CHAPTER SIX

THE ROMANTIC AESTHETIC AND IQBAL

Images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; ...or lastly, when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit. (Coleridge, Biographia Literaria)

The work of art leads to the artist's self
And supplies a clue to his heart. (Iqbal, Bandagi Nanah)
When John Stuart Mill wrote that "all poetry is of the nature of soliloquy"¹ he was overstating the most cardinal tenet of the Romantic aesthetic, viz., art is essentially expression and not imitation. The Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century marks a shift from the imitative-rationalist aesthetic of the neo-classical age to the projective-expressive view of art. Right from the days of classical Greece, mimesis was accepted as the basis of all art. Plato attacked poetry precisely because he regarded it as false imitation, the shadow of a shadow and hence twice removed from truth. The human mind, in his view, was a mirror held up to the external world which was the shadow of the real world. Aristotle took exception to many conclusions of his master with regard to art, and widened the scope of mimesis and purged it of many pejorative associations but mimesis remains the foundation of his theory of art. His view of the working of human mind is essentially the same as that of Plato although he uses a different analogy for it. In place of the analogy of mirror used by Plato, he compares the human mind with a piece of wax taking on the impressions of a signet-ring.

The mimetic view of art continued to dominate the

Western world up to the eighteenth century. Of course, sometimes a voice was raised here and there for the expressive theory of art, such as the one represented by Longinus, but it was stifled under the universal acceptance of the mimetic theory. The shift from the mimetic to the expressive theory of art became discernible in the second half of the eighteenth century. Critics like Kames and Twining began to make the subtle discrimination between painting and sculpture as predominantly imitative arts and music and poetry as predominantly expressive ones. Even pragmatic critics like Philip Sidney contributed to an extent to the development of the expressive theory of art. Although they focused their attention more on assessing and evaluating the effects of poetry on its audience than tracing a poem back to its source in the inner world of the poet, they could not wholly ignore the subjective dimension as the imparting of delight and instruction, the twofold purpose of poetry according to the pragmatic critics, was largely dependent on the native talent and mental training of the poet. Edward Young's influential essay, *Conjectures On Original Composition* (1759) was the boldest assertion of the doctrines of genius and inspiration and the concept of organicism which are essential ingredients of the expressive theory of art. With the early Romantics, Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge
the shift was complete and the expressive theory finally displaced the mimetic theory of art.

The epistemological foundations of the expressive theory of art are entirely different from those of the mimetic theory. The mimetic aesthetic was based on a mechanical concept of mind which was modelled on Newton's science of mechanics. The mechanical philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries believed that mental processes could easily be explained in terms of physical events. Every idea was, in the final analysis, the reflection of a physical impression. Locke, Hartley and Hume all base their ideas about the psychology of creation on this premise. In the empirical aesthetics of Locke, poetry is a matter of wit which makes up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions by combining different ideas. According to Hartley's theory of the association of ideas, all the complex mental processes are derived from elements of simple sensation. In Hume's view "the qualities from which this association (of ideas) arises, and by which the mind is after this manner conveyed from one idea to another, are three, viz. Resemblance, Contiguity in time and place, and Cause and Effect."²

But this mechanical explanation of the mental activity failed to explain the presence of unity or form in a work of art. If ideas worked according to the law of association and one idea recalled another merely because of the accident of resemblance or contiguity in time and place, how could the cosmos of a work of art emerge out of this chaos. Most mechanical theorists tried to explain this by postulating the existence of a force which was interchangeably called 'judgement', 'reason' or 'understanding' — a mental counterpart of the skilful artisan of the machine of universe.

From the mimetic point of view the mind was essentially a passive recipient of the external impressions. If poetry seemed to depart from fact it was not because the mind was creative and could act independently but because it (poetry) portrays a world whose bits have been reassembled and remoulded to make it look beautiful and to impart pleasure to the reader or to reveal the basic form or the denominator of a type. From the expressive or romantic point of view the mind is not passive but active in perception. It acts on and transforms the objects with which it deals. Writing about descriptive poetry Mill wrote in his essay, *Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties*, one of the most
seminal statements of the Romantic theory of poetry, that it describes "things as they appear, not as they are." Coleridge characterised the empirical view of human mind as a passive recipient of impressions as "the despotism of the eye" and attached supreme importance to the role of the mind in transforming the reality that it confronts. In his view passion that changes the reality, and not the observed reality, is the soul of poetry. In Biographia Literaria he writes:

Images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterise the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion ... or lastly when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit.

Poetry from this point of view is the expression of the

3 Early Essays by John Stuart Mill, p. 207.
4 Biographia Literaria, I, 74.
5 Vol. II, p. 16.
inner man, or if at all it is the representation of external
nature, it is external nature as modified by the poet's
imagination. The cause of poetry is not as Aristotle
thought a formal cause determined by what the poet imitates,
nor is it, as the pragmatic critics believed, a final cause
determined by the ends that poetry should serve; it is an
efficient cause determined by the inner impulse and creative
imagination of the poet.

