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Article:

Reading music through literary scholarship:
Granville Bantock, Shelley, and The Witch of Atlas

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In recent attempts to explore the complexities of program music, inevitably scholars have appropriated James Hepokoski's useful contractual definition. Just as the titles of literary texts "set up the framing conditions" of their potential interpretation, argues Hepokoski, so programmatic works are "situated in the listener's act (anticipated by the composer's) of connecting text and paratext, music and nonmusical image, and grappling with the implications of the connection";[1] the contract therefore depends upon the information that the listener is "given" at any particular time,[2] and their agreement to create the genre "by indicating his or her willingness to play the game proposed by the composer."[3] However, the "game" itself is not necessarily restricted to the specifics of the paratext (assuming that these details can be easily identified – not always the case where they may have been deliberately hidden or blurred by the composer, or where only a title is offered); not only might paratextual fragments be amplified by the listener's familiarity with the fuller texts from which they have been culled, but a range of interpretative models might be invoked by a particular listener in their "grappling with the implications" of the text-paratext relationship.

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[1] James Hepokoski, "Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero? Strauss's Don Juan Reinvestigated," in Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992), 136.

[2] Hence the variety of meaning communicated by musical texts where the "program" offered to the listener was revised, or even abandoned. Examples include the variety of information given to audiences at the 1889, 1894 and 1896 performances of Mahler's Symphony no.1, the evolving program of Berlioz' Symphonie fantastique, or the withholding of the program for a 1906 performance of Strauss's Sinfonia Domestica in Paris; see Donald Mitchell, Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 158-9; Nicholas Temperley, "The Symphonie fantastique and its program," The Musical Quarterly 57 (1971), 593-608; letters from Romain Rolland to Richard Strauss, 29 May and 9 July 1905, and from Strauss to Rolland, 5 July 1905, in Richard Strauss & Romain Rolland: Correspondence, Together with Fragments from the Diary of Romain Rolland and Other Essays, ed. Rollo Myers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 27-34. As Charles Youmans suggests, Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition: The Philosophical Roots of Musical Modernism (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 217-18, the suppression of the program of an illustrative work can be problematic, given that Domestica "is filled with moments that are obviously connected to particular extramusical events, whether one knows precisely what those events are or not."

[3] Hepokoski, "Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?," 136.

We might therefore expand Hepokoski's definition to suggest that information might not only be "given" to the listener, but actively "found" by them in cases of a taciturn composer, an ambiguous or hidden paratext, or where the listener is able to access particularly meaningful interpretative strategies – producing an interpretation that may even depart from one that the composer expected, predicted, or wished to convey.[4]

One particularly fruitful source of interpretative strategies is that of literary scholarship and critical commentary related to the paratext. Listeners able to invoke these strategies are akin to what Stanley Fish has described as an "informed reader"; considering potential responses to the question "What makes Iago evil?," Fish characterizes this type of reader as "the reader who is aware that the question has its own history, that everyone has had a whack at answering it, and that it has become a paradigm question for the philosophical-moral problem of motivation."[5] This is not restricted to program music, of course, and the invocation of literary scholarship as a hermeneutic tool could be applied to any musical refiguring of a literary text. Taking their cue from Richard Strauss's own description of Enoch Arden, Op.38 for reciter and piano as "a worthless occasional piece (in the worst sense of the word),"[6] for example, Strauss scholars have tended to dismiss this work as being of "only slight musical interest," "a weak poem for which Strauss provided even weaker music" representative of the composer's "questionable aptitude for business."[7] Although Dan

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[4] In terms of British music in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for example, meaningful paratexts can be identified from diary evidence concerning Elgar's Piano Quintet, information in Vaughan Williams' correspondence over his A London Symphony, or Vaughan Williams' sketches for his Ninth Symphony; see Michael Allis, British Music and Literary Context: Artistic Connections in the Long Nineteenth Century (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), Chapter 4, "Elgar and Bulwer Lytton: Hidden Narrative and the Piano Quintet, op. 84," 189-244; Alain Frogley, "H. G. Wells and Vaughan Williams's A London Symphony: Politics and Culture in Fin-de-Siècle England," in Sundry Sorts of Music Books: Essays on the British Library Collections. Presented to O.W. Neighbour on His 70th Birthday, ed. Chris Banks, Arthur Searle and Malcolm Turner (London: British Library, 1993), 299-308; Alain Frogley, *Vaughan Williams's Ninth Symphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[5] Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 93, 379-80 n.33.

[6] Richard Strauss's diary, 26 February 1897, quoted in Willi Schuh, Richard Strauss: A Chronicle of the Early Years 1864-1898, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 391.

[7] George R. Marek, Richard Strauss: The Life of a Non-Hero (London: Victor Gollancz, 1967), 112; Matthew Boyden, Richard Strauss (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 128, 136.

Wang's recent exploration of the "melodramatic mode" in Strauss's work represents a welcome reappraisal,[8] the highlighting of "the plot of bigamous return" or the "usurping" of characters in recent literary studies of Tennyson's poem encourages us to focus upon structural and tonal relationships in Strauss's setting;[9] as Example 1 confirms, the character Annie can be viewed overtly as the tonal lynchpin between the two rivals for her affections, and Philip ultimately as the chromatic usurper of Enoch. Whilst we might agree with Fish that "It is the ability of the reader to have an opinion (or even to know that having an opinion is what is called for), and not the opinion he has, which makes him informed,"[10] this article provides an example of how one specific type of interpretative community (to borrow another term from Fish)[11] – literary scholarship – might be invoked by the informed listener as a "way in" to appreciate Granville Bantock's orchestral refiguring of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem The Witch of Atlas. Seemingly straightforward on the surface – with an apparently clear paratext being offered by the composer as the hermeneutic "game" begins –

Example 1. Tonal relationships in Richard Strauss's Enoch Arden.

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[8] Dan Wang, "Melodrama, Two Ways," 19th-Century Music 36/2 (Fall 2012), 122-35.

[9] See Maia McAleavey, "The Plot of Bigamous Return," Representations 123/1 (Summer 2013), 87-116; Anne Humpherys, "'Enoch Arden,' The Fatal Return, and the Silence of Annie," Victorian Poetry 30/3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 331-42.

[10] Fish, Is There a Text in This Class?, 380 n.33.

[11] In suggesting that a reader's "interpretive strategies" are created "from the interpretive community of which he is a member" Fish, ibid., 13-14, explains how "Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading but for writing texts, for constituting their properties. In other words these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read." I use the term here both to suggest a listener's openness to "literary" interpretations of music (prior to the act of reading or listening), and as a community that might be deliberately accessed as a mode of interpretation.

Bantock's composition benefits from an awareness of the interpretative strategies explored in literary scholarship, leading to a more meaningful reassessment of the music's potential "reading" of the poem upon which it is based.

Bantock's musical refiguring of Shelley

Although the topic of Shelley and music is a familiar one, the majority of studies have tended to focus upon the nature and significance of musical imagery in Shelley's poetry, rather than ways in which the poetry might be somehow represented in music.[12] However, just as Neil Fraistat has suggested that editions of Shelley's poems (both official and pirated texts) might represent "a rhetoric of Shelley, a cultural performance locating the textual space of the edition within the particularized social space of its production and reception,"[13] so musical settings and refigurings might be allotted a similar status; of these, the "substantial canvas" of Bantock's orchestral poem offers a particularly meaningful reading of Shelley's text.[14]

Shelley's poem The Witch of Atlas, composed between 14 and 16 August 1820, was first published in Posthumous Poems (1824), edited by his wife Mary.[15] It is a 672-line poem consisting of eighty-four stanzas of uniform length in ottava rima. Six prefatory stanzas attempt to counter Mary Shelley's dislike of the work – hence the dedication, "To Mary (on

