Chapter I

The Theme of Journey

Introduction

Having established in the Introduction that Shelley and Bharatidasan are comparable despite differences in countries, cultures and ages, an attempt is made in the present chapter to show how these two poets have handled journey as a theme in some of their writings advocating a new social order.

Theme functions in a crucial manner in a work of art. Weisstein claims that it is "an ideal object of study" and "practically unlimited". Holger finds that theme is "an integral part of the functional web which fuses elements of content and form (Geschalt and Gestalt) in a unique whole". Sachithananthan holds a similar view. He says that "theme penetrates through the entire work of art". He further adds that "the scholars who are interested in the study of theme, not only relate the theme with characters but also with places. Sea Voyage has become one of the significant themes in literatures." The scope of journey could be broadened as earthly and space journey,
and journey by dreams.

Journey is made for pleasure; for knowledge; for trade and commerce and for mutual co-operation and understanding between peoples and nations. Journey enriches man with experience which broadens his thinking and inspires him to live a better life.

Journey is of two kind; one real and the other imaginary. Instances of historical and real journey may be cited here. Fahien and Yuwang Zuwang, the two Chinese travellers came to India to study the social life of the Indians of their time. Marco Polo sailed to India to have trade and commerce with Indian kings. Today, journey is made between nations for innumerable reasons, mainly for global peace and progress.

Imaginary journey is often found in literatures. It may be called literary journey. It serves the same purpose as the real journey does. The writers use journey as a theme or a technique in their writings with a view to sharing with the readers their views got by intuition and imagination. The views have mostly the aim of making the earth a better place to live in. Literary journey broadens the readers' knowledge; enlightens them to improve their way of thinking and shows them a new vision of better life.
Homer, in his *Ulysses*, stresses that man should untiringly strive "to follow knowledge like a sinking star,/ Beyond the utmost bound of human thought." Ulysses on his way home from the Trojan war happens to meet challenges from druggists, monsters and capricious gods. He overcomes the hurdles and reaches home as a man of wide knowledge and experience. *Ulysses* stands for all countries as a symbol of man’s thirst for knowledge and experience.

Dante’s *Divine Comedy* "describes a dream journey through hell, purgatory, and paradise, with the purpose of opening to its readers a vision to direct one from wretchedness to blessedness."

*The Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver’s Travels* are some of the works in English which are based on the use of journey as a theme. The pilgrim’s progress i.e. the journey of a Bedfordshire Christian emphasises that an individual should undertake spiritual journey in search of his salvation. *Robinson Crusoe* inspires adventure-loving people in their expeditions to remoter lands. Crusoe lords over the cannibals of the savage land with the minimum opportunities available to him. Swifts’ *Gulliver’s Travels* exposes the foibles and hypocrisy of the British and instils in the mind of the people a need for shaping a new British Isle.
The Ramayana, the earliest epic in India "like Homer's Ulysses tells the story of the adventures of a hero." The journey and adventures of Rama, establishes that all men of truth would triumph in their battle against evil. Rama’s journey with Viswanitro to destroy asuras leads him to Mithila where he breaks the bow of Rudra and marries Sita; and his longest journey to Sri Lanka through the jungles of South India to kill Ravana and deliver Sita imbibles in the minds of readers: "Deceit overwhelms the dharmic path; For a time; again Dharma wins."

arruppatai literatures, one of the literary genres in Tamil, employs journey as a theme. Its objective is to remember with gratitude the benevolent king who helps the poets in their poverty to lead a happy life. The poet who returns home with rich gifts from a philanthropic king meets a fellow poet in poverty on the way and directs him to the kindly king from whom he received help. The readers learn from the book about the country, the king and his citizens with their cultural heritage. cirupānārruppatai and perumpānārruppatai are such significant Tamil works. tirumurukārruppatai furnishes the readers with spiritual knowledge.

The Theme of Journey in Shelley and Bharatidasan

Shelley and Bharatidasan following the literary
conventions handle journey as theme in some of their writings so as to share with the readers their views on society with the objective of converting it into a dynamic rational one. Shelley’s *Queen Mab*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *Ozymandias* and *The Triumph of Life*, and Bharatidasan’s *cācalī parvatattin cāral, etirpārāta muttam, nīlavannān purappātu*, and *kuriṇcit tittu* use journey as a theme to impart the knowledge of social concern.

