days later, Vosmaer encourages Kloos to go ahead with the Shelley study. ‘Kunt gy u het boek niet aanschaffen?’ he asks; and as an incentive to Kloos, he adds: ‘Wy bezitten het niet: de kolom kan u met f 1.90 gehonoreerd worden’ (p. 51). Kloos probably acquired the volume soon afterwards, though on 4 March 1881, he confesses to Vosmaer: ‘Het stuk over Shelley, schoon ik het boek gelezen heb, is nog altijd in de pen gebleven’ (p. 52). The piece was never written; some of the preparatory notes are reproduced in Appendix 1.

A stray book by George Shelley (item 23) ended up in the impressive collection which Kloos never stopped to expand. Item 84, for instance, was published in the year of Kloos’s death (March 1938) which shows how he tried to keep his collection, and catalogue, up-to-date. Item 65, Locock’s study on *Prometheus Unbound* was sent to him by ‘Co’, together with a copy of Laura Buxton Forman’s letter concerning the ‘ruin-ravin’ controversy (see Chapter Four) sometime in June or July 1916. Though its absence is not proof that Kloos did not possess a copy, the omission of Alex Gutteling’s *Prometheus Ontboeid* from the catalogue becomes all the more glaring, especially when the presence of De Raaf’s two independent Shelley translations (items 19, 20) is taken into account. Kloos reviewed the translation in the May issue of *De Nieuwe Gids* in 1922 and it is difficult to believe that he did not have a personal copy at that stage. Notwithstanding the temptation to do otherwise, no direct causal relationship can be demonstrated between Kloos’s profound dislike of Gutteling’s dutchified version and the exclusion from the catalogue. Indeed, there are other cases which indicate that not every single book in Kloos’s Shelley library was recorded.

In the article from which I quoted Kloos’s reference to his 110-volume Shelley library, for instance, he claims that ‘de twee deelen van Trelawny’s Records sinds 1880 in mijn bezit zijn’ and that these are even ‘een der grondleggers’ of his entire collection. Kloos’s catalogue does not list the work. Trelawny’s later *Records* are a revised and

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12 Willem Kloos, ‘Nog eens Huet en Shelley’, p. 280 (see also Chapter Three). It is also in this passage that Kloos claimed to have received Dowden’s two-volume *Shelley* with the author’s dedication (item 42). Edward John Trelawny, *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author*, 2 vols (London: Basil Montagu Pickering, 1878).
greatly enlarged version of the *Recollections*, a title which Kloos did include in his entrybook (item 49).

Another book once in Kloos’s possession which, for obvious reasons, was not recorded in the catalogue is a collection of Shelley’s verse edited by Mary Shelley which Kloos gave as a present to Verwey in 1885. On the title leaf, Kloos wrote in black ink the following dedication: ‘aan Albert Verwey van Willem Kloos. 23 Juni 1885’. According to Garnt Stuiveling, the volume, which is now kept in the Royal Library at the Hague (signature 98 K 1), originally belonged to Jacques Perk (*JPGI*, pp. 316, 334).

In 1881 (or perhaps 1880), Jacques Perk presented Kloos with a collection of Shelley’s poetry, together with a dedicatory sonnet (‘Rampzalig wie, — waar in zich-zelf verzinkt’) which was first reproduced in *De Nieuwe Gids*. This book could not be traced and no bibliographic details about it are known. On 17 November 1881, Kloos received another Shelley edition, this time from Perk’s father, which had once been Jacques’s.

Below I have compiled a list of books which are part of the Kloos Collections in The Hague but which are not mentioned in the personal catalogue.