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[12] See, for example, André Cœuroy and Theodore Baker, "The Musical Inspiration of Shelley," The Musical Quarterly 9/1 (January 1923), 82-95; Jean L. De Palacio, "Music and Musical Themes in Shelley's Poetry," The Modern Language Review 59/3 (July 1964), 345-59; Erland Gregory Anderson, Harmonious Madness: A Study of Musical Metaphors in the Poetry of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1975); Ronald Tetreault, "Shelley at the Opera," ELH 48/1 (Spring 1981), 144-71; Nancy Moore Goslee, "Shelleyan Inspiration and the Sister Arts," in The Unfamiliar Shelley, ed. Alan M. Weinberg and Timothy Webb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 159-82; Paul A. Vatalaro, Shelley's Music: Fantasy, Authority, and the Object Voice (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Jessica K. Quillin, Shelley and the Musico-Poetics of Romanticism (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). One of the few exceptions is Jeremy Dibble, "'I pant for the music which is divine': Shelley's Poetry and the Musical Imagination," in The Reception of P. B. Shelley in Europe, ed. Susanne Schmid and Michael Rossington (London: Continuum, 2008), 278-301, which provides an overview of musical settings and refigurings of Shelley from John Barnett's [Twelve] Lyric Illustrations of the Modern Poets (1832-3) to Tippett's "I pant for the music that is divine" of 1960; see also Burton Pollin's useful reference tool, Music for Shelley's Poetry: An Annotated Bibliography of Musical Settings of Shelley's Poetry (New York: Da Capo Press, 1974).

[13] Neil Fraistat, "Illegitimate Shelley: Radical Piracy and the Textual Edition as Cultural Performance," PMLA 109/3 (May 1994), 410.

[14] Dibble, "'I pant for the music which is divine'", 298.

[15] This volume only sold 309 copies.

her Objecting to the Following Poem, / Upon the Score of its Containing No Human Interest).” The remaining seventy-eight stanzas that make up the primary poetic text outline a relatively simple narrative. After an overview of the Witch's heritage and her powers (and her influence upon the various creatures that offer her homage), Shelley describes how the Witch initially lived alone in her “wild home,” but created a hermaphrodite companion who pilots a boat in which she journeys through time and space. Several examples are given of her meddling with humanity – whether the creation of strange dreams, the bringing together of lovers, or the state of suspended animation in which she places the beautiful dead. Whilst some contemporary criticism simply admired the poem's “wild, imaginative, revelling in dreams of unreal beauty” representative of the poet's “peculiar manner,”[16] others, despite highlighting the “delicately beautiful” stanzas 38-42, suggested that such passages were offset by the “besetting sin of his [Shelley's] poetry, its extreme vagueness and obscurity.”[17] William Hazlitt, discussing Posthumous Poems in the Edinburgh Review, identified problems with Shelley's “involved style and imagery” – the progress of the Witch's boat in stanzas 38 and 42 was cited in particular as “the height of wilful extravagance and mysticism”[18] – and grouped The Witch with The Triumph of Life and *Marianne's Dream* as “rhapsodies or allegories” that were

> full of fancy and fire, with glowing allusions and wild machinery, but which it is difficult to read through, from the disjointedness of the materials, the incongruous metaphors and violent transitions, and of which, after reading them through, it is impossible, in most instances, to guess the drift or the moral. They abound in horrible imaginings, like records of a ghastly dream; – life, death, genius, beauty, victory,

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[16] “Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley,” The Literary Gazette 391 (17 July 1824), 451.

[17] “Shelley's Posthumous Poems,” Edinburgh Magazine 15 (July 1824), 14-15; for another appreciation of Shelley's imagery in stanza 42, see R. H. Horne, “On the Drowning of Shelley,” *Fraser's Magazine* 2 (November 1870), 624.

[18] [William Hazlitt], “Art. X. Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley,” Edinburgh Review 40 (July 1824), 504-5.

earth, air, ocean, the trophies of the past, the shadows of the world to come, are

huddled together in a strange and hurried dance of words, and all that appears clear, is

the passion and paroxysm of thought of the poet's spirit.[19]

Some reviews from the later nineteenth century did offer more positive responses.

Despite requiring an "initiative faith," Shelley's "purely imaginative" poems (which included

The Witch of Atlas) were felt by the British and Foreign Review to represent "the purest and

most permanent records of his genius," and William Michael Rossetti suggested that the work

was "unsurpassed even by Shelley himself as a piece of imaginative fancy and of

execution."[20] However, the majority of critics mirrored Matthew Arnold's famous aphorism

that Shelley was "'a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in

vain'."[21] Although the London Quarterly Review described the poem as "an embodiment of

Shelley's peculiar and inscrutable philosophy in a form the most graceful, fanciful, and fairy-

like, that even he ever conceived," they pointed to problems of interpretation – the "key

which will unlock all its beautiful mysteries" had "yet to be found."[22] George Barnett Smith's

Shelley: A Critical Biography (1877) and Edward Dowden's The Life of Shelley (1886) both

perpetuated this idea of the poem's inaccessibility, describing "hopeless confusion and an

obvious lack of purpose," and (despite "exquisite and inexhaustible arabesques of the fancy")

"themes which to most readers must appear vaporous, unaccountable" – although Smith did

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[19] Hazlitt, "Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley," 502-3. See also "Byron and Shelley, (Concluded.)," The Censor 1/4 (18 October 1828), 50, describing the poem as "too metaphysical and allegorical to be perfectly understood."
[20] "Article IV. The Poetical Works of P. B. Shelley," The British and Foreign Review 10 (January 1840), 108, 114; The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: E. Moxon, 1870), xx. See also George Saintsbury, A History of Nineteeth Century Literature (1780-1895) (London: Macmillan & Co., 1896), 85 (describing The Witch as "an exquisite and glorious fantasy piece"), and C. H. Herford, The Age of Wordsworth, 3rd edn. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1899), 249.
[21] Matthew Arnold, "Shelley," The Nineteenth Century 23 (January 1888), 39.
[22] "Art. V. The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley," London Quarterly Review 38 (April 1872), 141; similarly, "Art. IV. Shelley's Poetical Mysticism," The National Review 16 (January 1863), 82-3, suggested that despite its "symbols of rare beauty" the poem was "wanting" in "connecting purpose or subduing comprehensiveness." See also H. S. Salt, A Shelley Primer (London: Reeves and Turner, 1887), 67, describing The Witch as "perhaps the most impalpable of all Shelley's poems, [which] by its very nature baffles criticism and explanation."

concede that if "an artist or a poet be satisfied that mere colour and musical sound are art," the poem's status might rise.[23] Several reviews of Dowden's study agreed; as a "romantic fairy tale of Nature," the poem was "not . . . Shelley's most enduring claim to the crown of immortality," and Mary Shelley was judged to have "understood the defect of his [Shelley's] genius" in her doubts over the poem's potential appeal.[24] Of the early twentieth-century admirers of Shelley amongst whom Bantock's musical promotion of The Witch of Atlas might be more usefully situated,[25] one might highlight George Santayana, who invoked the poem in his essay "Shelley: or the Poetic Value of Revolutionary Principles":

> The distinction of Shelley is that his illusions are so wonderfully fine, subtle, and palpitating; that they betray passions and mental habits so singularly generous and pure. And why? Because he did not believe in the necessity of what is vulgar, and did not pay that demoralising respect to it, under the title of fact or of custom, which it exacts from most of us. The past seemed to him no valid precedent, the present no final instance. As he believed in the imminence of an overturn that should make all things new, he was not checked by any divided allegiance, by any sense that he was straying into the vapid or fanciful, when he created what he justly calls "Beautiful idealisms of moral excellence."
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> That is what his poems are fundamentally . . . the Witch of the Atlas . . . no less than the grander pieces.[26]

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[23] George Barnett Smith, Shelley: A Critical Biography (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1877), 210; Edward Dowden, The Life of Shelley, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1886), ii.340-1.

[24] See "Art. I. The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley," Quarterly Review 164 (April 1887), 312, and William John Courthope, "Thoughts on Dowden's 'Life of Shelley'," The National Review 8 (January 1887), 631. Roden Noel, "Art. II. The Poetry of Shelley," The British Quarterly Review 164 (October 1885), 281, dismissed the poem as "an exquisite iridescence of the fancy and no more."