*Queen Mab* is built upon an ethereal journey as a theme. *Queen Mab*, the spirit assigned with the duty of looking after the affairs of the earth, takes the spirit of Ianthe, a revolutionary girl to her ethereal palace and gives her a vision of the ruined past and the evils of the present. He condemns both and prophesies that the earth would emerge anew. Man and woman as equals move freely and live together happily. *Queen Mab* ensures the readers that the earth which has been tarnished by the past and present, would see a bright future.

*The Revolt of Islam* is based on a fairy journey but to the world of the Dead. A poet who is taken by a strange woman in a fairy boat to the abode of the Dead meets two young revolutionaries, Laon and Cythna who narrate the story of their struggle and Martyrdom in their effort to dethrone Othman, the tyrant ruler of the Golden
City and establish a new system. The poet learns from their story that the struggles for social changes would not come to fruition at one stroke. The revolutionaries should come forward to face trials and tribulations and even death to achieve the goal. The epic was written, keeping in mind the failures of the French Revolution. It cautions the revolutionaries in struggle not to get disheartened by the failures they meet.

*Ode to the West Wind* describes the global journey of the West Wind and its performances on the earth, in the sky and upon the ocean. While admiring the strength and power of the West Wind as an uncontrollable spirit, Shelley praises its multifarious activities on the earth, in the sky and upon the ocean. He requests the wind to spread his revolutionary message among the people for better social transformations. The poet is optimistic that his words would be well received by the people. Till then, he will patiently wait. "If winter comes can spring be far behind?" *Ode to the West Wind* expresses Shelley’s view that revolutionaries should be optimistic and patient till their efforts to change the world come to fruition.

*Ozymandias* is built upon the report given by an antique traveller who walked through the Egyptian desert. The traveller witnessed the broken statue of Ozymandias half-sunk in the sand, unnoticed and unremembered. Shelley
who listened to the report is convinced that all the proud and tyrant rulers of the world, would like Ozymandias, meet similar fate. "Ozymandias" advises rulers to be good and service-minded.

The Triumph of Life, a fragmentary poem built upon a procession that Shelley sees in a vision analyses life on the basis of character and sacrifice. He sees a chariot like the one used in Roman triumphal march. Rousseau appears before Shelley, disfigured and broken, and tells him that all the people who were called – The wise, / The great, the unforgotten, – 10 on earth when they were alive, are seen tied to the chariot. Because these men could not hold ‘shape all light’ in constancy. Socrates and Christ, being sacred and selfless in their service who held ‘shape all light’ constantly alone triumph over life. The philosophical conception of the ideal soul could be interpreted socially as referring to an ideal leader.

A similar treatment of journey is to be seen in Bharatidasan, too.

çañcëvi parvatattin caçaral, the first long poem of Bharatidasan is based on earthly journey as a theme. Kuppan and Vanji, the young lovers who journey to the Sanjivi mountain in search of miraculous leaves, find them; eat them and learn about an English man’s views on India’s freedom and the state of the Indians as victims of
religious exploitation. They return to the slope with a vow to work for social equality. \textit{caṇcīvī parvatattin cāral} expresses Bharatidasan's view that people should reject caste division and sex discrimination along with religion and superstition if they must have a happy social life.

\textit{etirpārāta muttam} is built upon the journey of young lovers to North India - Ponmudi on business and Poongothai in search of him. They are separated by the parents in feuds. Ponmudi is compelled to go on business to North India. Poongothai, vexed by his absence, leaves home in search of him. She finally meets him. When the love-lorn lovers are about to kiss, they are beheaded by a brutal and blood-thirsty North Indian. The news reaches the parents. It is decided that Saint Kumaragurubarar should go to North India and convert the North Indians to the path of non-violence and peace. \textit{etirpārāta muttam} presents Bharatidasan's view that North Indians are blood thirsty men who need the preachings of saints like Kumara-gurubarar to lead a life of peace and non-violence.

\textit{nīlāvannan purappātu} also uses journey as a theme. Neelavannan, the Aryan, who is exposed as a seducer runs away to escape dire punishment but he enters into a house of a Tamil and steals the food kept for a hungry child. As a result, the child dies of hunger. The news reaches the Tamil kings at war. They are ashamed of their infightings
and vow to remain united to safeguard the interest of the Tamils.