The emphasis on expression, on the inner being made
outer, is the common denominator of the various definitions
of poetry formulated by the Romantic poets although they
differ in details. Wordsworth described it as "the
spontaneous overflow of feelings" and on this basic idea he
formulated his ideas on the proper subjects, the proper
language and the use of poetry. Spontaneity in this
definition implies the role of intuition and inspiration
and the metaphor of 'overflow' suggests that the inner
compulsions are irresistible and uncontrollable. Coleridge
wrote in his essay On Poesy or Art that all the fine arts
are the revelation of the inner world of the man. Shelley
defined poetry as "the expression of imagination" and

6 Shelley's Literary and Philosophical Criticism, p. 121.
Byron's famous remark in his letter to Miss Milbanke (10 November 1813) is the most passionate expression of this idea. "Poetry is the lava of the imagination" he wrote, "whose eruption prevents an earthquake." John Keble opposes this idea of 'expression' to the Aristotelian concept of mimesis:

Aristotle, as is well known, considered the essence of poetry to be imitation. Expression we say, rather than imitation; for the latter word clearly conveys a cold and inadequate notion of the writer's meaning.

Imagination and Inspiration

Central to the expressive theory of art is a cluster of ideas that go together, although they could exist independently. These are the ideas of imagination, inspiration, poetry as the expression of emotion, and the concept of organicism. Together they constitute a complete reversal of the mimetic aesthetic and the mental mechanism that served as its basis. The emphasis is here not on the external reality but on certain powers inherent


in the individual. Rationality is underplayed and the irrational, though not necessarily irrational, powers of inspiration and intuition are assigned a pivotal role in the production of creative art.

In the empirical aesthetic of the eighteenth century, poetry was regarded as a product of craftsmanship whose mastery depended on following certain rules. The making of a book was compared to the making of a clock. Boileau, Racine, Gottsched, Reattie and even a poet like Gray sought to establish, once for all, standards of lasting validity in literature. Reattie compared the production of a poem with the making of an engine and Gray advised a young aspirant to poetry to "twirl a passage of prose into an apothegm, stick a flower in it, gild it with a costly expression" and he will have poetry. The flatest and most downright statement of this mechanical-rationalist aesthetic, however, comes from Gottsched. This is how he prescribes an elaborate recipe for making a good tragedy:

Let the poet first choose a moral precept which he wants to impress on his audience by means of the senses. Then he invents a general story to illustrate the truth for famous people to whom something similar.

---

9 Correspondence with William Mason (London: 1853), p.146.
has happened, and from them he borrows names for the characters in his story in order to give it a semblance of reality. After this he thinks up all the attendant circumstances necessary to make the main story really probable, and these are called the sub-plots and episodes. He then divides his material into five pieces, all of approximately equal lengths, and arranges them so that each section follows from the preceding one, but he does not bother further whether everything corresponds to the historical happenings, nor whether the subsidiary characters bore these or other names.10

It was necessary to quote this long extract in full because nothing can show better the mechanical view of art predominant in the neo-classical age. In this view of art there was no place for creative imagination which for the Romantics is the only source of poetry. The eighteenth century critics and poets use the term in altogether a different sense. Their view of imagination is quite in harmony with their world-view. They believed that images move across the mind's eye in succession. If they recur in the same spatial and temporal sequence as in the original sense-experience, it is memory. If they recur in a different order or combine to produce a new whole, it is

10 Quoted by Lilian Furst in Romanticism, p. 18.
'fancy' or 'imagination', terms which were used synonymously in the eighteenth century. Dryden explained the working of imagination by examples of the 'chimera' and 'hippocentaurs' in ancient mythology, creatures who combined in their constitution limbs of different animals.

For the Romantics, on the other hand, imagination is a mysterious creative faculty which transcends, though it does not of necessity violate, reason. Its procedure is not analytical like reason but synthetic. It grasps the truth all at once through an act of intuition and does not follow the circumlocutious and often unsure route of reason. It does not wholly depend upon external data and reproduce them mechanically but is active and productive in character and determinative rather than determined. In the famous Kantian typology it is synthetic power which imposes certain constitutive categories upon the data of experience and determines sense a priori in respect of its form. In the common, non-philosophical language, it bridges the gap between sensation and thought. By themselves the senses give us a world which is merely chaotic and by itself the intellect would not be able to turn this chaos into a cosmos and create something new out of the raw material of sense-data. It is the creative imagination which works as the shaping spirit of the chaotic material.
Among the English Romantic poets Blake is almost Fichtean in his denial of the real existence of anything except imagination. For him it is nothing less than God operating in the human soul. It determines and is not determined by sense-experience. Blake rejects Plato’s theory of knowledge as recollection and art as imitation. For him both are re-creation. Plato, according to him, worshipped the muses which are the daughters of memory rather than of imagination. Blake’s muses are the daughters of imagination which for him is divine, infinite and eternal. A work of art is, for him, an imaginative reordering or re-creation of sense-experience.