**List 3: Titles not mentioned in the catalogue**


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Pages 154-70: Verwey's *Alastor* translation. Kloos added alternative readings in pencil on page 154:

V: En mijn hart staart gedurig op het diep / Van uw diepste geheimen
K: 'En in de diepte van uw diep mysterie / Staart steeds mijn hart'

K: 'waar zwarte dood de zijn gewonnen zege[illegible] boekt (keeps record)'

K: 'zo 'k een verlaten geest / Uw bode dwingen kan mij taal te geven / Van wat wij zijn'
Appendix 3: Dutch Shelley translations

The compilation below lists the most important Shelley translations in Dutch. For the shorter poems, translations published after 1960 have not been included. One exception is Johan Jansen’s collection *Onkruid vergaat niet*, and this for three reasons: it is briefly mentioned in the introduction, all translations were made in the 1940s, and it contains translations of Shelley poems that are unique in Dutch (‘Arethusa’ and a complete ‘Mask of Anarchy’). With the original title of each poem I have also given the date of its first publication (in English). The date in *italics* immediately following the translator’s name refers to the date of composition of the translation (when it differs from the date of publication). When I have been unable to trace a copy of the translation, I have underlined the translator’s name and given the source from which I gathered the information. For the sake of convenience, I have given the full bibliographical details for each translation, even if the collection in which it appears has been mentioned before.

**Adonais (1821)**
Hein Boeken (?/not publ.) (stanzas 1-11) Manuscript held at the Literary Museum and Documentation Centre in The Hague (B663 H.1 2700).

**Alastor (1816)**
Arethusa (1820)

Autumn: A Dirge (1824)

The Cenci (1820)
W. Gosler (c. 1886/not publ.) Source: P.J. van Eldik Thieme, ‘Shelley’s treurspel The Cenci’ in: De Nederlandsche Spectator, 10 July 1886, pp. 231-33 (p. 233).

The Cloud (1820)
C.L. van de Weijer, ‘Wolk en regenboog (The Cloud en Iris) [De wolk]’ in: Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, 24 June 1922.
J.A. Blok (pre 1938/not publ.) Source: J.A. Rispens, Richtingen en figuren in de Nederlandsche letterkunde na 1880 (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1938 [?]), p. 179.

The Daemon of the World (1816)
A Defence of Poetry (1840)

Epipsychidion (1821)


Albert Verwey (?/not publ.) [1 paragraph, ll. 160-173] Manuscript kept in the Albert Verwey Collections at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) (AV III.49).

From the Arabic: An Imitation (1824)

The Fugitives (1824)


Good-Night (1822)


Hymn to Intellectual Beauty (1817)


Indian Serenade (1819)
The Isle (1824)

Julian and Maddalo (1824)
Hein de Bruin, Shelley’s Juliaan en Maddalo: Een gesprek, Bayard Reeks No. 12 (Bussum: F.G. Krooinder, 1946).

Laon and Cythna (1817)

Liberty (1824)

Love’s Philosophy (1819)

The Masque of Anarchy (1832)

Mont Blanc (1817)
Willem Kloos (1884) Manuscript kept in Albert Verwey Collections at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) (Kloos map 1884, letter dated November 1884). Text reproduced in modernised spelling in: WKJL, pp. 271-74.

Music (1824)
Mutability (1824)

Ode to the West Wind (1820)

On Death (1816)

Ozymandias (1817)

Prometheus Unbound (1820)

Queen Mab (1813)

Remembrance (1824)
The Sensitive Plant (1820)

Song to the Men of England (1839)

The Sunset (1824)

Time (1824)

To — (‘I fear thy kisses’) (1824)

To a Sky-Lark (1820)
J.A. Blok (pre 1938) Source: J.A. Rispens, Richtingen en Figuren in de Nederlandsche Letterkunde na 1880 (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1938 [?]), p. 179.

To Constantia: Singing (1824)
To Jane: The Recollection (1839)

To-Morrow (1824)

To Night (1824)

To the Moon (1824)

The Two Spirits: An Allegory (1824)
Appendix 4: Kloos’s Shelley Sonnet Cycle

Below I have reproduced the twelve sonnets of Kloos’s Shelley cycle as they appeared in *De Nieuwe Gids* of November 1921 (pp. 698-709). I have followed throughout Kloos’s spelling, use of capitals, and punctuation.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

doors

WILLEM KLOOS.