_kuriñcit titty_ is built upon sea voyage as a theme. Thirayyan, the 4001st king of Kurinjit thitlu returns home from Dravida Nadu with an Aryan woman called Vinothai and her band of religious men. Vexed by the immoral life of the king, Queen Mallika stabs herself to death. Her son who rushes to attend his mother's funeral is killed in ambush. Vinothai's immorality exceeds limits. The men who are close to the king are enticed and eliminated. Religion is spreading fast as temples are built and religious functions and discourses are conducted. But Vinothai's immorality is exposed and she is killed. The king ashamed of his immoral life commits suicide. The elders realise that people should be given a new social life free from caste, religion and government. _kuriñcit titty_ recommends a higher social life which transcends caste, religion and government.

Though _alakin cirippu_ appears to be a collection of poems strung together, the poems are based on an imaginary stroll by the poet with a young man. Each poem echoes the social consciousness of the poet. The characters, involved in the collection of poems are ordinary people like flower vendor, cart men and working women in the fields.
Queen Mab and caṅcīvi parvatattin cāral: A Study

Queen Mab and caṅcīvi parvatattin cāral are similar in their objectives of advocating a new social order. However, the mode of journeys in the poems are different in nature; so also the characters in the poems.

The Mode of Journey

The journey in Shelley’s Queen Mab is ethereal in nature and the characters involved in it are only spirits whereas in Bharatidasan’s caṅcīvi parvatattin cāral, the mode of journey is on terra firma and the characters involved are human beings. There are significant similarities in presenting the poems. Both the poems begin with beautiful and effective poetic lines. They provide ground for the journey and the introduction of the characters. Like Shakespeare’s opening scenes, the opening lines of the poems are arresting and significant.

Shelley opens his poem in a philosophical tone as it is a suitable mode to attract the readers to his “a gloomy theme”.

How wonderful is Death  
Death and his brother sleep!  
One, pale as yonder waning moon  
with lips of lurid blue;  
The other, rosy as the morn  
when throned on ocean’s wave  
It blushes o’er the world:  
Yet both so passing wonderful!11
Bharatidasan, on the other hand, begins his poem with simple, descriptive lines. The spontaneous flow of words would entice any one to read the poem with joy.

The Cuckoo would be singing
And the most charming peacocks would be dancing;
Breeze would be blowing fragrant and cool;
Mirror-like streams and trees
Laden with fruit would be there;
Blossoms sweet would be spreading their fragrance;
Swarms of bees would sit
On every flower and delight themselves humming sweet;
Maidens of the hunting tribe
Would go there for sporting;
Valorous lads of the jungle
Would court them and marry there;
Keep in mind!
This is the place
Which people call the Canjeevi range! 12

The Characters in the Journey

Queen Mab, the heavenly spirit, who is to look after the affairs of the world descends from her paradisiacal abode to the chamber of Ianthe, a revolutionary girl, who is asleeps. Mab, with the power of her magic wand, raises up the spirit of Ianthe from her body; puts it in her fairy car and ascends to her palace, 'the Hall of Spells' — crossing the boundaries of the earth, the seas and the planets of the sky. It is the fitting temple. From here, the spirit should be taught.

The narration is highly dramatic. The poet, when he
introduces the characters, mesmerises the readers:

These the Queen of Spells drew in,
She spread a charm around the spot,
And leaning graceful from the aethereal car,
Long did she gaze, and silently,
Upon the slumbering maid.  

and then,

From her celestial car
The Fairy Queen descended,
And thrice she waved her wand
Circled with wreaths of amaranth:  

Mab wakes up the soul of Ianthe and asks it to ascend the car with her. The noted feature of the narration is that the repetition of the line, "The magic car move on," keeps alive the theme of journey. The readers themselves feel as if they made the ethereal journey along with Mab and the spirit of Ianthe. A reader of Queen Mab writes to the Editor of the "Theological Inquirer" that the description of the fairy and spirit's course through the immensity of the universe, surpass Satan's passage through chaos. Milton's description is sublime but sinks into comparative insignificance.  

