

effectually from sin. "Dico flebiliter pro meipso quod istis decem annis continue predicavi contra peccata regnantia in diocesi mea, nec tamen video quod quis surget effectualiter a peccato" (fol. 287b). He came to the see of Rochester probably March, 1373.³ If he is talking in round numbers, the sermon may be dated July 22, 1382, when he would have presided over the diocese nine years and a half. There is evidence that because of ill health he was inactive much of the time after 1382, and so although he may have delivered this sermon in 1383, it is more likely that the sermon belongs to the series of 1382.

I have limited myself to this brief account of the chronology of the sermons of Bishop Brunton because I shall give a more complete discussion of the subject in the edition of the sermons which I expect to publish in the near future. I think, however, that I have proved that Miss Kellogg's method of dating the sermons is likely to result in serious error and that the sermons which she lists cover a period not of seven, but of ten years.

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³ Wharton, *Anglia Sacra* (London, 1691) I, 378, 379.

A NOTE ON SOURCE-STUDIES OF *ST. PATRICK* FOR IRELAND

RECENTLY there has come to my notice a German dissertation, *Quellenstudien zu Einigen Dramen James Shirley's*, by Karl Fröhlich (Herford, 1913), which is not listed in any of the Shirley bibliographies, nor catalogued by the Bodleian or the British Museum. In addition to containing studies of *The Maid's Revenge*, *The Politician*, *The Cardinal*, and Gould's *The Rival Sisters*, this volume devotes a little over two pages¹ to a consideration of *St. Patrick for Ireland*. In those pages Dr. Fröhlich offers Jocelyn's life of the saint as found in Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum Hiberniae*² as the probable source of the play. Since in my article, "The Sources of Shirley's *St. Patrick for Ireland*,"³ I stated that no one had hitherto recognized Shirley's debt to Jocelyn, I feel it my duty to call attention to this earlier piece of research, even though I believe that I have proved that the actual volume Shirley used was the free English translation of Jocelyn made by Frater B.B.⁴

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¹ Pp. 2-4.

² Paris, 1624.

³ *PMLA*, XLVIII, 806-814.

⁴ Fr. B. B., *The Life of the Glorious Bishop S. Patrick* . . . (S. Omers, 1625).

THE POET IN SHELLEY'S *ALASTOR*: A CRITICISM AND A REPLY

IN an article entitled "Wordsworth as the Prototype of the Poet in Shelley's *Alastor*,"¹ Professors Paul Mueschke and Earl L. Griggs attempt "to show that

¹ *PMLA*, XLIX (March, 1934), 229-245.

Alastor is allegorical of the premature decay of genius² and that "Shelley actually had Wordsworth in mind as the prototype of the poet in *Alastor*."³ The writers maintain that the vision of the Being whom the Poet loves is intended "to signalize the beginning of the poet's decline,"⁴ and that from the departure of the vision to the close of the poem "what Shelley emphasizes is the listlessness, apathy, and despair arising from the consciousness of a decaying power."⁵ "Like Wordsworth," they say, "the poet in *Alastor* sees the vision 'fade into the light of common day',"⁶ and becomes "keenly aware of the premature hardening of his own sensibilities."⁷ They assert that the Poet's suffering "arises from a persistent consciousness of hardening sensibilities and manifests itself in listlessness and apathetic despondency."⁸ This interpretation of the poem, in addition to the fact that "there is in *Alastor* much that cannot be explained in terms of an autobiographical interpretation,"⁹ that "Shelley's reading of *The Excursion* in 1814 marks a distinct change in his attitude toward Wordsworth,"¹⁰ and that Shelley has been much influenced by Wordsworth in the composition of *Alastor*, leads these writers to think that Shelley must have had Wordsworth in mind as the prototype of the Poet in *Alastor*.

This conclusion, however, seems based on a misinterpretation of the poem as a whole and in many of its parts. *Alastor* is not allegorical of the premature decay of genius, for the Poet's genius does not decay. The Poet's sensitiveness to the beauty of natural objects never hardens into insensibility, nor does it harden at all. The vision of the dream maiden, accordingly, does not signalize the beginning of the Poet's decline, and Shelley emphasizes neither listlessness nor apathy in the Poet.