Voor Co R. v. S.

1. PROÖIMION.

Soms, als men diep in zijn gedachten klimt
Naar de aan het zwarte azuur te ziene plekken,
De veel licht-eeuwen verre nevelvlekken,
Wier magisch scheemren weifelend verschimt,

Verlangt men naar omhoog, waar 't vonkt en glimt,
Beide armen ijlings voor zich op te strekken
In forschen uitzwaai, 'of ons vleuglen dekken,
Die dâârheen voeren, waar aan verdre kim 't

Paleis komt rijzen en onsterflijk wonen
Al wie op aarde in 't Onverderlijk-Schoone
Leefden, en schiepen wat niet kân vergaan.

Ach! 't menschdom ging hen voor hun hoogheid loonen ...
Aischulos vluchte voor der burgren hoonen,
En Shelley is op zee door moord vergaan.

2. VOÖRGEVOEL.

Wie ging, met snelle stappen, slank, gebogen
Een heel klein beetje 't hoofd, langs 't ruischend strand?
Daar heft hij plots zijn Aanschijn en met oogen,
Vaag en toch klaar, uitkijkend naar den rand,
Den versten zoom des horizons, waar vlogen
Vogels, als vlekken op den heldren wand
Des eindloos-wijden hemels, en zijn hand,
Als vogel-zelf, zich zwierend naar den hooge,

Leek hij zoo klein daar, in 't heelal-ruim staande,
De onsterfelijke Shelley ... Zwaar-diep-luid,
Een beest, dat bulkt naar onbereikbren buit,
Galmt dof de zee, golven op golven slaande:

Dees wéten 't wel, want, ach, slechts weinig uren later
Lag 't goddelijk genie, als lijk, vèr, diep in 't water.

3. DE MOORD.

Het ranke lichaam van de boot (de haven
Uitschietend als een meeuw op eens, met volle
Zeilen, die heftig inderhaast zich bollen)
Scheert over 't zeeschuim reeds, waar, in wild draven,

('s Afgronds mysteriën het doodsesein gaven)
Zij streeft den stormwind tegemoet te hollen,
Wijl, achteraan en naast, twee even dolle
(Als, ach! op roof-moord uitgestuurde slaven)

Barken snel reppen. Dan komt Duister vallen:
De mist ligt laag op 't water: zien en horen
Vergaan, alleen de horens hoeënd schallen ...
Hol-dof een botsing bonst: men raadt een smoren,

Door dichte witheid, van twee lichte gillen *)
En verder niets dan ... Dood, de diep-in stille ...

*) van Capt. Williams, Shelley's vriend, en Charles Vivian, den scheepsjongen.

4. SHELLEY'S STERVEN.

Voorover, in het boot-ruim, lang-uit lag
Shelley en las.*) De wilde golven sloegen
Luider en luider langs de zijden, droegen
Hoog-op het brooze vaartuig, met geklag

Van schril zoevend gieren door want en stag,
Die knerpten. Hoorde-i niet, hoe de andren joegen
Hierheen en daarheen, zuchten, riepen, kloegen?
Hij las maar, las, totdat hij niets meer zag ...
Toen stond hij op, verwonderd; neevlen drongen
Overal áán, en plots ... een donker blok
Komt dreigend door die misten opgesprongen ...
Hij wankelt door den donderenden schok ...

"Is dat de Dood? ontvang me ..." en willig glijdend
Valt hij de diepte in, zwijgend, de armen breidend.

*) In Keats Eve of St. Agnes, dat omgeslagen in zijn zak werd gevonden.