In cañcivi parvatattin căral, Vanji and her lover Kuppan - both belonging to the hunter's clan - undertake their journey to the top of the Sanjivi hill to test the miraculous power of the herbs that Kuppan promised to show to Vanji. Kuppan, at first, refuses to take her to the top
of the kill. He is afraid that they may have to confront wild animals and reptiles on the way. But Vanji declares that she would go alone to the top of the hill, find out the herbs and test the truth of them. Else, she firmly says that she will commit suicide.

The poet has framed the theme of journey with the background of romantic love story. The young man is filled with love whereas his lady-love is keenly interested in the miraculous herbs. The journey is dramatically introduced and excellently narrated. There is agility and quickness in the portrayal:

Lifting up his sweet-heart!  
Would not the command of ones own sweet-heart,  
very rare to attain  
Fly and spring up like a stone swung in the air?  
Even a lofty mountain is mustard seed  
To the youth on earth  
If only their sweet-hearts cast a propitious look!  
Did the mountain bow itself  
To help Kuppan climb with ease?  
Or did Kuppan walk with astonishing speed?  
No one knows.  
He let Vanji down on the mountain and said,  
'O girl! these are the herbs I spoke of then;  
You can pluck them! None will object!'  

The journey of Kuppan and Vanji to the top of the Sanjivi mountain gets a new dimension and the purpose of the journey is foregrounded.
The Mode and the Characters of the Journey - an Analysis

The merits of the poems depend upon the theme and the devices the poets use. Being a lover of Gothic and fairy tales since youth and admirer of Southey’s Thalaba and Erasmus Darwin’s The Botanic Garden, Shelley uses supernatural settings and characters in Queen Mab. Bharatidasan, though a rationalist who refuses to acknowledge the existence of spirits, fairies and supernatural elements and their involvement with man, uses miraculous herbs as the basic element of caṅcīvi parvatattin cāral. It raises doubt whether Bharatidasan is truly a rationalist. It is unnecessary to doubt his integrity. Bharatidasan uses ‘herbal episode’ only as a literary device in order to erase from popular mind the episode of ‘Hanuman and Sanjivi mountain’ as false. It is like using a thorn to remove another thorn. Both are thrown away when the purpose is served. M.D. Jayabalan holds, “Bharatidasan urges the readers to analyse myths and puranas in the same spirit and to discard them. He uses puranic motif to dispel puranic myths.”

The Journey and its Purpose in Queen Mab

Journeys in Queen Mab and caṅcīvi parvatattin cāral are made with a purpose. Mab descends from her heavenly abode to the chamber of Ianthe to take the spirit of
sleeping Ianthe to the Hall of Spells where she starts her
teaching. Mab furnishes the reasons for choosing Ianthe
for this mission. Mab says that Ianthe

with the resolute will
Vanquished earth's pride and meanness, burst the chains,
The icy chains of custom, and have shone,
The day - stars of their age.  

The spirit is given the boon - the reward. Mab tells:

This is thine high reward: - the past shall rise;
Thou shalt behold the present; I will teach
The secrets of the future.

The boon not only helps Ianthe to gain the knowledge
of the Past, the Present and the Future but it strengthens
her in guiding the people to a rational life.

The Journey and the Purpose in caṇcīvi parvatattin cāral

Vanji in caṇcīvi parvatattin cāral takes Kuppan, her
lover to the top of the Sanjīvi mountain to test the power
of the herbs that Kuppan had spoken about to disprove that
his faith in Gods, puranas and the supernatural powers is
false. Her intention is revealed when her mission of
converting Kuppan to her rational point of view is proved a
success; she says:

Only to save you for ever
From the clutches of entangling superstition
I asked you this day to take me to the Canjeeyi
mountain.
Inculcation: "The past" in Shelley's Queen Mab

Mab's preaching covers three periods of time. She begins her teaching of the 'Past' from the overhanging battlement. The teaching centres around the transitoriness of man's achievements in the past in the name of culture and civilization, and man's fall owing to his brutality, greed and pride. Mab tells the spirit that the Palmyra palaces of Egypt which excelled in beauty and grandeur have disappeared in the sands of time. They became a ruined mass. It is predicted that the Pyramids which stand on the banks of the Nile as great monuments shall fall one day. The desert where the wandering Arabs have pitched their tents was once the spot of the famous Salem's temple. Mab describes the men of the past as an inhuman and uncultured race. They invoked their Demon-God and "rushed to war, tore from the mother's womb /The unborn child,"22. She asks whether the benevolent God has given permission to the brutal race to kill the innocent people.