[25] For a useful overview of Shelley's status in the nineteenth and twentieth century, see Shelley's Poetry and Prose, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2nd edn. (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002), "Shelley's Reputation Before 1960: A Sketch," 539-49; also Sylva Norman, Flight of the Skylark: The Development of Shelley's Reputation (London: M. Reinhardt, 1954).

[26] George Santayana, Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion (London: Dent, 1913), 169-70.

Bantock may also have been aware of George Bernard Shaw's play *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* (published in 1901), originally titled The Witch of Atlas, and in which the character Lady Ciceley exclaims in act 1, "The Atlas Mountains! Where Shelley's Witch lived! We'll make an excursion to them tomorrow."[27] However, it was W. B. Yeats – a writer with whom Bantock was familiar[28] – who, confirming his certainty that "the imagination has some way of lighting on the truth that the reason has not," highlighted The Witch of Atlas in his discussion of the importance of "Intellectual Beauty" in Shelley's philosophy:

> The books of all wisdom are hidden in the cave of the Witch of Atlas, who is one of his [Shelley's] personifications of beauty, and when she moves over the enchanted river that is an image of all life, the priests cast aside their deceits, and the king crowns an ape to mock his own sovereignty, and the soldiers gather about the anvils to beat their swords to ploughshares, and lovers cast away their timidity, and friends are united.[29]

Bantock's orchestral version of The Witch of Atlas was premiered on 10 September at the 1902 Worcester Festival, conducted by the composer. It was flanked by songs two, four and five from Elgar's Sea Pictures and Parry's scena "The Soldier's Tent"; the program also included overtures by George Whitefield Chadwick, Elgar and Mozart (Melpomene, Cockaigne, Die Zauberflöte), Richard Strauss's Tod und Verklärung, Liszt's First Hungarian Rhapsody, and a variety of vocal works: Gluck's "Che faro," Somervell's arrangement of "All through the night," and Stanford's "Trottin' to the fair."[30] Although the full score and

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[27] See Roland A. Duerksen, Shelleyan Ideas in Victorian Literature (London: Mouton & Co., 1966), 184-5.

[28] "Granville Bantock," Musical Times 50 (January 1909), 17, confirmed that Bantock owned copies of Yeats' dramatic works.

[29] W. B. Yeats, "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry," The Collected Works in Verse and Prose of William Butler Yeats, 8 vols (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1908), vi.75.

[30] See "The Worcester Musical Festival," Musical Times 43 (October 1902), 676. Like Bantock, the American composer Chadwick also completed an orchestral work inspired by a Shelley poem: Adonais: Elegaic Overture (1898), following the death of his Bostonian friend Frank Fay Marshall.

parts of The Witch were published by Novello in December 1903, supplemented by Josef

Holbrooke's arrangement for solo piano in February 1904,[31] only a handful of additional

performances in Bantock's lifetime have been documented: those by the Liverpool Orchestral

Society on 14 March 1903, and orchestral concerts in Bournemouth (30 October 1926; 7

March 1927), and Eastbourne (7 October 1927).[32] Positive critical responses described The

Witch as "decidedly the most considerable work of his [Bantock's] that has yet been played

in London," and one "which should be performed more often," listing it (along with

compositions by Richard Strauss, Tchaikovsky, Glazunov, Borodin, Sibelius, Delius and

Elgar) as a modern work of which "no ordinary student knows what he should know."[33]

Several writers were struck by its soundworld in particular, highlighting "the composer's

resourcefulness in scoring," and describing "a curiously delicate piece of painting in sound,

full of ingenious and highly successful orchestral effects."[34] Hence despite Holbrooke's piano

arrangement being "well-transcribed," the Athenaeum highlighted the loss of the "orchestral

colouring which so heightens the effect of the music."[35] However, others pointed to a lack of

structural clarity. At the premiere, the Musical Times was initially uncertain – whilst The

Witch was "assuredly poetical in idea and clever in the working," it also inclined "at times . . .

(though the poem here justifies this position somewhat) a little to a vagueness that was not

always felicitous."[36] John Runciman was even less impressed: "The facility and ease are

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[31] See the advertisements in Musical Times 45 (January and March 1904), 54, 193; also "Ampersand", "Some New Musical Issues," Musical Opinion 28 (October 1904), 65, which described "a weird, picturesque tone poem . . . skilfully planned for the pianoforte."

[32] See W. J. B., "Music in the Provinces. Liverpool," Musical Standard 19 (21 March 1903), 184; "Musical Notes," Monthly Musical Record 33 (April 1903), 75; N. d'E, "Notes from Bournemouth," British Musician 2/3 (November 1926), 89, and 2/4 (December 1926), 160; "Music in the Provinces," Musical Times 68 (April 1927), 362; "Music in the Provinces," Musical Times 68 (November 1927), 1035.

[33] "Comments and Opinions. The Worcester Festival," Musical Standard 18 (6 September 1902), 139, after hearing a rehearsal of the work; E. A. Baughan, "The Hereford Festival," Monthly Musical Record 33 (October 1903), 183; Sydney Grew, "The Value of the Player-Piano," Musical Standard 35 (15 April 1911), 230.

[34] "Music in Liverpool and District," Musical Times 44 (April 1903), 261; "Musical Notes," Monthly Musical Record 33 (April 1903), 75.

[35] "Music," Athenaeum 4009 (27 August 1904), 282.

[36] "The Worcester Musical Festival," Musical Times 43 (October 1902), 676. This may explain N. de'E's comments in "Notes from Bournemouth," 88: "This really brilliant work, rich in melody, and scored with great

indeed striking; but when all is said and done, what is it about – what new thought had the composer to communicate?"[37] There were even some who were still ideologically opposed to the concept of program music – such as the magazine Truth – to the bemusement of the Musical Standard:

> [The Witch of Atlas] is certainly one of the most interesting things the composer has yet done. In a weird attempt at facetiousness (why will critics try to be so very funny when describing the subjects of symphonic-poems?) we find that Mr. Bantock's music is credited with fascinating cleverness. Truth refers to Mr. Granville Bantock's "so-called symphonic poem." What "so-called" is meant to convey, we cannot imagine. It would suggest that the Truth critic would have given it a plainer name. But it is beyond us to fancy that anyone seriously objects to the term "symphonic poem" now-a-days. And yet what does this very next sentence in Truth mean? "The 'poem' need not detain us." You notice that poem is within quotation marks. And why need it not detain the editor of Truth? Perhaps it did not.[38]

Although one might suggest Bantock's work as a potential catalyst for other British orchestral works associated with Shelley's poetry (Elgar's Second Symphony of 1911, Vaughan Williams' Sinfonia Antartica of 1952),[39] or situate The Witch within the composer's particular interest in refiguring orchestrally a range of literary texts in the first two decades of the twentieth century (discussed briefly at the end of this article), other contexts are

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subtlety (by which I mean that the part writing is so distributed among the various groups of instruments as to reveal its texture to the best effect) was received . . . by no means favourably by the critics of 1902."
[37] John Runcimann, "Mr. Granville Bantock and Mr. Coleridge Taylor," Musical Standard 32 (20 November 1909), 325. Discussing The Witch with Coleridge Taylor's The Time-Spirit, he concluded, ibid., "In neither piece has 'the fundamental brain-work' been done: nothing is done: the rifts are not 'loaded with ore': the ore has not been in the author's mind and heart before he started to write."
[38] "The Worcester Festival. Some Gleanings from the Press," Musical Standard 18 (20 September 1902), 174.
[39] Whilst the score of Elgar's Second Symphony contains the epigraph "Rarely, rarely comest thou, / Spirit of Delight!" from Shelley's "Invocation" or "Song" (published in 1824), the first movement "Prelude" of Vaughan Williams' symphony is prefaced by a passage from Prometheus Unbound: "To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite . . . This is alone life, joy, empire and victory."

