Chapter - 1

Poetry and Philosophy
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Can poetry and philosophy go hand in hand? Can one be imaginative and yet be a philosopher? The answer to these questions could be, 'yes'. The two need not be totally irreconcilable. It should be perfectly possible for a poem to become a philosophical poem. But the important question is: how are these two disciplines fused? Before we come to any resolution, it is necessary to examine the age-old quarrel between poetry and philosophy.

"... There is an old quarrel between philosophy and poetry."¹ says Plato in The Republic. The quarrel is still going on. The main endeavour of both great philosophers and poets is to discover the truth. They both are concerned with ultimate reality in relation to the phenomenal human existence and the universe around. But their methods to reveal the truth have been quite different. Reason, observation, analysis and speculation are the chief tools of the philosopher. He distrusts imagination, inspiration and faith. The philosopher relies upon the intellectual operation to fathom the ultimate reality. He applies 'scientific methods'. Bertrand Russell in his book A History of Western Philosophy tries to explain the term 'philosophy'. He writes,

"Philosophy, as I shall understand the word, is something intermediate between theology and science. Like theology, it consists of speculations on matters as to which definite
knowledge has, so far, been unascertainable; but like science, it appeals to human reason rather than to authority, whether that of tradition or that of revelation. All definite knowledge—so I should contend—belongs to science; all dogma as to what surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology. But between theology and science there is a No Man's Land, exposed to attack from both sides; this No Man's Land is philosophy. Almost all the questions of most interest to speculative minds are such as science cannot answer, and the confident answers of theologians no longer seem so convincing as they did in former centuries....

To such questions no answer can be found in the laboratory. Theologians have professed to give answers, all too definite; but their very definiteness causes modern minds to view them with suspicion. The studying of these questions, if not the answering of them, is the business of philosophy.

Thus it should be clear from the above observation that philosophers have an unflinching faith in reasoning as a valid tool, steering clear of the Scylla of dogmatism and the Charybdis of the scientific method. Now, as for poets, they use their imagination, insight and intuition to discover reality. Imagination is the chief tool of the poets to find out reality or truth. They have their own vision of reality of which no scientific proof can be produced. The quarrel is thus between the capacities of reason on the one hand, and that of imagination on the other.
Philosophers distrust imagination because of their belief that it is subjective and of no use except to please. They believe that subjectivity can lead a man away from reality into purely imaginary realms devoid of reality. But the question is: Can imagination always be subjective and reason always objective? Another important issue is: Are we sure that philosophy proceeds without imagination? A possible answer to the first questions is: imagination, when it goes beyond the subjective mind, is highly objective and such imagination is capable of revealing reality. Imagination embraces the truths of both the physical and metaphysical phenomena, while reason restricts itself to the verifiable truths of the physical world. The regular philosopher's absolute trust in reasoning has created the controversy between the realms of poetry and philosophy. Now, at this juncture, it is necessary to examine the philosopher's attack on imagination and poetry and then we shall consider how the poets have tried to defend imagination and how these two apparently contradictory disciplines are fused by poets or even great philosophers in their works.

Plato, one of the greatest philosophers of the West, albeit highly poetic in his presentation, attacks poets in The Republic. He writes, "He is an image-maker, far removed indeed from the truth." According to Plato, the art of poetry is imitative and this art is thrice (three times) removed from reality. He says,

"We may assume, then that all the poets from Homer
So, according to Plato poetry is devoid of truth and reality because it is imitative.

Plato presented the traditional view of poetry in his 'Ion'. According to the ancient tradition poetry is divine, inspired by God. Plato ironically presents this view stating that the God takes away the reason of a poet and inspires him to compose. So, the poet is merely a tool, and he cannot, on his own, exercise his reason and his art. He tells many fine things not because he is wise and thus discovers the truth, but because he is possessed by 'a divine dispensation'. Such a man, who is not in his perfect mind never tells us anything scientific or reasonable and therefore it is not truth, however, it may be attractive and beautiful. Plato writes,

"Now this is perfectly true: a poet is a light, winged, holy creature, and cannot compose until he is possessed and out of his mind, and his reason is no longer in him; no man can compose or prophesy so long as he has his reason. So, because it is not art but divine dispensation that enables them to compose poetry and say many fine things about the world, ... They are no good at anything else. This is because their utterances are the result not of art but of divine force. If they could utter on anyone theme by art, they would also be able to do so on every other."
Plato, here expresses his belief that when a poet composes, he is not in his 'right mind', and how can a man who is not aware of himself and his subject, tell the truth? For Plato, a poet is a man lacking a volition of his own. He is only a passive puppet in the hands of a God. About this dialogue Wimsatt and Brooks observe,

"Overlooking a degree of unfairness in the procedure of Socrates, we may say that we are invited by this dialogue to consider at least two principles which are not on the face of the matter absurd:
(1) Being able to compose poetry is not the same as being able to give a rationale of it;
(2) poetry is not concerned with making scientific statements."