Mab expresses her sorrow on the fall of the one-time centres of human civilization. She remarks, "where Athens, Rome and Sparta stood, /There is a moral desert now:"23 and she continues to say that

Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's slave,
A coward and a fool, spreads death around -
Then, shuddering meets his own.
Where Cicero and Antoninus lived,
A cowled and hypocritical monk
Prays, curses and deceives. 24

Mab contends that human race has not been refined. Ten thousand years have passed; yet the sons of Europe still "wakes the unholy song of war". 25 She then comments on trade and commerce with contempt. She charges that "Trade and commerce", is one of the factors for moral degradation and concludes with disappointment that all living things — the meanest and the smallest — go by moral laws of their own except man. Pride is responsible for his fall.

Mab's talk on 'the past' is rather bookish. She reproduces it like a good student of classical history who recalls his memory before sitting up for the examination. But the interpretation that she gives to each real or imagined incident of 'the past' is philosophical as well as intellectual. The interpretations are rational. They reveal that a radical should not enter into any dispute without the knowledge of 'the past'. The spirit of Ianthe thanks the Fairy for her useful and inspiring teaching. The spirit says:

I know
The past, and thence I will essay to glean
A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors, and derive
Experience from his folly. 28
The last two lines are thought provoking and have been proverbial.

Inculcation: 'The past' in 'caṇcīvi paryatattin cāral'

caṇcīvi paryatattin cāral does not deal with the 'Past'. Vanji plunges directly into the 'Present'. It does not mean that Bharatidasan is satisfied with the 'Past'. He is actually sad about the 'Past' dominated by the Aryan culture. He always considers 'Sangam Past' as the ideal past and desires that such past should guide the present and the future as well. He feels a spiritual continuity in the three periods of time. T.S. Eliot believes that the three periods of time is inseparable in the eternal cycle. He says,

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in the future
And time future contained in time past. 27

Bharatidasan wishes that the cultural continuity of the Tamils should not be broken by the intrusion of alien cultures and religions.

Both Shelley and Bharatidasan are quite conscious of the 'Past'. But Shelley brings to light the 'Past' as transitory whereas Bharatidasan ignores the 'Past' as polluted. Both are similar in their view that the 'Past'
should continue in the 'Present' and the 'Future'.

'The Present' in 'Queen Mab'

Great efforts have been taken by the poets to depict 'The Present'. They charge that monarchy and religion are responsible for 'the ills' of the Present. But their concentration is more on religion. The reasons are quite explicit. Religion is a strong fortress and that any penetration into it is a very hard task. Rationalism gives sustenance to their attack on religion. Rulers are condemned as responsible for war and for the sufferings of the people. Trade and commerce are also blamed for disparity among men and moral degradation.

Monarch as the Target of Attack

'The Present' is presented with contempt by Mab. She vehemently attacks the monarch. She tells the spirit of Ianthe that though the king is in the midst of his guards and sentinels in the well protected city, he is in utter distress. He is sleepless and is crying for peace. He whispers:

Sacred peace!
Oh visit me but once, but pitying shed
One drop of balm upon my withered soul. 28

The king resembles the rich man in 'The Bible' who cries to Abraham to allow Lazarus to dip his finger into
water and put a drop on his parched tongue. The king cannot get peace as peace cannot profane itself. Mab claims that

Nature can chastise
Those who transgress her law, — she only knows
How justly to proportion to the fault
The punishment it merits. 29

Mab calls the king “a poor wretch” and complains that he gains the power not by his virtue but by “the unconquered powers/Of precedent and custom interpose” between a king and virtue. The King leads a pompous and luxurious life only because of the sweat and toil of the poor workers, and sharply remarks:

Those gilded flies
That, basking in the sunshine of a court,
Fatten on its corruption. 30

Mab is sure that only the virtuous will be remembered even after their death and not the tyrant king. She remarks that

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
The subject, not the citizen for kings
And subjects, mutual foes, forever play
A losing game into each other’s hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery. 31

Mab speaks of how power corrupts man. Power is a disease that spoils every thing it touches. She remarks that obedience devoid of genius, virtue, freedom and truth makes one a slave and the human body becomes a ‘mechanized
automation'. She reminds the people that the fall of the tyrants would be like that of Nero's - sudden and pathetic. She concludes that earth is changeless and is rich with its flowers and fruits whereas man stabs his own peace. But she hopes that endless peace will come as time is fast maturing.