The Poet's genius does not decay. The Poet goes forth to the contemplation of the universe with an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge. But in his enthusiasm for the beauty in nature and the learning of man, he neglects human love. In the *Preface* to the poem Shelley himself states this, and in the poem the incident of the Arab maiden is evidently intended to show the Poet's spurning of love. He not only fails to cultivate human sympathy and friendship, but he also ignores the love of others for him. The Arab maiden, who devotes herself generously to the care of him, is enamoured but dares not speak her love, and the Poet goes away, apparently unconscious of her affection. His neglect of human love, though not fully nor adequately shown by this single episode, is nevertheless evidently intended to be emphasized here. His passion for the majestic and beautiful in life, with his sacred thirst for all that is best, is self-centered, and so though it is "by a generous error" that he is deluded, he keeps aloof from sympathies with his kind and attempts to exist without human sympathy.

The time arrives, however, when learning and natural beauty cease to suffice, and it is at this time that Professors Mueschke and Griggs see the beginning of the Poet's decline into insensibility to beauty. But rather than the beginning of

² *Ibid.*, 229.³ *Ibid.*, 240.⁴ *Ibid.*, 241.⁵ *Ibid.*, 241.⁶ *Ibid.*, 241.⁷ *Ibid.*, 242.⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.⁹ *Ibid.*, 229.¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 229.

a decline, we have here an awakening. It is the awakening of his desire for human sympathy. The Poet's "mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves."¹¹ In his sleep he sees a vision of a veiled maiden who represents in human form everything that his heart and soul might desire, but who in particular represents that human love which hitherto he has spurned. He finds a response to his love in this dream maiden, and thereafter seeks in vain for her prototype.¹² The spirit of sweet human love has sent this vision to him to punish him for having spurned love. From now on, he loves love—hence, the motto of the poem: "the love of love"—but he is unable to find that love which he has idealized for himself, and blasted by his disappointment he descends to an untimely grave.

Dowden has pointed out that the motto of *Alastor* is in a certain sense the motto of Shelley's whole life.¹³ There is a strong autobiographical element in this allegory of the state of mind of a youth who, having first dedicated himself to wisdom and beauty, later is filled with a keen desire for human love and seeks in vain for an idealized companion. Addressing Mary Shelley in his "Dedication" to *The Revolt of Islam*, Shelley tells of a similar state of mind that he himself experienced before he met Mary. After his now famous description of the moment when he dedicated his life to justice and wisdom and freedom and gentleness, he tells how he devoted himself to knowledge until the time came when this ceased to suffice and he longed for human love.

Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
 Within me, till there came upon my mind
 A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.¹⁴

Then he sought to find in mortal image the maiden whom he visualized as being able to sympathize with all his interests. Like the Poet in *Alastor*, his search for the ideal loved one was in vain and led to black despair. In *Alastor* the despair leads to desperation and death; in Shelley it gave way to love when he met Mary.

Alas, that love should be a blight and snare
 To those who seek all sympathies in one!—
 Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,
 The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
 Over the world in which I moved alone:—
 Yet never found I one not false to me,
 Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone

¹¹ "Preface" to *Alastor*. Quotations from Shelley's writings are from the text as given in the Julian edition of *The Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter W. Peck, 1926-30.

¹² Professor Havens ("Shelley's *Alastor*," *PMLA* XLV (December, 1930), 1102) says: "In spite of the preface, the solitary does *not* seek for a prototype of his conception. It is the veiled maid that he wants and no other." But the Poet feels that his dream maiden has a basis in existence; that is, that there is a being who corresponds to the vision that he beheld; and this being that he seeks is the prototype, or original, of his dream.

¹³ Edward Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London, 1886), II, 473.

¹⁴ "Dedication" (*To Mary*) to *The Revolt of Islam*, 43-45.

Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
Aught but a lifeless clog, until revived by thee.¹⁵

Years later Shelley was still seeking the ideal companion. He thought for a time that he had found her in Emilia Viviani, to whom he addressed *Epipsychidion*, but later when he found that she was "a cloud instead of a Juno"¹⁶ he wrote to John Gisborne of the futility of such a search: "I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal."¹⁷

Obviously then, the vision of the dream maiden in *Alastor* represents the awakening of the Poet to the "love of love,"¹⁸ and has no relation to the gradual hardening of a poet's sensibilities. The experience is allegorical of a state of mind that Shelley himself had known, and is not concerned with Wordsworth except as it concerns mankind in general. The vision arouses the Poet to a passion for "sweet human love." "The Poet's self-centered seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin."¹⁹ Professors Mueschke and Griggs's interpretation of the poem requires them to twist this statement of Shelley's to mean that the Poet's "suffering arises from a persistent consciousness of hardening sensibilities and manifests itself in listlessness and apathetic dependency."²⁰ But hardening sensibilities and apathy are not consistent with irresistible passion.