Plato's objection to poetry is based on moral grounds. He pondered more and more upon the poet's moral responsibility. At last he criticises poetry because it feeds unworthy passions in men.

"Poetry has the same effect on us when it represents sex and anger, and the other desires and feelings of pleasure and pain which accompany all our actions. It waters them when they ought to be left to wither, and makes them control us when we ought, in the interests of our own greater welfare and happiness, to control them."

Although, Plato severely criticises poetry, he himself was
at heart a poet par excellence because in a great number of his dialogues, we find a beautiful fusion of inspiration, imagination and reason. Plato's 'Phaedo', in which he discusses the immortality of the soul is intuitional and imaginative. In this great masterpiece of European Philosophy, Plato discovered transcendental reality regarding man's soul which in turn profoundly influenced the religious thoughts of Europe. This great philosopher influenced many European poets.

Plato's firm belief in innate knowledge influenced Wordsworth profoundly. The poet writes,

"Our birth is but a sleep and forgetting." 8

We find an echo of this dialogue in Shelley's Adonais, where he writes,

"The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
    Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
    Until Death tramples it to fragments." 9

Sir R. W. Livingstone observes,

Gomperz does not exaggerate when he says that 'the Phaedo' bears the impression of all Plato's excellences. The acute dialectician and the imaginative poet, the fervid votary of
free intellectual inquiry, and the enthusiast glowing with intense religious emotion - all these characters appear side by side."\textsuperscript{10}

In \textbf{The Republic} also, where Plato discusses the immortality of the soul, he is imaginative. He says,

"We can take that, then, as proved," I said "And if so, it follows that the same souls have always existed. Their number cannot be decreased, because no soul can die..."\textsuperscript{11}

Transcendental reality cannot be discovered through mere analytical reason devoid of intuition and imagination. Socrates's theory of the immortality of the soul is based on divine vision and intuition. This concept is intuitional. Reason can discover the truth regarding material objects but in the case of abstract concepts like 'Free-Will', 'struggle between good and evil', and 'the immortality of the soul', a fusion of inspiration, imagination and reason is both indispensable and inevitable. It is not possible to experiment with such concepts or to observe them with the naked eyes. Only through the divine vision one can fathom such eternal realities. St. Paul says, "the things that are seen are temporal but the things that are unseen are eternal"\textsuperscript{12}

Plato's conclusion regarding poetry is paradoxical. One of the greatest philosophers of Europe who banished poets from his ideal republic, was himself a great poet. Plato is not just a theoretician
who can provide irrefutable proofs and arguments for almost everything. He is a great myth-maker. It is almost impossible to separate Plato the philosopher from Plato the poet. In the works of Plato science, Philosophy, poetry and mysticism are inseparably blended. His presentation is highly poetic. In 'The Myth of Er' and the passage in "Symposium" where Plato describes the journey of the soul in search of beauty are highly imaginative. In "Symposium" Plato's analytical and logical discussion of how to attain higher beauty is imaginative. In this dialogue Plato tells us about the birth of Eros. This myth is poetic. In 'Phaedrus' too, Plato poetically narrates the procession of gods and human souls across heaven. Through this Plato says that only those who sincerely love wisdom can achieve bliss. "Phaedrus" is greatly allegorical.

We should however remember one fact here: though, Plato criticised poetry, he was not the enemy of poetry as such. He wanted to remove only those passages from Homer which he thought harmful to the young people. He respected and honoured Homer. In The Republic he writes, "I must tell you, I suppose; yet the love and respect I've always had from a boy for Homer makes me hesitate—for I think he's the original master and guide of all the great tragic poets".\textsuperscript{13} He wanted poets to write poetry in praise of gods, which can create better citizens. He did not banish poetry in general, nor did he think it worthless. He wanted to delete only those passages where gods were wrongly depicted, quarreling among themselves,
jealous and weak. We can say that although Plato failed to pay heed to the creative power of imagination as such, he never rejected poetry in the manner in which, say, Hobbes, Locke, Newton, Hume and others did. In the works of Plato we find an unmistakable fusion of philosophy and poetry.

Hobbes in his *Leviathan* rejected imagination. He had another vision of reality. In the second chapter he writes,

"...For after the object is removed, or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than when we see it. And this is it, the Latins call *Imagination*, from the image made in seeing; and apply the same, though improperly, to all the other senses. But the Greeks call it *Fancy*... Imagination therefore is nothing but decaying sense; and; is always in men, and many other living creatures".  