As the only son of Timothy Shelley, a parliamentarian, Shelley desired to become a parliamentarian, and so, his attack on monarchy is shocking and surprising. Yet, his charges against the monarch have specific reasons and are justifiable. Though the parliament governed the country, the real ruler was the king. The king as the Head of the Nation had unprecedented powers with him. Shelley's hatred towards the king was inflamed for many reasons. Firstly, the radicals incurred repressive measures from the government. Though the freedom of the press was granted by the laws of the country, it was denied for one reason or another. Secondly any sign of protest among the working population was brutally crushed. The notorious Peterloo massacre was one of the examples of the tyrannic rule. Further the execution of Brandreth, Ludlum and Turner, tricked by Government 'agents provocateurs' was another brutal example of misrule.

Shelley expresses, with specific reasons, his contempt of the British rulers through Mab. He wishes that
the radicals should not get discouraged by the repressive measures taken by the government against them. He attempted to spread his view that the king was a tyrant who disregarded the wishes of his citizens. The king is accused as acting in connivance with the priests, statesmen and traders, in spite of the fact that the king had done some good. The English government protected its citizens from bloodshed when France, in the name of revolution, let loose violence and bloodshed. By colonial expansion and trade and commerce the king made the country wealthy and his citizens happy. But Shelley's hatred towards the tyrannical attitude of the monarch and the exploitation of the poor by the affluent class are genuine. His philosophical as well as the intellectual interpretation of the laws of nature and the man's place in it prove himself not only a man of genius but also a man of social consciousness.

Monarch: A View in 'cāṅcīvi parvatattin cāraśa'

The insinuous nature of the British monarch is criticised in cāṅcīvi parvatattin cāraśa through a British citizen. The Englishman says that Indians would never come together nor struggle for their political independence. He contends that Indians are divided by castes, creed, and religion and by cultural, lingual and geographical differences. Further, there are enough myths and legends
and irrational and superstitious stories to corrupt man. There are irrational laws which cause them to quarrel among themselves. The English man is confident that India would not attain political independence.

Monarch: A Critical View

Shelley regards the king as a tyrant. He undoubtedly believes that the kings of all nations are tyrants and they must have treated their citizens as slaves. They are war-mongers. They are the supporters of superstitious religions, and parasites of the people. This view is not totally acceptable. History offers instances both of tyrants and good kings.

Bhratidasan too attacks the British monarch, the trader-turned ruler. But he never fails to praise good rulers like the Chera, the Chola and the Pandia. Shelley describes the monarchs as exploiters of human labour. But he never thought about the exploitation of the colonies by the British.

Religion: A Hostile View in ‘Queen Mab’

Religion and God are severely criticised by Mab. She charges that religion has filled "the earth with demons, Hell with men, / And Heaven with slaves!" She claims that man in his ignorance created God and He is the
"prototype of human misrule."³³ She contends that such God is no good and speaks of "Necessity" as the substitute to God. It is called "The universal Spirit" or the "Spirit of Nature". It is "the mother of the world" that "Unlike the God of human error", she "Requir'ist no prayers or praises;"³⁴. Mab declares that "There is no God".³⁵ Man in his ignorance created God. And God is nothing but his own creation. He becomes the worshiper of his creation. From a general consideration of religion and God, Mab directs her attention to Christianity. Ahasuerus, a wandering Jew is raised in spirit to express his views on Christianity. Ahasuerus was cursed to wander on earth till the Judgment Day. For he teased Christ on his way to Calvary. He describes Jehovah, the Almighty God, as a tyrant, Moses, a murderer and Christ, a malicious villain, and questions the very concept of Creation and Redemption. Ahasuerus says that he was not excused by Christ, the saviour of humanity. Christ is, according to him, an intolerant figure in human form.

Shelley's attack on religion in general, and Christianity in particular is three sided. First, Shelley argues that the concept of God was born of ignorance and fear. Shelley's tracing of the origin of religion and God is indisputable. Secondly, Shelley refuses to admit the concept of Jehovah as the Almighty God, and Christ as God
-incarnation. Thirdly, Shelley claims that God of 
convention requires praises and prayers whereas 'the Spirit 
of Nature' or 'the Soul of universe' or 'Necessity' needs 
no prayers and praises. Fourthly, Shelley questions the 
accountability of Christianity (or any religion on earth) 
as a religion which guarantees the salvation of man.