It is true that for the moment, when the Poet is awakened from his dream by the shock from the departure of his dream maiden, he gazes vacantly about him.

His wan eyes
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.²¹

It is true that henceforth the objects that hitherto held his attention will no longer suffice. But it is erroneous to conclude from this that "the poet is no longer able to appreciate the beauty and majesty in objects long familiar."²² The Poet remains susceptible to all that is excellent and majestic to the very end of his life. At the moment of the Poet's death, Shelley truly speaks of him as one whose blood

ever beat in mystic sympathy
With nature's ebb and flow.²³

After the departure of the vision the Poet seeks the prototype of the dream maiden with the same intensity of passion that he revealed in his earlier search for knowledge. Professors Mueschke and Griggs describe this later search as "the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 46-54.

¹⁶ *The Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, "The Julian Edition" (1926-30), x, 401.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, x, 401.

¹⁸ Professors Mueschke and Griggs (*op. cit.*, p. 243, footnote) admit that "the vision is spoken of as being inspired by human love."

¹⁹ "Preface" to *Alastor*.

²⁰ *Op. cit.*, 243.

²¹ *Alastor*, 200-202.

²² Mueschke and Griggs, *op. cit.*, 241.

²³ *Alastor*, 652-653.

listless wanderings of the poet from the time he sees the vision, until his death (ll. 149–671),”²⁴ and they make the following statement:

From the departure of the vision to the close of the poem Shelley is not primarily concerned with the vain strivings of an impracticable dreamer toward an unattainable ideal. Still less is he concerned with his own experiences. Though the poet at moments continues to catch fugitive glimpses of the vision, what Shelley emphasizes is the listlessness, apathy, and despair arising from the consciousness of a decaying power.²⁵

But Shelley *is* primarily concerned with the Poet’s search for the ideal. First the Poet seeks for his dream maiden in life, his passionate search being described as occupying the remainder of his life until the last two days. The account of this is comparatively brief (ll. 222–271) and is not as fully nor as clearly illustrated as might be desired, but the search nevertheless occupies him intensely. He is described as being consumed by the fire of his passion:

At night the passion came,
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,
And shook him from his rest.²⁶

He is driven “by the bright shadow of that lovely dream”²⁷ to speedy ruin.

And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering,
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin.²⁸

Only “youthful maidens, taught by nature”²⁹ half understand the “love of love” that wastes him. It is not “the listlessness, apathy, and despair arising from the consciousness of a decaying power” that youthful maidens are taught by nature to understand!

The Poet’s vain search leads to despair and he is moved by a restless impulse to embark in a little shallow to “meet lone Death on the drear ocean’s waste,”³⁰ but he goes with the “desperate hope”³¹ of yet finding the original of his dream. His search has not ended. Throughout the long description of the death journey and death (ll. 273–671) he is still obsessed by the vision and is desperately hoping that death may lead to the “mysterious paradise”³² of sleep where he first beheld the dream maiden. He is described as going eagerly, not apathetically, to his death, and he is still keenly sensitive to his surroundings. His journey is by no means the listless one that Professors Mueschke and Griggs make it out to be. Shelley’s own love of the water must have inspired him to grant this Poet a magnificent boat journey, and Shelley must have thought of it as, in part at least, a fitting and ideal end to the life of this brave, generous, and noble being. All Shelley’s eagerness and enthusiasm for a boat ride, his love of nature and beauty, his “exulting joy” which the various aspect of the visible universe inspires in him is apparent in the final magnificent description. Imaginatively Shelley is here much concerned with his own experiences. Mrs. Shelley’s comment, in her note on *Alastor*, is particularly applicable to this large section of the poem:

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, 240.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 241.

²⁶ *Alastor*, 224–226.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 233.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 248–251.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 266–267.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 305.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 291.

³² *Ibid.*, 212.

None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude—the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspect of the visible universe inspires, with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts, give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near, he here represented in such colours as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout; it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the out-pouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death.