meaningful. After noting the specifics of the paratext given to us by Bantock, I will focus

upon three issues highlighted in literary scholarship: poetic genre, the metamorphic quality of

the poem, and visual perspective – all of which help us to identify Bantock as a strong reader

of Shelley's text.[40]

Poetic reduction

In understanding Bantock's musical refiguring of this poem, the first issue is the

relationship between musical text and paratext. In the published score of The Witch of Atlas,

Bantock reproduced selected lines from Shelley's text (Figure 1), creating an abridged

version of the poem. A familiar form of editorial intervention, textual reduction is often

associated with perceived standards of decency (expurgation), political or market-based

issues, or attempts to define a writer as a specific type of cultural monument.[41] Like many

writers, Shelley was no stranger to this process, whether in terms of text selection in

anthologies of his works, or the removal of specific passages in his poems. Examples

included Mary Shelley's 1824 edition of his Posthumous Poems (a "shockproof" and

fragment-focused collection that deliberately suppressed any "ideologically controversial"

texts, where "Shelley's grammar, punctuation, diction, rhymes, indentations, and stanza

orders were altered and supplemented with freedom"),[42] or volumes such as Stephen Hunt's

The Beauties of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1830), which juxtaposed complete versions of Adonais

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[40] I use the term "strong reader" in the Bloomian sense of the creation of a "clear imaginative space" being established through "misreading"; see Harold Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 5, 30, and A Map of Misreading (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 3-4.

[41] Recent studies of expurgation, for example, include Ed Folsom, "Leaves of Grass, Junior: Whitman's Compromise with Discriminating Tastes," American Literature 63/4 (December 1991), 641-63; Jay A. Gertzman, "Not Quite Honest: Samuel Roth's 'Unauthorized' Ulysses and the 1927 International Protest," Joyce Studies Annual (2009), 34-66; Expurgating the Classics: Editing Out in Greek and Latin, ed. Stephen Harrison and Christopher Stray (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012); in a dramatic context, see Adam H. Kizes, "The Hazards of Expurgation: Adapting Measure for Measure to the Bowdler Family Shakespeare," Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies 13/2 (Spring 2013), 43-68, which contextualizes Henrietta and Thomas Bowdler's editions of Shakespeare's plays in the context of the "rich traditions of adaptation and revision" of the dramatic texts of the eighteenth century.

[42] Fraistat, "Illegitimate Shelley," 410-11; Geoffrey Matthews and Kelvin Everest, 'Introduction', in The Poems of Shelley Volume 1 1804 – 1817, ed. Matthews and Everest (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), xvi.

Figure 1. Bantock's abridged version of Shelley's The Witch of Atlas

Cue letter	Text	verse/line
A	A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain Within a cavern by a secret fountain.	[1:55-6]

B	'Tis said she was first changed into a vapour,
	   And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,
	Like splendour-winged moths about a taper,
	   Round the red west when the sun dies in it:
		[3:65-8]

C	And old Silenus, shaking a green stick
	   Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew
	Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick
	   Cicadæ are, drunk with the noonday dew:
	And Driope and Faunus followed quick,
	   Teasing the God to sing them something new;
	Till in this cave they found the lady lone,
	Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.
		[8:105-12]

D	And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,
	   And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,
	Who drives her white waves over the green sea,
	   And Ocean with the brine on his grey locks,
	And quaint Priapus with his company,
	   All came, much wondering how the enwombed rocks
	Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth; –
	Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.
		[10:121-8]

E	For she was beautiful: her beauty made The bright world dim, and everything beside Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade:	[12:137-9]
F	The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling Were stored with magic treasures – sounds of air, Which had the power all spirits of compelling,	[14:153-5]

G	And then she called out of the hollow turrets
	   Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermilion,
	The armies of her ministering spirits –
	   In mighty legions million after million
	They came, each troop emblazoning its merits
	   On meteor flags; and many a proud pavilion,
	Of the intertexture of the atmosphere,
	They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.
		[52:457-64]

H	To those she saw most beautiful, she gave
	   Strange panacea in a crystal bowl.
	They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave,
	   And lived thenceforth as if some control,
	Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave
	   Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,
	Was as a green and over-arching bower
	Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.
		[69:593-600]

and Alastor with selections from Prometheus Unbound and The Revolt of Islam. Hunt's

volume also included an expurgated version of Queen Mab (where passages "calculated to

retard rather than assist the melioration of mankind" were omitted),[43] as did the four-volume

Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley published under Mary's editorship in 1839; the

republication of the complete poem in a one-volume edition of Shelley's poetry later the

same year led to the conviction of the publisher Edward Moxon on charges of blasphemy.[44]

This restorative edition also included the complete version of The Witch of Atlas, which had

initially appeared in Posthumous Poems without its preliminary stanzas.

If, as Fraistat suggests, it was an "etherealized, disembodied, and virtually

depoliticized poet" who emerged from Mary Shelley's expurgations, "the corporate product

of an entire cultural apparatus: sponsored by a nascent set of middle-class Victorian

ideological positions, propagated by the publishing and reviewing institutions, mediated by

the workings of the marketplace, impinged on by copyright law, and challenged by

competing appropriations of Shelley,"[45] Bantock's editorial decisions were for more practical

purposes – to create a more straightforward paratext suitable for musical refiguring which

also simplified the "involved style and imagery" highlighted by Hazlitt. Any "informed"

listener familiar with the entire poem could of course fill in the textual gaps if they wished,

but Bantock's resulting eight textual blocks of varying length altered the nature of the poetic

text significantly. Whilst Bantock's reduction of verses 1-14 of Shelley's poem only

simplified the poet's description of the Witch's heritage and reduced the number of creatures

who visit her, his excision of verses 15-51 was extreme – removing details of the Witch's

cave, her loneliness, the creation of her hermaphrodite companion, and their journeys through

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[43] The Beauties of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Consisting of Miscellaneous Selections from his Poetical Works, ed. Stephen Hunt (London: Stephen Hunt, 1830), xviii.

[44] The one-volume edition of 1839 that restored the cuts to Queen Mab also now included Peter Bell the Third and Oedipus Tyrannus – both omitted from the four-volume 1839 edition. For a general discussion of English editions of Shelley's poetry, see Stephen C. Behrendt, "The History of Shelley Editions in English," in Schmid and Rossington, The Reception of P. B. Shelley in Europe, 9-25.

[45] Fraistat, "Illegitimate Shelley," 410.

time and space. In the final verses, Bantock again abridged the description of the Witch's

"ministering spirits," and avoided most of her mischievous journeys to the mortal world. The

result is a text that focuses more on characters – the creatures that dwell near the Atlas

mountain, but particularly the Witch herself.

Poetic genre

In terms of poetic genre, Harold Bloom's 1959 essay on The Witch of Atlas is

revealing. Describing the poem as "the supreme example of mythmaking poetry in

English,"[46] Bloom situates the text as an example of mythopoesis – a genre associated with

the poets Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton and William Blake, or later writers such as J. R.

R. Tolkien, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, C. S. Lewis and Seamus Heaney, involving the creation

of a fictional mythological world.[47] Taking Shelley's prefatory stanzas as his starting point

("Prithee, for this one time, / Content thee with a visionary rhyme"), Bloom notes:

> "The Witch" tells "no story, false or true," not because it lacks a narrative element but
>
> rather because its events are not our events. "The Witch" celebrates the world of
>
> relationship, the state of innocence; our world is that of experience, our state is
>
> mutable and generative.[48]

Bloom suggests that passages describing the Witch's genesis ("Her mother was one of the

Atlantides . . . She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away," ll.57-64) should be seen as a

deliberate reference to Spenser's Garden of Adonis in The Faery Queen, the poet's "most

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[46] Harold Bloom, *Shelley's Mythmaking* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 165.