For all doubts and confusions that Shelley has about 
Christianity, the view of John William Fox could be quoted 
as a defence. Fox says: "Shelley has merely substituted 
necessity for God. All of the attributes which Alexander 
Pope attributed to God, Shelley attributes to 'necessity'. 
Shelley's only error in his assigning attributes and 
characteristics to God which are really human aberrations 
and deviations. Therefore, the supposed atheism of Shelley 
is really a deep and abiding faith under another name." 36

Religion: A Hostile View in 'caṅcīvi parvatattin cāral'

Vanji, like Mab, attacks religion and God. The only 
difference is that Mab elaborately discusses the issue 
whereas Vanji speaks summarily and attacks particularly 
superstition and ignorance as two vital evil forces which 
support religion. Vanji refuses to believe the story of 
Ramayana. She is convinced that Ramayana has blinded the 
reasons of men. Kuppan, her lover, is one such. When 
Kuppan is found frightened on hearing the episode of
Hanuman carrying the Sanjivi mountain from central India to Lanka, he tries to ward off his fear by saying:

O my darling!  
From the time of the earth's creation  
Until this dusk there was none  
Among the mortals strong enough  
To lift up a big mountain!37

Vanji refuses to believe in the supernatural power of Lord Rama and the puranic stories which speak vividly about Lord Rama’s many-sided divine personalities. Vaniji firmly states that she would not believe even if thousands of books on the godliness of Rama are published. She reiterates her rational stand:

What is the use of all these put together?  
Men cannot even move a seasame  
By these books contrary to reasoning.38

Vanji contends that ‘there is no God’. Lord Rama has no divine and supernatural qualities. He cannot take ‘Vishvarupam’. She also refuses to accept the power of Hanuman. She bluntly remarks that ‘Ramayana is a useless story. She desires that people should realise this truth. She is happy that she is successful in coverting her lover, Kuppan into a rational being.

A Comparative View on Religion

Comparing the views of Shelley and Bharatidasan on religion, Shelley is found more aggressive and hostile
whereas Bharatidasan is rather mild and less hostile. Shelley’s description of God, particularly the Christian God as ‘tyrant’ or Christ as ‘malicious’ and Moses as murderer is highly hostile. Bharatidasan rejects Rama as God incarnation and the legends which add divinity to human characters as false. He refuses to attach any supernatural power either to Rama or to His devotee or anybody else. The poets are specific in their attack on religion. Shelley claims that religion perpetuates intolerance. He cites two examples: One is narrated briefly by the spirit of Ianthe; when she was young, she witnessed the burning of an atheist for his lack of faith; and the other is narrated by Ahasuerus. He says that he is damned to wander till the end of the world by the intolerant Christ. Bharatidasan justifies his attack on religion by showing a religious man collecting money in haste after his religious discourse. This religious exponent is shown to Kuppan as a swindler and greedy hog. Shelley and Bharatidasan claim that religion is built upon superstition and false stories.

The attitudes of the poets on religion are different. Shelley’s theory and practice of religion are fluctuating. He denies the existence of God but accepts the existence of spirits. He substitutes ‘Necessity’ for God, whereas there is no inconsistency in Bharatidasan as an atheist. He uttered slogans; ‘One God ; one race’,
‘Knowledge is God’, and ‘Truth is God’, but they do not mean that he accepts the concept of God. Shelley, in his Queen Mab, lacerates religion and God, particularly Christian Gods. But soon he dismissed the poem as ‘villainous trash’, and confessed: "‘a poem written by me when very young in the most furious style with long notes against Jesus Christ and God the Father and the King and the Bishops and marriage and the Devil knows what’. "39 The attacks on religion in Queen Mab would have been, Desmond King-Hele feels, much milder if the poem had been written a year later, for in the Essay on Christianity (1816?) his [Shelley’s] tone is almost friendly.40 Shelley, in Queen Mab makes a great play with "Necessity". Soon after finishing the poem, Shelley seemed to realise that "Necessity" was a barren concept. In his later years, particularly in his The Revolt of Islam he once again attacks God, religion and priests, but in Prometheus Unbound, though he calls Jupiter, a tyrant, he accepts in silence the presence of God in the universe. It is evident that Shelley’s understanding of God till his death was rather unsteady and inconsistent.