The poet leaps eagerly, not listlessly, into the boat, and prepares for an exciting ride that shall bring his search to an end. It is a sail such as Shelley loved to imagine and loved to take. "The day was fair and sunny";

Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.³³

The boat is driven into rough water, but the Poet sits "calm and rejoicing,"³⁴ as if the genii of the waves

were the ministers
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those beloved eyes.³⁵

When the boat at midnight is carried with unrelaxing speed into the opening of a cavern, the Poet, in hopeful mood that death is the path that will lead to his dream maiden, cries out:

"Vision and Love!
. I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
Shall not divide us long."³⁶

At dawn the boat comes to a treacherous whirlpool, and for a moment it seems as if it shall be caught and the Poet's search ended then and there; instead, a wandering stream of wind catches the sail and carries the boat into a quiet part of the stream. In a little cove, the Poet sees on the bank yellow flowers that "for ever gaze on their own drooping eyes, reflected in the crystal calm,"³⁷ and he longs "to deck with their bright hues his withered hair," but he refrains.

Noon brings him to a wooded vale, and here, led "By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,"³⁸ he seeks in "Nature's dearest haunt"³⁹ some bank to be his grave.

³³ *Ibid.*, 311–315.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 326.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 330–332.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 366–369.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 407–408.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 428. In his desperate hope, he is not certain what the restless impulse is that drives him on—whether it is a "fair fiend" (l. 297), or love, or merely a dream, or death enticing him to destruction.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 429.

He comes to a lovely dell—"Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep their noonday watch"⁴⁰—and here he is sensitive to the motion of the leaves and grass and to the sound of the brook, and "communes" with the Spirit that is clothed in

undulating woods, and silent well,
And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom.⁴¹

And as he communes with nature, two eyes, two starry eyes (presumably those of the dream maiden) seem to beckon him "with their serene and azure smiles."⁴² A moment later, as in obedience to their beckoning he continues his wanderings, his being responds to the rivulet, and he sees in it an image of his life. Assuredly his sensibilities have not hardened and he is not listless.

Evening finds the Poet still wandering until he comes to "one silent nook."⁴³ Here he knows that death is on him, and a little before the end, he resigns his "high and holy soul" (not a hardened one!)

To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber.⁴⁴

He dies "at peace, and faintly smiling,"⁴⁵ in surroundings appropriate to the "loveliest among human forms,"⁴⁶ and as he is breathing his last,

two lessening points of light alone
Gleamed through the darkness.⁴⁷

No sooner is the Poet dead than Shelley wishes for the existence of some supernatural essence—Medea's wondrous alchemy; the chalice that gives eternal life; the preparation sought by dark magician in his visioned cave—that might give eternal life to a soul as noble as this one,—

The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
The child of grace and genius.⁴⁸

Shelley laments that this man, deluded by a generous error, has had an untimely death, while others, far less sensitive, live on; but in the "Preface" he gives the reader some comfort by reminding him that while the good die young, the short life of such a gentle poet is nobler and happier and better than the long life of "lasting misery and loneliness" of the individual of hardened sensibility. "They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse."⁴⁹ This Poet is not likened to, but contrasted with, those of "hardened sensibility."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 455–456.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 484–485.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 491.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 572.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 629–632.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 645.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 593.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 654–655. These "two lessening points of light," like the "two starry eyes" that seemed to beckon him (l. 490), may be intended to refer to the vision of the maiden.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 689–690.

⁴⁹ "Preface" to *Alastor*.

II

In some statements and details not covered by the preceding discussion Professors Mueschke and Griggs seem to be in error:

1. "*His [Shelley's] poet becomes totally insensible to the horrors of war and to the suffering of all mankind.*"⁵⁰ No evidence is given to support this statement, and there seems to be nothing in the poem, other than the death of the poet, to warrant it.

2. "*Moreover the autobiographical details are not essential to the poet's character: they might be omitted without detracting from the meaning of the poem as a whole.*"⁵¹ If details are omitted, such as: the Poet's loveliness; his gentleness, bravery, and generosity; his feeling of loneliness; his capacity to inspire love in others (Trelawny wrote of Shelley: "Everything that came in contact with Percy, especially women, loved him at sight");⁵² the "solemn vision and bright silver dream" by which his infancy was nurtured; his response to nature; his thirst for knowledge, which was satisfied in part at "the fountains of divine philosophy"; his sympathy with "all of great, or good, or lovely, which the sacred past in truth or fable consecrates"; his alienation from home; his fearlessness in seeking truth; his gracefulness; his "high thoughts"; his ignoring of human love for a time because of his intense search for knowledge; his "lofty hopes of divine liberty"; his love of "knowledge and truth and virtue"; his awakening to the need of love; his search for his ideal maiden; his anticipation of death; his boat journey; his "exulting joy which the various aspect of the visible world inspires," mingled with "the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts"; if these details—all definitely autobiographical ones—should be omitted, there would be little left of the poem. Knowingly or unknowingly, Shelley has so projected himself and his experiences into the character and experiences of the Poet that he and the Poet are inseparable.

