In this thesis, an attempt has been made to study in detail the set of tendencies that emerged in Panjabi poetry after it came in contact with the poetry and philosophy of the English Romantic poets of 19th century. There is no second opinion, that the history of modern Panjabi literature commences with the impact of the West on the Panjab, when it came under the British Rule. The learning of English and other subjects through the medium of English gave new directions to the growth of the indigenous thought. The independent growth of the native genius was checked, and the teaching and learning of English, says Lord Meston, "deflected the Indian mind from the traditional lines of Culture, which an advanced vernaculars might have encouraged."

Consequent establishment of universities and colleges gave a new impetus to the assimilation of new ideas by the young intellectuals, who became sounding boards for that western thought which they studied for the examination purposes. They were charmed by this new light as the Elizabethans were once charmed by the Italian light of thought. They turned their back on the native thought and form of expression and

1. Forward to India and the West: O'Melley.
consequently, a complete break with the past traditions, not of course without experimental exercises here and there, came about. The traditional Panjabi literature began to appear effete and exhausted in content and form. While the classical literature was paid a ritual homage by the priest and theologians, the romantic one was left to its own fate, to survive in the backwaters of the rural life. The young intellectuals, so to say, were cut off from their literary moorings. This was the first wave of the renaissance, which was like the reassertion of the soul of the nation fluttering her wings under the inspiration of foreign rule.  

A strong impulse toward literary expression came from the study of English literature by a fairly large sprinkling of the population, whose tastes were being moulded with their new knowledge. English with its vast range of expression and its variety of theme and technique, which no Indian language in the 19th century could even distantly compare, was found to be both a model and a mine of the untold treasure.  

To the Panjabi poets, to whom writing poetry on the traditional line was becoming more like a confinement in the tower and more and more intolerable because the very foundation of that tower they found crumbling, were only left with the

2. Ibid., p. 214.
3. Ibid., p. 214.
alternative, to burst the barriers and to get back to the people and to things in the open. This freedom gave a bewildering variety to their poetical works and this is evident in their new modes of feeling, their more direct expression, in their choice of new pastures and also in the new aesthetics.

All this was done by the Panjabi poets under the impact of English Romantic poets, whose poetry was prescribed for reading at the school and college levels.

Consequently, Bhai Vir Singh picked up the courage to incorporate new form, and to a limited range, new themes, such as depiction of nature, love for the beauty and art, in his poetry and he, like Wordsworth, sang of the common objects making them as the subject of his poetry. His Nature appears as alive as that of Wordsworth and he found Wordsworthian pleasures, comfort and soothing influence in it. The personification of natural objects and through them expressing own feeling of the poet, on the pattern of the English poetry was introduced for the first time in Panjabi poetry. He was the first poet to write personal poems and attempt short lyrics on the pattern of the English lyricists. His writing 'Rana Surat Singh' in 'Sarkhandi Channd' and adding a suitable preface to defend this metre and making allusions to the handling of blank verse by the English and other poets, is quite reminiscent of Wordsworth who wrote a long comprehensive Preface to 'Lyrical Ballads' and put forth his own
idea of language, metre and poetic diction. With Bhai Vir Singh, a new type of poetry began to be written in Panjabi, that rightly deserves the epithet 'Modern'; and as the word 'modern' itself is 'romantic', so there is nothing wrong if we call the poetry of Bhai Sahib as romantic, and to him a Romantic poet.

This new attitude in Poetry discouraged too strict a formalism as well as over much moralizing didacticism, though Bhai Vir Singh still went on preaching his mysticism based on Gurbani and like Blake and Wordsworth, he continued seeing in Nature the 'Invisible' presence. The tradition of making new experiments in Panjabi poetry was carried forward by Lala Kirpa Sagar, Dhani Ram Chatrik and other Panjabi poets. Kirpa Sagar wrote 'Lakshmi Devi', a first successful epic poem in Panjabi, that broke the spell of spiritual 'experiences' as narrated by Bhai Vir Singh in 'Rana Surat Singh'. 'Lakshmi Devi' is a romantic creation and contains description of the scenes and sights of Nature, the horrors of war, the love intrigues, jealousies, and hatred of characters, their personal grudges and enmities. The atmosphere of the epic is very close to that of the real world and for the first time, it is felt that the poet belongs to the real world of men and women, as did English Romantic poets.