[47] See, for example, Harry Slochower, Mythopoesis: Mythic Patterns in the Literary Classics (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970); Elizabeth J. Bellamy, "Colin and Orphic Interpretation: Reading Neoplatonically on Spenser's Acidale," Comparative Literature Studies 27/3 (1990), 172-92; Kirstin Johnson, "Tolkien's Mythopoesis," in Tree of Tales: Tolkien, Literature, and Theology, ed. Trevor Hart and Ivan Khovacs (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 25-38; Henry Hart, "History, Myth, and Apocalypse in Seamus Heaney's North," Contemporary Literature 30/3 (Autumn 1989), 387-411; Michael Bell, Literature, Modernism and Myth: Belief and Responsibility in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[48] Bloom, *Shelley's Mythmaking*, 170.

successful original myth (for all the ascribing it to sources in the Variorum edition of

Spenser)";[49] concurring, Michael O'Neill highlights the significance of this connection:

> It is less the thematic relevance of the allusion which matters than what it reveals
>
> about Shelley's involvement with the business of fictionalizing. Spenser loses himself
>
> in the strange beauty of the episode; Shelley makes us aware that his lines are a
>
> nimble-witted piece of story-telling, that the story-teller is both amused and fascinated
>
> by the process of inventing myth.[50]

Not all writers have adopted this approach; Carl Grabo in particular has attempted to relate

Shelley's Witch to familiar external mythological figures, citing Isis, Osiris, Minerva, Venus,

Juno, Astrea, or Diana.[51] However, as Jerrold Hogle concludes, although the Witch

"meanders through bits and pieces of Egyptian deities who come to the poem displaced and

dismembered by Greco-Roman versions . . . none of these blends completely with the others

and all of them are transferred from a host of mythological histories which are themselves

based on various texts that have no clear point of origin"; the lack of meaning identified in

the poem by early critics can therefore be seen as deliberate, as Shelley "toys with just these

possibilities of decentered origins, displacing repetitions, bottomless histories, and open-

ended readings."[52] For Bloom, therefore, Grabo's attempts to "unravel" the "playful web of

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[49] Bloom, *Shelley's Mythmaking*, 177-8. See also Carlos Baker and David Lee Clark, "Literary Sources of Shelley's 'Witch of Atlas'," PMLA 56/2 (June 1941), 472-9; F. L. Jones, "Shelley and Spenser," Studies in Philology 39/4 (October 1942), 662-69.

[50] Michael O'Neill, *The Human Mind's Imaginings: Conflict and Achievement in Shelley's Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 142. In stanza 8 (Bantock's section C in Figure 1 above), O'Neill, *The Human Mind's Imaginings*, 146, suggests that Shelley "covertly re-establishes the reader's interest in myth and he insinuates the superiority of his own mythic creation." See also Anthony John Harding, The Reception of Myth in English Romanticism (Columbia & London: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 206: "Like all Shelley's more serious attempts at mythopoesis, the Witch of Atlas derives validity not from the myths themselves that constitute his raw material, but from the interpretive spin he gives them"; quoting Hans Blumenberg, trans. Robert M. Wallace, Work on Myth (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 48, Harding suggests, 205, that the Witch represents "'an earlier revelation to mankind, perhaps the recollection of Paradise'" – something concealed "behind the frivolous surface of classical mythology."

[51] Carl Grabo, *The Meaning of "The Witch of Atlas"* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935).

[52] Jerrold E. Hogle, "Metaphor and Metamorphosis in Shelley's 'The Witch of Atlas'," Studies in Romanticism 19/3 (Fall, 1980), 328, 331. Hogle, *Shelley's Process: Radical Transference and the Development of His Major*

mystification" in Shelley's text, are misguided.[53] Instead, reproducing stanzas 3 and 4 of the

main poem (lines 65-80), Bloom highlights how Shelley mischievously "mocks the

professional source hunter" via a "tone of wonderment":

> 'Tis said, she [the Witch's mother] first was changed into a vapour,
>
> > And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,
>
> Like splendour-wingèd moths about a taper,
>
> > Round the red west when the sun dies in it:
>
> And then into a meteor, such as caper
>
> > On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit:
>
> Then, into one of those mysterious stars
>
> Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

> Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent
>
> > Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden
>
> With that bright sign the billows to indent
>
> > The sea-deserted sand – like children chidden,
>
> At her command they ever came and went –
>
> > Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden
>
> Took shape and motion: with the living form
>
> Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm.[54]

Works (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 211-12, goes on to list a plethora of figures potentially related to the Witch, including the "sometimes incompatible aspects of Astrea, Venus, Juno, Minerva, Isis, Osiris, Persephone, Arion, Calypso, Pan, Apollo," "Hermes at his most prankish," "Milton's *L'Allegro* nymph," Keats' Dian from Endymion, the Witch of the Alps from Byron's Manfred and Haidee from his Don Juan, "Spenser's Una, Alma, Belphoebe, Amoret, and Phaedria, Dante's Beatrice or Petrarch's Laura coming to them in dream-visions," the Massylian priestess from the Æneid , the sorceresses from Forteguerri's Ricciardetto, and "Shelley's own Queen Mab, his dream-maiden from Alastor, Cythna, Asia, Panthea, the cloud, the west wind and the sky-lark."

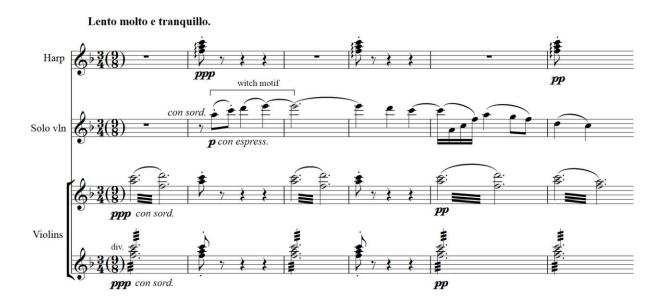[53] Bloom, *Shelley's Mythmaking*, 172.

As Philip Wheelwright has suggested, mythopoetic statements "really mean something, make a kind of trans-subjective reference, although their methods of referring and the nature of what is referred to need to be understood and judged on their own merits, not by standards of meaning imported from outside."[55] Viewed as a visionary musical text standing apart from a perceived reality, therefore, Bantock's The Witch of Atlas represents a manifestation of the composer's keen interest in "otherness" – whether the gypsy dancer in Browning's Fifine at the Fair, the Moon Maiden in Ernest Dowson's The Pierrot of the Minute, or the Eastern exoticism of Southey's The Curse of Kehama and Thalaba the Destroyer.[56] Bantock's suggestion of an "other" world in The Witch of Atlas is achieved primarily through orchestration – a feature highlighted by several contemporary music critics; as the 1904 Musical Times suggested, "[Orchestration] is here carried to such a pitch of perfection, the orchestral colour is so beautiful in itself and so successful in its suggestion of poetical ideas, that it can be enjoyed on its own account and defended as an end in itself, instead of merely a means to an end."[57] At the opening of The Witch of Atlas, Bantock creates a frame of sonic "otherness," with high tremolo strings, harp and triangle accompanying a

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[54] Bloom, *Shelley's Mythmaking*, 180-1. Whilst Christine Gallant, *Shelley's Ambivalence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 130-41, explores further the aspect of "play" in the poem, John Greenfield, "Transforming the Stereotype: Exotic Women in Shelley's Alastor and The Witch of Atlas," in The Foreign Woman in British Literature: Exotics, Aliens, and Outsiders, ed. Marilyn Demarest Button and Toni Reed (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 18 and 23, characterizes the Witch as one of Shelley's "mythopoetic or visionary beings who exist apart from known contemporary culture," a subversion of exotic/orientalist stereotypes: "[The Witch] is 'irrational' in the sense that she thinks and acts spontaneously and intuitively, and she could be described as childlike in her whimsical mischievousness. However, the stereotype is undercut by Shelley's controlling the point of view that is filtered through the Witch's consciousness. Thus, her oriental qualities are seen in a generally positive light, for Shelley endows her with power and autonomy."