Locke also in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) fiercely attacked imagination. He developed his own theory of sense perception. According to Locke the mind remains passive in the process of perception. He had no faith in the principle of innate knowledge. He believed that creative imagination is nothing but fantasy. Imaginative creations have no connections with reality. He writes, "Is there anything so extravagant as the imagination of men's brain?"
Like Hobbes he criticised imagination. Let us see what he writes,

"It is no matter how things are: so a man observe but the agreement of his own imaginations and talk comfortably, it is all truth, all certainty. Such castles in the air will be as strongholds of truth as the demonstrations of Euclid. That an harpy is not a centaur is by this way as certain knowledge, and as much a truth, as that a square is not a circle.

But of what use is all this fine knowledge of men's own imaginations to a man that inquires after the reality of things? It matters not what men's fancies are, it is the knowledge of things that is only to be prized: it is this alone gives a value to our reasonings and preference to one man's knowledge over another's, that it is of things as they really are and not of dreams and fancies."16

For Locke poetry is a matter of wit. He says,

"For wit lying most in the assemblage of ideas, and putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy."17

Newton says about poetry, "Poetry was a kind of ingenious nonsense."18 C. J. Horne's comment is noteworthy in this regard. He says,"
For Galileo, Descartes, Hobbes, the only real truth was that discoverable by inductive and mathematical methods. On this view the universe appeared as a great machine and the principles on which it worked were taken as a demonstration of the ultimate rationality of creation; all was capable of explanation."\(^{19}\)

Most of the philosophers after 1660 distrusted imagination. Reason and scientific spirit dominated their philosophy. Talking about the spirit of the age Horne writes:" Poetry could be of no assistance in scientific enquiries; on the contrary, its deceitful fables, apt enough for primitive ages, must now be banished with the fairies".\(^{20}\)

Even David Hume failed to understand poetry. Although he exalted imagination over abstract understanding, he had no high regard for poets. According to Hume poets are liars, and poetry nothing but fanciful creations devoid of reality. In *A Treatise of Human Nature* he writes : "Poets themselves, though liars by profession, always endeavour to give an air of truth to their fictions"\(^{21}\) In a similar vein he condemns poetry also. He says,

"Of the liberty of imagination to transpose and change its ideas. The fables we meet with in poems and romances put this entirely out of questions. Nature there is totally confounded, and nothing mentioned but winged horses, fiery dragons, and monstrous giants".\(^{22}\)

Both Locke and Hume miserably failed to understand the
worth and dignity of poetry. Their philosophies are inadequate to comment on the nature of imagination. T. J. Diffy says,

"The theory of imagination proposed by empiricist philosophies such as Locke's and Hume's is therefore woefully inadequate to serve as an account of the nature of poetic imagination".23

One fact is important regarding Hume and that is: he also attacked absolute rationalism.

Rationalist philosophers namely Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza and empiricist philosophers chiefly Locke, Hume and Hobbes could not appreciate the value of poetic imagination. For rationalist Philosophers, ultimate reality can only be discovered through the operation of the reasoning faculty; while empiricists on the other hand believed truth to be revealed only through the sense experience. But both these schools of philosophy are inadequate because of their biased judgements.

Now let us examine the defence of poetry. Poets, critics and even some philosophers recognised the importance of poetic imagination. For them poetry is not merely a fairy tale; combined with inspiration and reason, which is intuitional, it could reveal the ultimate truth. Poets never completely rejected reason. They never considered it as a worthless faculty, but they were familiar with its limitations. Poetry for them is not devoid of reason. Poets believe
that poetry has a reason of its own, which philosophers failed to notice because of their absolute faith in scientific reasoning. But a mere analytical reason can lead a man to a certain point, but there it stops. Inspired imagination can go beyond the mind and reveal the truth which cannot be discovered by reasoning alone.

Aristotle considered poetry to be philosophic. In Poetics he writes: "Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular." 24

One point is clear from Aristotle's observation and that is, poetry can be philosophic. In this regard Gunter Ralfe's comment is noteworthy.

"To sum up in a word the result of this discussion. The whole tenor and purpose of the Poetics makes it abundantly clear that poetry is not a mere reproduction of empirical fact, a picture of life with all its trivialities and accidents. The world of the possible which poetry creates is more intelligible than the world of experience. The poet presents permanent and eternal facts, free from the elements of unreason which disturb our comprehension of real events and of human conduct". 25

According to Aristotle, poetry deals with higher realities. Poetry for him was not merely a fairy tale or a fantasy. Aristotle
believed that great poetry can transcend the world of phenomena, and reveal the higher truth which is beyond the common experience of everyday occurrences.