3. "*In the preface he [Shelley] says that this poem may not be without meaning to the living; near the close of the poem he refers to 'the chalice which but one living man has drained.'* There is good reason to believe that these two references to 'the living' are veiled allusions to Wordsworth."⁵³ Shelley's words in the *Preface* are: "The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men", to say that either this or the "one living man" refers specifically to Wordsworth is simply not proven.

4. Most of the "direct" and "indirect borrowings"⁵⁴ cited by Professors Mueschke and Griggs are parallels rather than borrowings.

5. "*Then follows the lament over the poet's death (ll. 50–56), an elegiac passage in keeping with the preface but not strictly in accord with the description of the poet's death as given near the close of the poem.*"⁵⁵ No evidence nor explanation is given to support this statement. The lines referred to, moreover, seem in perfect accord with the later description.

6. "*Whatever Shelley meant to imply by this vision is obscured by his inability to disentangle its ideal from its physical aspects. It will be recalled that a similar con-*

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, 230.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 230.

⁵² *Letters of Edward John Trelawny* (Oxford: H. Buxton Forman, 1910), pp. 230–231.

⁵³ *Op. cit.*, 230.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 235–239.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 240.

fusion was later cited by Shelley himself as being the chief weakness of *Epipsychidion*,"⁵⁶ and a footnote is given: "See Shelley's Preface to *Epipsychidion*." But there is no Preface to *Epipsychidion*! In the "Advertisement" Shelley refers to the incomprehensibility of the poem to certain readers but not to any confusion in the poem or in his own mind. Are the authors thinking of the passage in Shelley's letter to Gisborne which I have quoted earlier? But here too Shelley is not discussing a weakness of the poem.

7. "Is there anything in the career of Ahasuerus to suggest the 'dark magician . . . raking the cinders for life and power'?"⁵⁷ The authors, I think, have misunderstood the whole passage (ll. 672–686); although they find it "particularly baffling," the passage is clear. The "one living man" and the "dark magician" are not the same. After recording the death of the gentle Poet, Shelley expresses a wish for the existence of some essence of supernatural power—Medea's wondrous alchemy; the chalice that gives eternal life; the preparation sought by dark magician—that might give eternal life to a soul as noble as this Poet's.

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⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 243–244.

REPLY

I. In an elaborate, and in many respects illuminating, commentary upon our interpretation of Shelley's *Alastor*, Mr. Kessel treats the poem as purely autobiographical and sees in it nothing beyond the actual experiences of Shelley himself. We are willing to accept much of what he says, but we cannot agree with his fundamental objections. It is our firm conviction that at the time of the composition of *Alastor* Shelley was preoccupied with the decay of Wordsworth's genius and that he allowed his interest to reflect itself in a rather significant way in the allegory presented in *Alastor*.

Mr. Kessel refuses to consider the *Sonnet to Wordsworth*, *The Celandine*, the references in Mary's Journal, and Shelley's own Letters, all of which show that "Shelley's attitude towards Wordsworth gradually changed from one of admiration for his genius to one of regret for his gradual decline and of resentment towards his reaction." The parallels or borrowings (for we use the terms indiscriminately) Mr. Kessel simply waves aside. The strong evidence afforded of Shelley's preoccupation with Wordsworth by two direct quotations (one at the end of the *Preface* and another at the conclusion of the poem itself) as well as the numerous echoes from Wordsworth throughout the poem, cannot be ignored by a fair-minded person, even though they tend to contradict the autobiographical interpretation which Mr. Kessel seems so anxious to defend. Either the objective evidence we have assembled has no meaning for Mr. Kessel, or he is mysteriously reluctant to acknowledge its significance.

Mr. Kessel is especially irritated by our interpretation of the vision and by our insistence that the poet in *Alastor* is painfully conscious of the decay of his powers. So intent is he on defending his autobiographical interpretation of the poem