[55] Philip Wheelright, The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 4. The self-sufficient nature of Shelley's fictive myth is mirrored by the autonomous nature of the Witch herself; as Jean Hall suggests, "Poetic Autonomy in Peter Bell the Third and The Witch of Atlas," in The New Shelley: Later Twentieth-Century Views, ed. G. Kim Blank (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 204, the Witch leads an "imaginative" life "aspir[ing] to a condition of self-sufficiency . . . attempt[ing] to exist without significant engagement with the world" and is "so immortally perfect in body and soul that she needs nothing beyond herself and must transcend the mortal world lest it make her weep."

[56] For studies of some of these works see Michael Allis, British Music and Literary Context, 133-88; "Bantock and Southey: Musical Otherness and Fatalism in Thalaba the Destroyer," Music & Letters 95/1 (February 2014), 39-69; and "'A canvas of endless extent': Granville Bantock, Robert Southey, and The Curse of Kehama Project," European Romantic Review 27/2 (2016), 143-74.

[57] "Reviews," Musical Times 45 (February 1904), 113.

Example 2. Bantock, The Witch of Atlas (London: Novello & Co., 1903), opening.

muted violin solo (Example 2) that establishes the Witch's thematic germ – just as Shelley establishes a sense of "once-upon-a-time" with his brief reference to the main character ("A lady witch there lived on Atlas' mountain / Within a cavern, by a secret fountain."); solo oboe, cello, cor anglais and clarinet are subsequently incorporated within the soundscape. The prolonged F major chord creates an atmospheric stasis, with French sixths adding to the sense of a magical exoticism. The opening tremolos return at the beginning of the coda, heralding a truncated and reordered version of the soundworld – the solo cor anglais now preceding the return of the solo violin.

Metamorphic and visual perspectives

In terms of Bantock's musical structure, Shelley's The Witch of Atlas offered different challenges to the plot-driven narrative of Thalaba the Destroyer, or the resolution of opposing arguments in Fifine at the Fair. As Brian Nellist suggests:

[The Witch of Atlas] is a celebration of its genius loci. It is all journey, yet unlike the

earlier narratives the Witch is not going anywhere. Movement justifies itself by its

exhibition of freedom of mind, by a kind of self-contained pleasure. Hence the poem

is as much about stillness as about movement.[58]

By removing overt references to the Witch's travels in his abridged paratext, Bantock's

ability to evoke movement might seem to be hampered even further. However, he was able to

respond to two striking features of Shelley's poem. The first is its sense of transformation.

Even before the Witch is born, her mother takes on a number of elusive forms, from vapour

to cloud, to meteor, to star, as suggested in stanza 3 above ("'Tis said, she first was changed

into a vapour . . . Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.") – although the

juxtaposition of Bantock's first two stanzas in his edited version of Shelley's text (Figure 1)

could imply that it is the Witch who takes on these characteristics instead, thus increasing the

transformative associations with the central character. In terms of the Witch's power to create

change, the "magic circle of her voice and eyes" tames the wild beasts, and subdues the

"wonder and . . . mirth" of her audience, her beauty makes "the bright world dim," and her

"magic treasures" have the power to change sickness to health, death to dreams, and sadness

to happiness.[59] The Witch's own shifting characteristics are also striking in the poem.

Mirroring the ambiguities of her mythological ancestry, as Hogle explains, attempts to situate

her in the context of the poet's other female figures are doomed to fail; Shelley "replays

several of his own previous maidens and nymphs in patterns that refuse a single context,"

whether the "witch of benevolent prophecy" that can be situated in relation to Queen Mab, or

the "impish dream-sprite of Romeo and Juliet weaving a mental fabric that could be purely

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[58] Brian Nellist, "Shelley's Narratives and 'The Witch of Atlas'," in Essays on Shelley, ed. Miriam Allott
(Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), 169.
[59] Lines 103, 128, 138, 154.

fanciful."[60] Even within the poem, the Witch proves elusive – she "exists as the 'shape and motion' of some 'embodied Power' . . . yet the Power is not a fixed Presence visible in evanescent matter," but is "constituted as a force by its ardent metamorphosis from one metaphor into another" – all contributing to Hazlitt's unease over the "strange and hurried dance of words."[61]

If the central idea of Shelley's poem is "metaphor shift[ing] beyond or beside itself into new analogies repeating old ones with some differences,"[62] Bantock responds by having thematic transformation at the heart of his musical structure. Figure 2 provides a structural overview of Bantock's The Witch of Atlas that should be referred to throughout the remainder of this discussion. One obvious example of Bantock's thematic transformation is how the semitone-based music for the forest creatures in m. 61 (just after letter C) is reworked at the arrival of the nymphs and shepherdesses at letter D (m. 99), as shown in Example 3. However, it is the Witch's musical transformation that dominates Bantock's tone poem. After her opening thematic germ shifts to accommodate a major, rather than a minor third at letter B ("'Tis said, she was first changed into a vapour"), supported by a new texture of harp and solo horn (Example 4a), so the germ is further developed into the Witch's full theme in D flat major at C:5, m. 64 (Example 4b). Just as the Witch is difficult to pin down in the poem, so her music in this section modulates sequentially to D major (via a dominant seventh chord on A), and, subsequently E flat major, eventually disintegrating into cello and bass recitative-like textures. When the Witch reappears at letter E (m. 138), as suggested by Shelley's text ("For she was beautiful: her beauty made / The bright world dim, and everything beside /

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[60] Hogle, "Metaphor and Metamorphosis," 328.
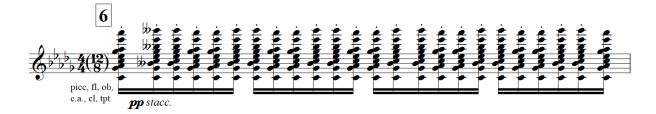[61] Hogle, "Metaphor and Metamorphosis," 329; Hazlitt, "Art. X. Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley," 502. Despite these ambiguities and contradictions surrounding the Witch, David Rubin, "A Study of Antinomies in Shelley's The Witch of Atlas," Studies in Romanticism 8/4 (Summer 1969), 217, explores how the "governing imagery of the poem, fire and water" is used to suggest her "unified nature."
[62] Hogle, "Metaphor and Metamorphosis," 330.

Figure 2. The Witch of Atlas overall structure

Measure	Section	Key
1 (A:1)	Introductory frame (fictive myth)	F
60 (C:1)	Creatures introduced	Db (V)
64 (C:5)	The witch revealed	Db – D – Eb
99 (D:1)	Additional creatures	seq – Db (V)
138 (E:1)	The witch's beauty ("for she was beautiful")	Db
152 (F:1)	link ("compelling" the spirits)	→ f (V)
165 (G:1)	The witch's power ("mighty legions")	f – c
194 (G:30)	Harp cadenza	F (V)
198 (H:1)	witch/"mighty legions" conflation	F – f
217 (H:20)	Coda: introductory frame replayed	F

Example 3. Bantock, The Witch of Atlas, thematic transformation of the creatures.
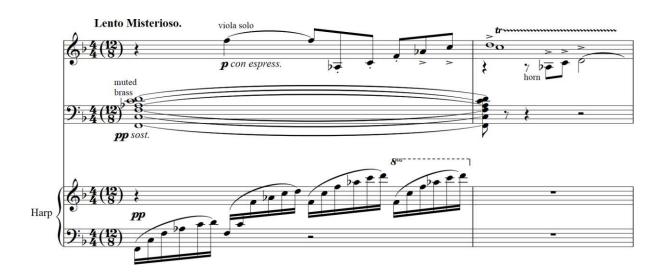
(a) Measure 61

(b) Measures 99-100

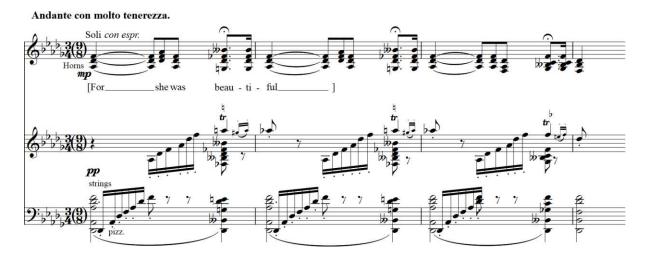Example 4. Bantock, The Witch of Atlas, thematic transformations of the witch.