Like Aristotle, Longinus also believes that the greatest poets are 'above mortal stature'. Longinus in his essay On Sublimity says that sublime effect is produced not by logical arguments, but by revelation or illumination. With the aid of imagination poets create sublime effect. They are by no means dreamers or whimsical. Their imagination often travels beyond this world to another higher and nobler realms. Longinus writes,

"What then was the vision which inspired those divine writers who disdained exactness of detail and aimed at the greatest prizes in literature? Above all else, it was the understanding that nature made man to be no humble or lowly creature, but brought him into life and into the universe as into a great festival, to be both a spectator and an enthusiastic contestant in its competitions. She implanted in our minds from the start an irresistible desire for anything which is great and, in relation to ourselves, supernatural.

The universe therefore is not wide enough for the range of human speculation and intellect. Our thoughts often travel beyond the boundaries of our surroundings. If anyone wants to know what we were born for, let him look round at life and contemplate the splendour, grandeur, and beauty in which it everywhere abounds."
... we have to conclude that such men, for all their faults, tower far above mortal stature. Other literary qualities prove their users to be human; sublimity raises us towards the spiritual greatness of god.

... something higher than human is sought in literature".26

Thus for Longinus the poet is not a dreamer but a man gifted with higher faculties to penetrate the truth and reveal it.

Philip Sidney in An Apology for poetry tries to establish the supremacy of poetry. Poetry, for him, cannot only discover the truth, but convey it in a better manner than philosophy and history. He writes,

"The philosopher therefore and the historian are they which would win the goal, the one by precept, the other by example; but both, not having both, do both halt. For the philosopher, setting down with thorny argument the bare rule, is so hard of utterance and so misty to be conceived, that one that hath no other guide but him shall wade in him till he be old, before he shall find sufficient cause to be honest. For his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and general, that happy is that man who may understand him, and more happy that can apply what he doth understand. On the other side, the historian, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what should be but to what is, to the particular truth of
things and not to the general reason of things, that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine.

Now doth the peerless poet perform both; for whatsoever the philosopher saith should be done, he giveth a perfect picture of it in some one by whom he presupposeth it was done, so as he coupleth the general notion with the particular example.\textsuperscript{27}

For Sidney, the poet is not a liar. He says, " ... that of all writers under the sun the poet is the least liar, and though he would, as a poet, can scarcely be a liar".\textsuperscript{28}

Poetry and imagination were defended systematically during the Romantic Revival. The Romantics, chiefly Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, P.B.Shelley and Keats revolted against Locke's theory of sense perception and against scientific reasoning. They also reacted sharply against the mathematical reasoning of Berkeley and Leibniz. However it does not mean that they were enemies of reason. They were aware of the usefulness of reason. They could clearly see that the fusion of imagination and reason is possible. These poets never rejected reason. But for them imagination is the most important faculty because they believed that the perception of imagination is more integral than that of reason. For them imagination is divine. These poets want to go beyond all forms of mediate knowledge and go into the heart of things by becoming one with the Universal Being.
That alone would give the knowledge of reality as it is. Poetry according to these poets is not mere talk, nor doctrine, nor theory which can be proved by logical arguments but it is a matter of realization, and they believed that great poetry cannot exist without imagination. Imagination is not bound by cause and reason. Nor is it bound by time, space and universe. Causation is the base of reason without which it cannot exists. But inspired imagination is divine and can travel into the higher realms of experience. Reason is concerned with accident while imagination, on the other hand is related to essence. Imagination can discover the relationship between essence and accident or could synthesise them. The metaphysical truth can be realized through poetry which comes to the genius from that nobler realm where reason cannot reach. Great poets become a medium through which light, inspiration and divine truth is expressed in language. This is what Shakespeare says through the character of Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Poetry is not merely a matter of fancy but conviction:

"But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But howsoever, strange and admirable".29

Poetry is capable of uniting opposites. Poetry is a noble gift. Praising the role of poetry in human life Goethe writes,
"Must the poet forgo what Nature gave
Him as his birthright, forfeit wantonly
For you that noble gift? How else does he
Move all men's hearts, what power but his invents
The conquest of the elements?
Song bursts forth from him, a harmonious whole
Engulfs the world and draws it back into his soul
Nature spins out her thread, endlessly long,
At random on her careless spindle wound;
All individual lives in chaos throng.
Together, mixed like harsh discordant sound,
Who divides up this dull monotonous drift
Into a living rhythm? Who can lift
Particular things into a general sense
Of some great music's sacred congruence?
When passions rage, who makes the tempest sing,
The sunset glow when solemn thought prevails?
Who scatters all the blossoms of the spring
On his beloved's path? Who makes a crown
Of mere green leaves the symbol of renown
For high distinction? What is this that fills
Olympus, joins the gods in unity?
The power of Man, revealed in Poetry!"30

It was Blake, the great mystic, who sharply reacted against
Locke's theory of sense experience in which the mind is said to remain
passive. But for Blake and Coleridge the mind does not remain passive,
it is active. Blake considered imagination as divine and pure as God.
For him imagination is the only reality. He says in "A Vision of the Last Judgement,"

"This world of Imagination is the World of Eternity; it is the divine bosom into which we shall go after the death of the Vegetated body. This World of Imagination is Infinite & Eternal, whereas the world of Generation or Vegetation is Finite & Temporal. There exist in that Eternal World the permanent Realities of Every Thing which we see reflected in this Vegetable Glass of Nature.