5. BEKENTENIS VAN DEN MOORDENAAR.

Wij waren jonge wilden: o, de vlock,
Te moeten jong en dwaas zijn: niet te weten
En toch te doen ... wel gauw weer is 't vergeten ...
Maar later ... later ... Ach! 'k ben moede, ik zoek

Naar woorden, om te sussen mijn geweten,
Doch vindt er gééne ... Zie daar, in dien hoek,
Daar staat Hij en hij glimlacht: schijnt te meten
Den afstand naar mijn bed ... geef mij dien doek,

'k Moet hoesten weer: bloed is 't: ik voel 't, als rijden
Mij duivlen door de borst: 'k zal 't snel belijden,
Want haast begeeft mij de adem ... en ik sterf:

'k Heb eens in 't stormen der Toscaansche baren ...
... Geef, geef mij de absolutie of 'k verderf ...
Voor geld een Engelsch scheepje omvergevaren.

6. SHELLEY'S VERSCHIJNING.

Stil was 't, toen Shelley snellijk tot mij trad ...
Ik zag hem nauw, maar voelde zijn nabijen
Bovenaardsche' adem om mijn hoofd zich vlijen,
Zóó zacht, alsof er op een buiten-pad,

Waar niemand loopt, een zoeltje gaat: geen blad
Omhoog beweegt: men merkt alleen zachtblij een
Vreemde verfrissching langs zijn slapen glijen ...
Eerbiedig wacht ik roerloos, waar ik zat:

"Hoor naar uw Ziel, die gij nauw weet, die binnen,
Ver achter 't aardsche schimmenspel, zich wiegt
Op eigen levensdiepte, waar 't beminnen
Eindeloos-door om 't Eeuwig-Schoone vliegt,
Lijk in ‘t Heelal-ruim om de nooit te kennen,
Der zonnen Zon, al andre zonnen rennen.”

7. Vervolg.

Zóó voelde ik: Shelley zeide ‘t, en een vrede
Van veilig weten zeeeg er door mijn heele
Wezen tot in mijn diepste ziel, die ‘k spelen
Hoorde van ver, stil-eenzaam op de breede

Weiden der eindeloosheid, en haar beden,
Om één te wezen met het Al-zijn, kweelen
Weer ging, heel diep-inwendig, als zoovelen
Dat sinds hun vroegste, droefste jaren deden ...

Doch Shelley lachte en riep, terwijl hij schudde
’t Jong hoofd — dat lachen scheen als zilvren bellen:—
“Gij moet niet langer meer uw Zelf wreed kwelen,
“Gij liept nooit mede met de doffe kudde

“Van wie graag, door den Dood, in ‘t Niet vervlogen:
“Gij zijt U-zelf, strikt-vrij van Schijn of Logen.”

8. Vervolg.

“Gij wist, als Ik, van deinzen niet noch wijken,
“Gij stoordet nooit aan dwazen u, die smaadden,
“Maar gingt, door niets weerhoudeen, vroeg en spade,
“Uw eigen echten weg naar ‘t hoog Bereiken ...

“Naar ‘t Diepste dalen en naar ‘t Verste reiken,
“Naar ‘t niet te noemen Eerste, Oneindge raden
“En, schoon met Denken’s eeuwgen last beladen,
“Toch nimmer, geen sekonde ook maar, bezwijken.

“Wijs-zijn, niet hopen maar ook geenszins vreezen,
“Terwijl men stil-gestuwd omhoog blijft dringen
“Op ‘t pad, u door uw diepste Zijn gewezen ...

“Dát was de weg, dien alle dichters gingen,
“Die niet om zelfs-wil maar om Zielswil zingen ...
“Zoo blijf, wat gij steeds zijn woudt, een van deze.”
9. **ANTWOORD VAN MIJ.**

Meester! ... vergeef, dat 'k U zoo noeme in schromen,
Maar met een diepe, als bovenaardsche vreugd,
Sinds 'k als vaag-ontroerend na-geneugt
Van overschoone en lang-geleden drommen,

Die in 't koud daglicht plots weer vóór ons komen,
Uw naam — o, hoe dat oogenblik mij heugt! —
in de' allereersten opgang mijner jeugd
Met wijdingsvolle ontroering heb vernomen.