   (a) Measures 32-3

(b) The witch revealed, measures 64-72.

(c) The witch's beauty, measures 138-41.

Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade."), not only does the return of D flat major establish this as the Witch's representative key, but the distinctive seventh chord is also reiterated – now respelled either enharmonically or as a German sixth, and used as a chromatic decoration rather than for modulatory purposes. Melodically, although the leaps of a third are clearly linked to the Witch's previous theme, Bantock alters the rhythm to reflect the poetic stresses of Shelley's specific line "For she was beautiful" (Example 4c).[63] These connections allow the listener to distinguish clearly between the Witch and the creatures

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[63] The poetic text in Example 4c is an editorial addition to show the mapping of poetic text and musical rhythm.

around her. However, Bantock also suggests the Witch's ability to change the nature of these creatures ("Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth") as her solo violin roulades begin to dominate their Allegretto molto leggiero music at figure D, leading to yet another thematic transformation of her germ at D:17, encouraging the lower textures of the orchestra to take up the original germ at the Molto sostenuto before letter E.

The second facet of Shelley's poem highlighted in Bantock's refiguring is its manipulation of the visual in terms of the reader's expectations. Sketches in Shelley's notebooks, including one for The Witch of Atlas,[64] suggest that visual perspective was important to the poet. Nancy Goslee, focusing on the Prometheus notebooks, divides these sketches into three categories: drawings that might "directly imitate this world, or this world as described in the poetry" (hence the boat in the sketch for The Witch of Atlas, presumably related to the vessel described by Shelley in stanza 31: "the fairest and the lightest boat / Which ever upon mortal stream did float."); those "more symbolically imitative of underlying mythic patterns . . . both subjectively expressive and objectively received from his reading and his larger culture, as conventional archetype, emblem, or symbol"; and finally, "non-mimetic reiterated expressions of some psychological force."[65] Goslee also identifies several "clusters" or subject groups; in addition to the boat sketches there are "representations of the human figure" (including "haunting eyes that stare directly out of the notebooks"), "architectural sketches," and a particularly important group – the "landscape cluster."[66] Ranging from "a simple scrawled treetop through single trees, some abstract and some naturalistically sketched, to trees along a foreground line, to fully finished sketches of trees,

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[64] GB-Ob MS Shelley adds. e. 6 (p.85 rev.), reproduced at http://shelleysghost.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/the-witch-of-atlas-draft [accessed 16 December 2014].

[65] Nancy Moore Goslee, "Shelley at Play: A Study of Sketch and Text in His 'Prometheus' Notebooks," Huntington Library Quarterly 48/3 (Summer 1985), 220, 223. See also Neville Rogers, Shelley at Work: A Critical Inquiry, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967).

[66] Goslee, "Shelley at Play," 219.

lakes, and distanced mountains,"[67] these latter sketches confirm Shelley's clear awareness of perspective:

> His [Shelley's] finished landscape sketches follow, not unskilfully, the tradition of Claude, Ruysdael, and Gainsborough – and thus also the countless picturesque sketchers such as Gilpin who converted the language of foreground, frame or screen, middle ground, and background into a formulaic chant. Shelley's landscape sketches tend to separate fairly consistently into these three planes, with a lake forming an indeterminate middle zone and the darker, continuous curved outlines and diagonally sketched-in masses of the trees in the foreground forming a frame and parallel plane with the viewer.[68]

Visual expectation is an important part of the reading process in Shelley's The Witch of Atlas. The opening lines tantalize the reader by their fleeting reference to the Witch, the reliance on rumor for details of her heritage, her gradual transformation into substance ("a dewy Splendour hidden / Took shape and motion"), and the procession of "living things" who seek her presence, confirming her status as a "centre that draws in everything."[69] This all fuels the reader's expectations before the Witch's actual appearance as a visual climax in stanza 8 ("Till in this cave they found the lady lone, / Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone."); this progression is matched by a change of mood – O'Neill sees this stanza as one of several "modulating from sly humour into wonder."[70] Bantock manipulates his listener in the same way. After the germs of the Witch's music in the introductory frame, it is the arrival of the various creatures looking for the Witch at letter C that heightens expectations. Mirroring Shelley's visual expectation and resolution, a prolonged dominant pedal in D flat major whets

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[67] Goslee, ibid., 214.
[68] Goslee, ibid., 219.
[69] Hall, "Poetic Autonomy in Peter Bell the Third and The Witch of Atlas," 208.
[70] O'Neill, *The Human Mind's Imaginings*, 147.

the listener's appetite for the Witch's main theme in that key. The same effect is achieved in Bantock's approach from letter D to letter E (stanza 10 leading to the beginning of stanza 12). Again, it is the appearance of the Witch ("For she was beautiful") that offers a visual climax to the poetry at the opening of the twelfth stanza; significantly, O'Neill again resorts to musical imagery to characterize the progression from previous stanzas as "an effortless crescendo culminating in . . . affirmation."[71]

One final example of this visual expectation also highlights Bantock's awareness of specific poetic imagery. At letter F, the "For she was beautiful" motif appears more forcefully in the brass, the accelerando heralding dramatic descending scales in the violins, all representative of her magical resources "Which had the power all spirits of compelling." This increased activity heralds the Marziale con anima section in F minor at letter G, where the music focuses upon the "mighty legions" of the Witch's "ministering spirits" (Example 5); a move to C minor, accompanied by a quieter dynamic, suggests how these troops "pitched upon the plain of the calm mere." The concluding verse of Bantock's paratext ("To those she saw most beautiful, she gave / Strange panacea in a crystal bowl") then focuses once more upon the Witch. To effect this transition, Bantock adopts a simple device that he also used in Fifine at the Fair to create a change of both mood and tonality – the cadenza. Rather than Fifine's clarinet, here Bantock turns to the harp, whose distinctive timbre and flexible arpeggiations reiterate the sense of fantasy; this extended dominant pedal in F major prepares the listener for the Witch's final appearance, paralleling the visual expectations of Shelley's text once more. Shelley's refocus on the central character, as outlined in the final stanza of Figure 1, provides an obvious opportunity to replay the Witch's music, but Bantock adopts a more meaningful juxtaposition here. Focusing on the line "To those she saw most beautiful," Bantock deliberately highlights the final word ("beautiful") by replaying the

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[71] Ibid.

Example 5. Bantock, The Witch of Atlas, "mighty legions," measures 165-8.

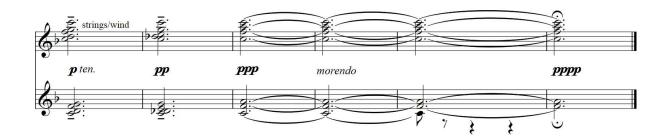music from the Witch's second manifestation ("For she was beautiful"), now in F major. However, the phrase "mightier than life were in them" is similarly suggestive – the textual echo of the "mighty legions" is suitably represented by the replaying of music from letter G. Bantock therefore focuses upon specific imagery from Shelley's poem to conflate his musical materials.

The ensuing F major coda revisits the music of the introduction, but incorporates another device that Bantock uses elsewhere – a penultimate dissonant chord (here in the wind and strings) that is ultimately resolved (Example 6). In both Fifine at the Fair, where a tonic chord of D major is juxtaposed with a dissonant German 6th (reflecting the specific lines in Browning's poem, "The augmented 6th resolved . . . into D major natural"), and "Processional" from The Curse of Kehama, this type of progression is suggestive of transfiguration after death – the reunion between husband and wife in heaven in the former, and Azla's immolation as she "takes her seat / Upon the funeral pile!" in the latter.[72] In The Witch of Atlas, the final progression might represent the immortality of the bower-paradise that the beautiful can enjoy, after Death has "oppressed the weary soul." Bantock's firm sense of closure contrasts with the open-ended nature of Shelley's final stanza in the poem ("These

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[72] Robert Southey: Poetical Works 1793-1810, vol.4, ed. Daniel Sanjiv Roberts (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004), The Curse of Kehama, 13 (Book 1, lines 144-5). See also the end of Bantock's Overture to a Greek Tragedy (1911), where a C sharp minor chord disrupts the B flat major tonality to suggest the death of Oedipus.