All Things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the Divine body of the Saviour, the True Vine of Eternity, The Human Imagination, who appear'd to Me as Coming to Judgement among his Saints & throwing off the Temporal that the Eternal might be Establish'd".31

Blake believed that truth and eternity can be realized only through imagination. Imagination according to Blake is divine which is concerned with the world which is Infinite. It is very difficult for the intellect to fathom this divine world. Neither is it grasped by sense-perception nor by scientific reasoning. Inspired Imagination could reach there and reveal the supreme state which is beyond mind. It is a matter of realization and not of discussion. This is what Dante says in the Purgatorio. Virgil says,

"Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione possa transcorrer la infinita via"
Foolish is he who hopes our intellect
can reach the end of that unending road.

Even the great Kathopanisad, also describes the limitation
of intellect. This profoundly philosophic and highly poetic text says,

"When the five senses of knowledge come to
rest together with the mind, and the
intellect, too, does not function, that state
they call the highest"32

(Part II, Canto III, Verse 10)

Coleridge's observation on imagination is similar to that of Blake. He writes,

"The primary Imagination I hold to be the living Power
and prime Agent of all human perception, and as a repetition
in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite
I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo
of the former, co-existing with the conscious will ... It
dissolves diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create;"33

Keats's observation regarding imagination is similar to that of Blake because he also believed that ultimate truth is to be
found only in the imagination. In a letter to Benjamin Bailey, he writes,
"I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination. What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth - whether it existed before or not - for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. In a word, you may know my favourite speculation by my first Book and the little song I sent in my last - which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these Matters. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream - he awoke and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning - and yet it must be. Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerous objections? However it may be, O for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! It is 'a Vision in the form of Youth', a Shadow of reality to come - and this consideration has further convinced me for it has come as auxiliary to another favourite speculation of mine - that we shall enjoy ourselves hereafter by having what we called happiness on Earth repeated in a finer tone and so repeated. And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in sensation rather than hunger as you do after Truth. Adam's dream will do here and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human Life and its Spiritual repetition."34

Thus it is clear from the observation of Keats that imagination
is capable of discovering reality and this reality is not ordinary but essential. Romantic Poets successfully combined imagination and truth in their poetical works. C. M. Bowra points out, "They combine imagination and truth because their creations are inspired and controlled by a peculiar insight"\textsuperscript{35}

Coleridge, the great philosopher and poet could clearly see the fusion of feeling and intellect in great poetry. In his \textit{Biographia Literaria} and elsewhere he emphasised the union of emotion and thoughts. Unfortunately most of the philosophers failed to see this sort of union. Poetry is not without reason, it is not merely a fairy tale meant for entertainment only. Poetry has a reason of its own. Coleridge Writes,

"I learnt from him\* that poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because, more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more and more fugutive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word"\textsuperscript{36}

For Coleridge poetry is not devoid of reason. Philosophers could not see this fusion and that is why they rejected poetry. They

\* The Rev. James Bowyer, many years Head Master of the Grammar School, Christ's Hospital.
believe that poetry is the product of the heart and emotion and can lead a man astray. Coleridge was not satisfied with the theories of Hartley, Berkeley, Locke, Leibniz and Newton. He could not find a place for his imagination in these philosophers. The poet, according to Coleridge is a seer of truth and he can successfully maintain balance between thought and feeling. Like Blake he believed that supersensuous realities could not be grasped by the mere intellect, but intellect should be combined with imagination. Discussing Coleridge's theory of imagination Shawcross writes,

"For in that experience he had been made conscious that the most genuine apprehension of reality is of the nature of a direct intuitional act, to which thought and emotion are alike indispensable, in which they are indeed inseparably blended".37

Coleridge rejected Newton's theory of the mind's passiveness. In his letter to Thomas Poole Coleridge writes,