Ik zag hem ... lás hem ... wist niet, hoe mij wierd ...
Groeiëde er een verre erinnring in mij wakker
Dat ik, in vroeger Zijn, met U als makker,
Heb vrij door 't Engelsch heuvlenland gezwierd?

O, is de heele Menschheid, hier op aard verschenen,
Eén bonte ontbloëïng van het diep-in Eeuwig-Eéne?

10. **Vervolg.**

Spiegelt, wat elk beleef, terug in 't Groote,
't Oneindig-diepe Al-wezen (achter 't schijnen
Van dit en dat en wéér wat, 't Uwe en 't mijne)
In 't Eeuwge Denken, waar, in durend stooten

Van Neen op Ja, van 't Kleine tegen 't Groote,
Onder steeds reddeloos geleden pijnen,
Waar zich vergaan in voelt het Teêre en Fijne,
Het Levensraadsel uit is opgeschoten?

Moet men getroost dus, weg van al vergeefsche
Klachten om heel ons klein, persoonlijk Lijden,
't Al-eenig eeuwiglijk-bestaand goed-geefsche,

Het God-genoemd goed-nemende te al tijden
Machteloos eerend, verder in goed-leefsche
Koelheid het Goede doen, het Slechte mijden?

11. **SHELLEY'S OORDEEL.**

Doch Shelley's stem zei, klinkend als het golven
Van wind door slank-getopte popel-takken:
“De aarde werd woonoord voor gespeende wolven,
“Die met hun jonge tanden alles pakken.

“Dra zullen dichters wonen in barakken,
“Waar, als zij daags hebben gespit, gedolven,
“Zij worden heengedreven door de kolven
“Van vunze Bolsjewistische Kozakken.

“’t Menschdom is als Natuur, waar allen strijden,
“Geroofd wordt eeuwig-door: ’t gaat op en neder,
“Dees wint of die, maar ’t is tot schâ voor beiden.
“O, vlieg, vriend, met mij mede, als lichte veder.

“Hierboven is het zalig, waar in wijden
“Kringen alle blauwingen zich om ons breiden!”

12. SLOT.

Toen lachte ik. “Meester, in die hooge streken,
“Waarheen mijn droomen ging in kinderjaren,
“Wanneer ik zat lange avonden te staren,
“Wijl alle sterren naar me, als oogen, keken ...”

“Voel ik mij, die maar ’n aardling ben, een zware,
“Veel minder thuis dan Gij.” Gelijk een bleeke
Straal van den maan, dien bladbeweeg kwam breken,
Was Shelley, als een waan, plots heengevaren ...

“Illusie, gingt gij?” zei ik zacht. “Waar bleef gij?
“Muziekvolle ademing uit beetre sfere,
“Die eenmaal ’n oogwenk hier op aard verkeeren
“Dwaamt, om te vlieden, óók te gauw toen ... streeft gij

“De oneindigheid der Ruimte dóór, om te ontmoeten
“’t Verbeeldde Kernpunt van dees Chaos, dat wij groeten ...?”
Appendix 5: Revenue and attendance figures for *De Cenci*

The table below shows the attendance figures for each of the six performances of *De Cenci* at the ‘Koninklijke Nederlandsche Schouwburg’ in Antwerp (January 1929), and the prices of all the types of tickets available as mentioned in the KNS accounts held at the Antwerp City Archives (KNS 1929-1933, 4525). The total revenue per performance is that found in the accounts, the overall attendance figure per performance I compiled myself.

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Poems, articles, and reviews written by Willem Kloos and published in *De Nieuwe Gids* are not included. Exact details of these are given in the footnotes when they are discussed in the text proper. Dutch Shelley translations are listed separately in Appendix 3.

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