So, the old began to disintegrate and the new was already appearing in the poetry of Bhai Vir Singh and Kirpa Sagar.
Panjabi poetry now came closer to common man. His sorrows, and sufferings, his customs and contentment with his poverty stricken environment, his hopes and aspirations and his love for the rustic ways of life became the subject matter of poetry. Lala Dhani Ram Chatrik became the first representative poet who imbibed these tendencies in his poetic works. His love for country's freedom, his revolt against corruption and corrupt God-Agencies, his socialistic view, and his condemning of cruel old rituals, customs and institutions, all remind us of Shelley, Byron, and Wordsworth and constitute a new mile-stone in Panjabi poetry. Thus, the idealism and the 'Invisible' of Bhai Vir Singh has been presented as realism of the earth, by Chatrik and in doing so he came closer to the romanticism of the English poets of the 19th century.¹

Panjabi poetry touches the new heights with Prof. Puran Singh who brought into it the love philosophy of Shelley, Romantic love for freedom, and 'vulgar pleasures' of Wordsworth enjoyed in the company of natural objects. His love for details and exaggerations, his imaginative flights, his looking at the world through a coloured glass, his love for the rustic men and women; his invoking Romantic heroes and heroins of the Panjab and his introducing 'Free Verse' for the first time in Panjabi, give all that Panjabi poetry needed to earn the label 'Romantic'. To him there appeared no difference between the language of

¹ Dr. Attar Singh: Kav Adhian, p.166.
poetry and prose and all this was done under the influence of the 'Preface' to 'Lyrical Ballads' by Wordsworth. But besides being romantic, Puran Singh did not forget his rich cultural heritage and he continued pouring forth in his poetry his spiritual learning that never spared him. Diwan Singh Kalepani followed in the footsteps of these poets. He launched a crusade against existing institutions and rituals of religion, and voiced in his poetry the cause of country's freedom. His poetry contains the irony and satire with which he attacked the greedy and the traitors and thus, is reminiscent of Shelley's and Byron's poetry. Dr. Mohan Singh Diwana also made a conscious departure from traditional poetry and wrote in free verse. He feels that he has sub-conscious contacts with Coleridge, Shelley and Keats.¹

Romanticism in Panjabi poetry reached its climax in the hands of Mohan Singh. The poet is Romantic to the core and imbibed all the qualities of English Romantics in his poetry. His love has all the licentiousness of the English poets and in the free and naked expression of love he even surpasses them. He introduced in Panjabi, the dream poetry of Coleridge, and also the supernatural element of the English poets. He attempted songs, ballads, dramatic monologues and even odes, the forms he borrowed from English poetry of

¹ Dr. Mohan Singh (quoted) by Dr. M. P. Kohli: The Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p. 62.
the 19th century. He is a poet of the senses. The propagandist and the rebel in Mohan Singh remind us of Shelley, and his discovering beauty in the rags of a poor gypsy girl exhibits Wordsworth's influence on the poet. It also is reminiscent of Keats' idea that 'A thing of Beauty is a joy for ever'. In addition to these themes, the poet loves Nature and gives beautiful description of her scenes. He depicts in a number of poems his chivalrous love and his desire to make the present sufficient in itself. In short, Mohan Singh can be termed as pure romantic poet, who loved to try on new themes and new forms of poetry. For a number of his poems, he directly borrowed the idea from those of the English Romantics and dwelt upon it, giving it Panjabi colouring.

Love, revolt, supernatural element, atheism, and at occasion being spiritual, mark the poetry of Bawa Balwant. He sometimes, appears as a rebel like Shelley, and at another time he sings his personal love and thus, becomes subjective. Sometimes he emerges out as an atheist, but at another time he preaches the merging of the 'soul' with the Almighty, reminiscent of Wordsworth. His poems also create the supernatural atmosphere of Coleridge and his mysticism reminds us of Blake. Though incongruous and obscure, Bawa displays many qualities of the English Romantics in his poetry. He wrote lyrics, odes and sonnets but is of the opinion that poetry without rhythm and metre is no poetry at all.
The poetry of Amrita is the expression of sorrows, and thus basically Romantic (leaving aside her religious verses). Her singing of the personal love, her revolt against the tyranny of man over woman, her consciousness of the universal suffering, her use of Natural objects while making comparisons, her voice against injustice, the corrupt and the corruptions in society, are all romantic qualities and except a few are found in the English poets of the 19th century.

Pritam Singh Safeer's depiction of his divine love, his clarion call of revolt, his warning to the capitalists, his frequent allusions to the western mythology and also his writing in free verse, are the qualities that can be studied in the context of the Romantic influence on the English poets on him. Some minor poets in Panjab were also writing poetry in passionate tone on freedom of their country and on religious themes. And except their love for freedom, there is nothing in their poetry that can induce us to find on them the influence of the English poets.

From our study of the modern Panjabi poetry, it has been observed that our poets modelled their poetry only on the short poems of the English poets of 19th century and especially those poems that were popular in their times. They, it is true, express the ideas of the long poems of these poets, but none wrote any long poem as written by Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats, save translations and
Lala Kirpa Sagar, who wrote his epic, a long romantic narrative based on 'The Lady of the Lake' by Scott.

Also, the romanticism in Panjabi poetry is not the result of any organised efforts on the part of our poets as it was the result of a planned revolt, by a set of poets, against the traditional and classical poetry in England.