"My opinion is this - that deep Thinking is attainable only by a man of deep Feeling, and that all Truth is a species of Revelation. The more I understand of Sir Issac Newton's works, the more boldly I dare utter to my own mind & therefore to you, that I believe the Souls of 500 Sir Issac Newtons would go to the making up of a Shakespeare or a Milton- [...] Newton was a mere materialist - Mind in his system is always passive - a lazy Looker-on on an external World. If the mind be not passive, if it be indeed made
in God's Image, & that too in the sublimest sense the Image of the Creator - there is ground for suspicion, that any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be a false, as a system".38

Poetry can bring man closer to the great universal truth because of its celestial vision and inherent knowledge of beauty which is beyond the range of reason. The great German philosopher Kant also believed that the mere intellect cannot grasp the suprasensuous reality. Talking about his "Critique of Pure Reason" Will Durant says,

"The most eloquent and incisive portions of the book had argued that the object of faith - a free and immortal soul, a benevolent creator-could never be proved by reason".39

Kant believed that ideas of God, immortality of soul and freedom of will cannot be grasped by reason as realities. They remain hypotheses. Here Coleridge differs from Kant. Shawcross writes,

"All that we can know (says Kant) is the world of phenomena. Hence the Ideas of Reason (God, freedom and immortality) can never be objects of knowledge. Moreover, even by reason itself these Ideas are not grasped as realities - they remain regulative ideas, hypotheses essential indeed to our construction of experience, yet still hypotheses. But to Coleridge the ideas are realities : and what he chooses to call the Reason is the organ of our insight into them."40
Kant distrusts imaginative interpretation of nature. It could be erroneous because it is subjective. He distrusts emotion. Writing about Kant Shawcross says, "In seeming to pierce to the truth of things, it [the imaginative interpretation] is in fact creating, out of a world already subjective, one more subjective still."\(^41\)

But for Coleridge the deliverance of imagination is not subjective. For him imagination is objective and fancy is subjective. Coleridge writes, "that the deliverances of fancy are subjective, those of imagination objective."\(^42\)

Unlike other philosophers Kant did not reject imagination as a useless faculty. He considered imagination as mediator between an object and understanding. Imagination helps one to understand an object. Although Kant believed that ideas expressed in a poem cannot be conceptualized, he did not condemn poetry as merely illusory or unreal. Neither did he label poets as liars. His observation on poets in his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* is important. He writes,

"The poet essays the task of interpreting to sense the rational ideas [ideas of reason, not of understanding] of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, hell, eternity, creation, &c. Or, again, as to things of which examples occur in experience, e.g. death, envy and all the vices, as also love, fame and the like, transgressing the limits of experience he attempts with the aid of an imagination which emulates
the display of reason in its attainment of a maximum, to
body them forth to sense with a completeness of which nature
affords no parallel."\textsuperscript{43}

Another German philosopher Schelling regarded imagination
as the highest faculty for the revelation of truth. The greatest virtue
of imagination is its ability to reconcile opposite elements. Imaginative
attitude towards nature is necessary for philosophers also. He con­
sidered imagination as the supreme source of truth. In \textit{Transcendental
Idealism} he writes,

"Philosophy starts with an infinite division of two opposed
activities; but the same division is at the root of every
aesthetic product, and is completely resolved by every
individual representation of art. What is then that marvellous
faculty by which according to the assertion of the phi­
osopher, an infinite contradiction is resolved in the pro­
ductive intuition ?.... It is the poetic faculty, which in its
first power is the original intuition, and contrariwise it is
only the productive intuition reasserting itself in the highest
power, that we call the poetic faculty."\textsuperscript{44}

The greatest virtue of imagination for Coleridge is its unifying
power. He called it 'Esemplastic imagination'. He writes,

"The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole
soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its
faculties to each other, according to their relative worth
and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control (laxis effertur habenis) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities:"45

Coleridge considered imagination as the organ of philosophy. Poetry and philosophy deal with the same issues, and they both are based on the same experience. Coleridge says,

"The postulate of philosophy, and at the same time the test of philosophic capacity, is no other than the heaven descended KNOW THYSELF! And this at once practically and speculatively. For as philosophy is neither a science of the reason or understanding only, nor merely a science of morals, but the science of BEING altogether, its primary ground can be neither merely speculative or merely practical, but both in one. All knowledge rests on the coincidence of an object with a subject."46

Thus Coleridge made it clear that poetry and philosophy can go together. He writes, "No man was ever yet a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher."47

In great poetry we find a miraculous fusion of reason and
imagination. This type of poetry is capable of comprehending reality in a better way. Shelley writes, "A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not."48

The realization of the world of the Infinite is very difficult. It cannot be grasped by only the sense or the mere intellect but poetry can grasp it. Shelley writes, "For it acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness."49 Ultimate reality can be comprehended only after transcending the senses, the mind and also the emotions. In this regard C. M. Bowra's comment is relevant. Discussing the Romantic poets he writes,

"In so far as they made sweeping statements about the oneness of things, they were metaphysicians, but, unlike professional metaphysicians, they trusted not in logic but in insight, not in the analytical reason but in the delighted, inspired soul which in its full nature transcends both the mind and the emotions. They were, too, in their own way, religious, in their sense of the holiness of reality and the awe which they felt in its presence."50

The great poets and mystics find themselves in communion with God. They did not only discover the truth but experience it.