The Vision of Future

Man, of all animal species, has the gift of foreseeing future. Of all human beings, poets are not only blessed with foretelling future but also they are endowed
with an insight to shape it better for humanity. The poets with a social consciousness direct their mind and heart, words and deeds and their whole being to envisage and advocate a new life for humanity. They desire a rational future for mankind.

The Future in Queen Mab

An optimistic rational future is explicit in *Queen Mab* whereas in *cāṇḍī paryatattāṃ cāral* such a future is implicit. Mab, after showing the 'transitory past' and 'the evil present' tells the spirit of Ianthe not to get despair. It assures her of a bright future. It claims,

All things are recreated, and the flame,
Of consentaneous love inspires all life:41

and in the world of agreeable love, there will be a great change among the living beings. They will forget their old enmity and live together happily. Mab tells:

The lion now forgets to thirst for blood:
There might you see him sporting in the sun
Beside the dreadless kid; his claws are sheathed,
His teeth are harmless, custom's force has made
His nature as the nature of a lamb.42

Mab unfolds before the spirit the dawn of a new world without hatred and enmity. The change will be not only with the animals symbolising nature, but also with man who is also a part of nature.
Man has lost
His terrible prerogative and stands
An equal amidst equals. 43

Man will be happy. He will be a vegetarian and will maintain good health. Disease ceases to threaten him. Reason will overcome passion. There will be neither war nor battle among mankind. And in the domestic side, Mab predicts:

Woman and man, in confidence and love,
Equal and free and pure together trod
The mountain—paths of virtue, which no more
Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim’s feet. 44

The Future in caṅḍīva parvatattin cāral

Bharatidasan does not advocate a new social order so explicitly as Shelley does. From the conversation between Vanji and Kuppan, it can be inferred that Bharatidasan, through Vanji advocates a new social order. To make life happy Vanji says that Indians should reject religion and superstitions, casteism and social discrimination and geographical, cultural and lingual differences. All writings should encourage rationalism and should develop right thinking and right action. People should have unflinching faith in work. They should avoid mean knowledge and should search for a new social standing in life. Vanji opines:
Man should have a dauntless heart!
Hearts should overflow with confidence
In the hard labour of men!
Moreover, while we develop for ever good wisdom
Stupidity should be removed
And a new order established! 45

Vanji is confident that a day will come and a new rational society would certainly emerge. Her faith in such a new, rational and atheistic society is not a dream. She sees a new reality in Kuppan, her lover, who realises that he had been ignorant and superstitious all these years. His confession is not only an assurance for a new life but also for laying the foundation for a new social order. This new social order will recognise social equality and treat men and women as equals.

Shelley's New Social Order: An Analysis

Shelley's advocacy of a new social order is derived from Isaiah and Godwin. What Isaiah prophesied about the transformation of earth on the advent of 'The Blessed One' in the stem of Jesse, has been repeated with a similar tone and spirit but with a slight alteration in Queen Mab. Isaiah prophesied:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and this lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall feed;
their young shall eat straw like the ox.
The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. 46

Bharatidasan New Social Order: an Analysis

Bharatidasan is more practical and believes that a new social order is sure to emerge. People are slowly rejecting religion and ‘Varnashrama Dharma’ which are responsible for caste divisions, social discrimination and women suppression and human slavery. He yearns for a new social order on line with the Sangam age, incorporating with modern rational views.

A Comparative Analysis

Both Shelley and Bharatidasan dream of a bright future. Shelley’s vision of future is Utopian in nature whereas Bharatidasan’s perception of future is realistic or practical. There is a tall claim in Shelley’s prediction of future. But Bharatidasan, on the other hand, visualises a possible future. Future is explicit in Shelley’s Queen Mab whereas future is implicit in Bharatidasan’s čaṅči-va parvatattin cāral. The poets undoubtedly hope for a new social order for the future humanity.

Summary

Shelley and Bharatidasan have successfully used journey as a theme. Besides attacking monarchy and religion
as responsible for human inequality and misery, they are very particular in unfolding a bright future to mankind. The future would assure equality and happiness. Rationalism, atheism and egalitarianism would guide the people to a new social order.

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