Example 6. Bantock, The Witch of Atlas, ending.

were the pranks she played among the cities / Of mortal men, and what she did to Sprites /

And Gods . . . I will declare another time;"), typical of how the poet's major narratives

"habitually insist on their own uncertainty and incompleteness."[73]

     Reading Bantock's The Witch of Atlas through the lens of literary scholarship

therefore offers a meaningful reassessment of the work, whether in relation to the genre of

mythopoesis, the metamorphic quality of the poem, or the importance of visual perspective.

Returning to Bantock's overall structure, however, literary scholarship again provides an

interpretative model via the suggestion of Shelley's departures from traditional expectations

of plot:

> The pranks of the Witch of Atlas . . . proclaim the bliss of the inventive storyteller
>
> intoxicated by a love of mischief, mocking literary custom, authority, and decorum,
>
> and in this way taking the possibilities of story to surprising new limits. Freed from
>
> the constraints of tradition while displaying ample traces of its origins in myth, the
>
> plot of The Witch of Atlas invites the reader to measure and savour the originality of
>
> its departures from what is expected and legitimated by established narrative modes.[74]

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[73] Jack Donovan, "The Storyteller," in The Cambridge Companion to Shelley, ed. Timothy Morton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 97.

[74] Donovan, "The Storyteller," 98-9.

The obvious musical parallel here is the familiar concept of structural deformation, associated

primarily with the writings of Hepokoski.[75] Bantock's structure can therefore be

characterized as a type of rondo deformation,[76] as Figure 3 highlights: the recurrence of a D

flat major-focused central character (a recurring A section), interspersed with contrasting

material in other keys to represent additional creatures (sections B and C), is suggestive of the

rondo concept; the deformation comes with the modulatory nature of the initial A section, the

thematic modification of the Witch's rondo material, the conflation of rondo theme and

episode in the final return (in a key not associated with the A section), the addition of a

linking passage to prepare for the second episode, and the introductory and closing F major

frame that establishes the sense of mythmaking. As I have noted elsewhere,[77] this distinctive

mapping of musical structure and poetic paratext suggests parallels with the familiar position

of Richard Strauss: that musical structures should be understood in terms of their poetic

models:

> I have found myself in a gradually ever increasing contradiction between the musical-
>
> poetic content that I want to convey a[nd] the ternary sonata form that has come down
>
> to us from the classical composers . . . If you want to create a work of art that is
>
> unified in mood and consistent in its structure . . . [then] this is only possible through
>
> the inspiration by a poetical idea, whether or not it be introduced as a programme. I
>
> consider it a legitimate artistic method to create a correspondingly new form for every
>
> new subject.[78]

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[75] See James Hepokoski, Sibelius: Symphony No.5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 5-7; for critiques of the theory, see Julian Horton, "Bruckner's Symphonies and Sonata Deformation Theory," Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland 1 (2005-6), 5-17, and Paul Wingfield, "Beyond 'Norms and Deformations': Towards a Theory of Sonata Form as Reception History," Music Analysis 27/1 (2008), 137-77.
[76] Hepokoski , "Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?," 146, suggests that this term represents one possible way to understand the musical structure of Strauss's tone poem.
[77] Allis, "Bantock and Southey," 65-6.
[78] Hans von Bülow and Richard Strauss. Correspondence, ed. Willi Schuh and Franz Trenner, trans. Anthony Gishford (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1979), 82-3.

Figure 3. Bantock, The Witch of Atlas, rondo deformation

Section	Key
Introductory frame	F → Db (V)
A: The witch I	Db – D – Eb
B: Episode I (creatures)	seq – Db (V)
A': The witch II	Db
link	→ f (V)
C: Episode II 'mighty legions')	f – c
Cadenza	F (V)
A''/C': witch III/ "mighty legions" conflation	F – f
Coda (introductory frame replayed)	F

Indeed, writing under the nom-de-plume "G. Ransome," Bantock suggested a similar approach:

It is only in the realm of Romance that we find the descriptive and illustrative element. Here are to be found new forms, which, although they may owe their origin and development to the Classics, are condemned by the scholastic upholders of orthodoxy. Classicism is bound down by pedantry; while, on the other hand, we find Romanticism free in the pursuit of its theme. The Sonata, or Symphony, as it stands at present, may be regarded as an arid form of abstract musical thought . . . The composer of modern days who would present his work to the world in an abstract form, conceived upon no definite or titled Idea, is injuring his own position, and seriously handicapping the progress of Art, which must ever advance . . . Cut away

the useless encumbrances of classic form, and we find ourselves free to act. The air

that we breathe is fresher, and untainted by the musty odour of the midnight lamp.[79]

This idea was put into practice in Bantock's pre-war orchestral refigurings of literary

texts, outlined in Figure 4.[80] These works are striking not only in their deliberate exploration

of a range of paratextual models (drama, novel, tales, lectures, and poetry – including the epic

and dramatic monologue), but in the way in which the nature of the specific text dictates the

musical structure. In terms of sonata deformation models, for example, the use of rotational

form and unredeemed B minor tonality mirrors the relentless narrative of Southey's Thalaba

the Destroyer; the three key centers in the expository space (D, E, C sharp minor,

representing the Pornic Fair and the Don's wife and mistress, respectively) and multiple

recapitulatory events reflect the Don's dilemma in Browning's Fifine at the Fair;[81] and the

use of the secondary key area (D flat major) at the conclusion of Dante and Beatrice

symbolizes the lovers' heavenly reunion. The Pierrot of the Minute overture adopts a broad

ternary form to contrast the Pierrot figure with the dream world of the Moon Maiden in

Dowson's "dramatic phantasy," and on a more local level undermines Pierrot's E minor

scherzo in the A section with a suggestion (via G flat major) of the "otherness" that he is to

experience in the central dream interlude. Via the interpretative strategies of literary

scholarship, therefore, we can add The Witch of Atlas's rondo deformation as yet another

strong reading highlighting Bantock's thoughtful experimentation with the relationship

between musical text and paratext.

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[79] G. Ransome [Granville Bantock], "The Idea in Music," New Quarterly Musical Review 3 (February 1896), 186-8.
[80] Of these, El Islam, King Lear, Emperor and Galilean, On Heroes and Hero-Worship, and Hudibras unfortunately have not survived.
[81] See Allis, "Bantock and Southey," 54-65, and British Music and Literary Context, 156-88.

Figure 4. Bantock's pre-war literary-inspired orchestral works

Date	Title	Published	Text	Author
1890	Satan in Hell overture		epic	Milton
1895-1901	The Curse of Kehama		epic	Southey
1896	Eugene Aram overture		novel	Bulwer Lytton
1899	Thalaba the Destroyer orchestral poem		epic	Southey
c.1901	El Islam orchestral poem		[?]	[?]
c.1901	King Lear orchestral poem		drama	Shakespeare
c.1901-	Emperor and Galilean orchestral poem		drama	Ibsen
c.1901	On Heroes and Hero Worship orchestral poem		lectures	Carlyle
1901/ 1910-11	Dante & Beatrice poem for orchestra	1911	poem/biography	Dante
1901	Hudibras orchestral poem		narrative poem	Samuel Butler
1901-3	The Witch of Atlas orchestral poem	1903	poem	Shelley
1901-3	Lalla Rookh orchestral poem	orch parts, c.1903	tales	Thomas Moore
1901-2/1911	Fifine at the Fair orchestral drama & prologue	1912	dramatic monologue	Browning
1908	The Pierrot of the Minute overture	1909	dramatic phantasy	Dowson
1911	Overture to a Greek Tragedy	1912	drama	Sophocles