Even a modern, and predominantly intellectual poet like W.
H. Auden had a vision of supreme reality which he calls 'Vision of Agape'. He writes,

"Quite suddenly and unexpectedly, something happened. I felt myself invaded by a power which, though I consented to it, was irresistible and certainly not mine. For the first time in my life I knew exactly—because, thanks to the power, I was doing it—what is meant to love one's neighbor as oneself".\(^{51}\)

This is revelation and it is the source of ultimate knowledge. Man who wants to achieve knowledge regarding the soul, or the destiny of man or his relation to God, must rise above the material or empirical knowledge. Mere intellectual exercise cannot give any true knowledge of it. Discussion, theory and information about it are not enough; one must have the experience of it. Ultimate truth is beyond sense perception. Knowledge of God, soul, free-will and man's relation to God is infinite and is beyond the mind. Knowledge based on direct revelation transcends the world of phenomena and takes him to a higher realm of knowledge. The ultimate reality can be achieved in a state of consciousness which transcends reason. Radhakrishnan observes,

"Intellect and integral insight are related as part to the whole. Integral insight discloses to us eternity, timelessness in which time and history are included. Truth is not the reflection of reality in sense and intellect. It is a creative mystery experienced by the soul in its deepest being".\(^{52}\)
For transcendental experience one must go beyond the mind and the corporeal world. It is not proper to say poets are led by emotions. The great poems of the East and the West are highly philosophic, poetic and spiritual. One can enter the superconscious state of experience only after transcending the limitations of body, sense and the mind. This kind of blessed state can only be experienced through the divine vision. It cannot be proved by argument, reasoning, and experiment.

Poetry can bring man closer to the great Universal Truth because of its suprasensuous vision and inherent knowledge of beauty which is beyond the range of reasoning. Almost all the great poems of the world are philosophic Viz. The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, The Divine Comedy, Adonais, "Ode on the Intimation of Immortality" etc. In the Upanisads we find great fusion of poetry and philosophy. They are profoundly philosophic and at the same time highly poetic. Some of the Upanisads use parables to explain a message with facility. The philosophy expressed in these religious works of India is par excellence, and writers of these philosophic texts were poets. Swami Vivekananda comments,

"I would say one thing more in connection with this philosophy. In the old Upanisads we find sublime poetry. Their authors were poets. Plato says that inspiration comes to people through poetry, and it seems as if these ancient Rishis, seers
of truth, were raised above humanity to show these truths through poetry."\(^{53}\)

Juan Mascaro says,

"The composers of the *Upanishads* were thinkers and poets, they had the vision of the poet; and the poet knows well that if poetry takes us away from a lower reality of daily life it is only to lead us to the vision of a higher Reality even in this daily life, where limitations give way for the poet to the joy of liberation."\(^{54}\)

It is absurd to say that poetry can never be philosophic or without philosophic strain. Wordsworth considered poetry 'the most philosophic'. He says,

"Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all Writing: It is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion, truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature."\(^{55}\)

Truth is the final objective of philosophy, but unfortunately theories proposed by most of the philosophers remained inadequate because of their overemphasis on reason and negligence of im-
agination. They forgot that direct realization of truth can be achieved through inspired intuition alone because it can go beyond the mere mind. The intellectual exercise could be of little assistance in transcending reality. It deals only with the world of phenomena. Empirical knowledge is concerned with the finite world. Ultimate truth or spiritual vision is a matter of comprehensive realization. Poets find themselves in communion with reality when they rise above the finite world. Truth is revealed to them by intuition. In this connection C. E. M. Joad says,

"Many philosophers are and always have been inclined to doubt whether questions relating to the ultimate origin, nature and purpose of the universe can be fruitfully tackled by the method of speculative reasoning. When such doubts are expressed, it is reason in the strict and narrow sense of the word that is impugned, the contention being that knowledge of the ultimate nature and purpose of things, if, indeed such knowledge be possible in the present stage of our development, withheld from reason, is revealed to a faculty more akin to what is popularly known as intuition or insight."56

The approach of the poets seems to be 'rational' too in the sense that it is not in conflict with reason. But they fully recognise the limitations of reason. Reason could help to find out what is evidently false or true. It can only help us to know whether our vision of truth is real or merely an illusion; but for the realization of the ultimate truth it is inadequate. The greatness of Dante, Shakespeare, Milton,
Wordsworth and Coleridge lies in the successful reconciliation of suprarational intuition with reason. These poets fully utilised reason and at the same time corrected and supplemented the results attained by reason by means of their intuition.

The reason of Hartley, Leibniz, Descartes and Locke is an incomplete one which led them to clash and conflict. It seems that in their zeal to condemn imagination, the rationalist philosophers seem to forget the fact that philosophy itself is not totally devoid of imagination. Philosophy can also be and very often is imaginative. It is not only true of philosophy but even science. In fact all original philosophy is imaginative. Scientists also often apply their imagination to arrive at certain truth. Therefore it is not proper to say that imagination is out of place in the field of science and philosophy. F. C. Happold points out,

"The status of intuition, creative insight, imagination, call it what you will, is an acknowledged one. It is recognized not only by the mystic, the poet, and many philosophers, but also by the scientist. It was one of the most eminent of quantum physicists, Max Planck, who wrote in his autobiography:

When the pioneer in science sends forth the groping fingers of his thoughts, he must have a vivid, intuitive imagination, for new ideas are not generated by deduction, but by an artistically creative imagination."
The great discoveries in every field of knowledge have had their origin in the intuitions of men of genius. Through intuition they see, sometimes in a flash, things not seen by other men.\(^57\)

The grand virtue of imagination is its ability to reconcile and by using this faculty poets successfully combined poetry and philosophy. Poetry and philosophy are not totally irreconcilable. Commenting on Schelling's theory, Wimsatt and Brooks write,

"Ideas were images of divinity when taken as ideas. When taken as real, they were no less than gods... Poetry conceived along these lines would be a kind of philosophy, the most creative and the highest philosophy. It would take the place of ordinary philosophy. Poetry-art-was the supreme fact. 'Poetry' wrote Novalis in one of his Fragments "is a genuine absolute reality. This is one of the gist of my philosophy. The more poetical, the more true"\(^58\)

George Santayana in his **Three Philosophical Poets** explicitly describes the relationship between poetry and philosophy. For him poetry and philosophy can go together smoothly if the object of a philosopher and a poet is the attainment of truth. He writes,

"But the vision of philosophy is sublime. The order it reveals in the world is something beautiful, tragic, sympathetic to the mind, and just what every poet, on a small or on a large scale, is always trying to catch."
In philosophy itself investigation and reasoning are only preparatory and servile parts, means to an end. They terminate in insight, or what in the noblest sense of the word may be called 'theory', Owpia, - a steady contemplation of all things in their order and worth. Such contemplation is imaginative. No one can reach it who has not enlarged his mind and tamed his heart. A Philosopher who attains it is, for the moment, a poet, and a poet who turns his practised and passionate imagination on the order of all things, or anything in the light of the whole, is for that moment a philosopher.\(^59\)

It is not impossible for poets to deal with philosophical ideas. T. S. Eliot writes,

"The poet can deal with philosophic ideas, not as matter for argument, but as matter for inspection. The original form of a philosophy cannot be poetic. But poetry can be penetrated by a philosophic idea, it can deal with this idea when it has reached the point of immediate acceptance, when it has become almost a physical modification. If we divorced poetry and philosophy altogether, we should bring a serious impeachment, not only against Dante, but against most of Dante's contemporaries."\(^60\)

The great poets claim that their experiences are not merely beautiful, subjective sensations, but they convey the knowledge of man's destiny and his place in the universe. Poets like Aeschylus,
Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Milton etc. were truly and simultaneously philosophical and poetic. It is indeed possible for one to be philosophic and poetic. Neither Dante nor Milton was interested in the clash or conflict or ideas or notions which can lead man away from reality. But these poets successfully fused poetry and philosophy in their works and so is the case with all the sublime poetry of all over the world. It is not only impossible but futile to separate philosophy from poetry in the poetry of Dante and Milton. Discussing Dante's poem, Mark Musa says, "The formal beauty of The Divine Comedy should not be dissociated from its spiritual message. The universal appeal of the poem comes from a combination of the two: Poetry and Philosophy". The same is the case with Paradise Lost. There also Milton maintains a perfect balance between poetry and philosophy. In both the poets there is an innate kinship between poetry and philosophy.
NOTES


(4) Ibid., p.429.


(16) Ibid., p. 298.

(17) Ibid., p. 72.


(19) Ibid., p. 189.

(20) Ibid., p. 191.


(22) Ibid., pp. 18-19.


(28) Ibid., p. 30.


(41) Ibid., p. xliii.

(42) Ibid., p. xliv.


(49) Ibid., p. 232.