Of all the Romantic statements about imagination, Coleridge’s is the most compact and comprehensive. He distinguishes between ‘imagination’ and ‘fancy’ — a term which he reserves for the eighteenth century view of imagination. Fancy is dismissed as a mechanical mode of perception which merely reproduces the materials that it receives “ready made from the law of association.” The creative imagination is subdivided into ‘primary’ and ‘secondary.’ “The Primary Imagination”, says Coleridge, “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.”

In other words, primary imagination is the basic sense of perception, the realization on the part of the perceiving subject of his self-identity, of his identity as a subject experiencing an external reality. The secondary imagination, on the other hand, has two attributes which make it far superior in degree to primary imagination. Firstly "it is essentially vital even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead." That is to say it is active and not passive in perception. It has a life-bestowing capacity which informs the world with attributes which make it responsive and hospitable to man. Secondly it is a creative faculty which dissolves, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify." It idealizes and reshapes the data of experience to create a new reality out of them and this new reality has the prime attribute of unity in it. Disparate bits of experience are unified into organic wholes and this has as its basis the organic unity of the subject and the object.

A work of art receives its shape and organic unity


through the operation of 'feeling' or 'emotion'. In one of his letters to Southey, Coleridge explains the role of 'emotion' or 'feeling' in art with the analogy of the breeze that makes the leaves move. The believers in 'fancy', in the 'theory of the association of ideas' try to explain the motion of the leaves without the existence of the wind. In *Biographia Literaria* (ch. IV), the nature of fancy and imagination is explained with examples from Otway and Shakespeare. Otway's line — "Lutes, lobsters, seas of milk and ships of amber" — is cited as an example of fancy, and Shakespeare's line — "What! have his daughters brought him to this pass" — and Lear's apostrophe to the elements that precedes it, as an example of imagination. Both are attempts at depicting madness. Otway's line looks like a piece of non-sense verse with no imaginative unity. The list of items is joined by superficial associations — first alliteration, then a string of marine associations and then a deliberate distortion of colours. Shakespeare's line, on the other hand, and the preceding apostrophe of Lear to the elements —

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit fire! Spit rain! 
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters,

has an imaginative unity although it has no verbal ingenuity. The unity comes from the presence of an overpowering emotion, Lear's obsession with his daughter's ingratitude. Thus in
Coleridge there is a clear connection between the theory of imagination and the theory which attributes central importance to emotion or feeling which holds a vision of the world together.

Although imagination is not such a central concept in Wordsworth as feeling or nature, his ideas on the subject are very close to Coleridge's ideas. In the 1815 Preface he writes:

"Imagination in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws."

And the most important of the processes of creation, as Wordsworth tells us later, is that of consolidating numbers into unity. Thus Wordsworth speaks of imagination as creative and the work of art as an organic unity in words not very different from those of Coleridge. Later in the Preface (1815) he draws a distinction between fancy

---

and imagination and uses the same account of Lear's madness, to explain the nature of imagination, as Coleridge was to use.

Both Shelley and Keats were conscious of the importance of the role of imagination in the production of creative art. Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry* opens with the distinction between reason and imagination. Reason is described as the analytic operation of human mind which enumerates known quantities whereas imagination is the synthetic process which combines these quantities and perceives their value. Poetry is then defined in a general sense as the expression of imagination. Keats did not formulate his views on imagination in detail but he considered it as a surer guide to truth, comprehended in the form of beauty, than analytic reason. In a letter to Benjamin Bailey (22 November 1817) he wrote:

I am certain of nothing but the holiness of 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 ... The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream — he awoke and found it truth. 13

It is clear from the views of the Romantic poets about imagination that they, like Kant, regarded it as a mysterious faculty and, in the ultimate analysis, as undefinable. It is a divine faculty whose nature and character reason cannot easily comprehend. Blake categorically deifies it and Coleridge presents it as a human analogy of the divine act of creation. Such a belief links the Romantic theory of imagination with the idea of inspiration.

Literally, to be inspired is to be breathed on by Apollo or by one of the muses, or, in the Islamic or Christian context, by God or the holy spirit. The idea that poetry is not the result of craft but of inspiration was not a new idea. Thinkers and literary critics were aware of it ever since the days of Plato. In Plato's Dialogues Socrates tells the rhapsode that the poets do not compose their beautiful poems by art but because they are inspired and possessed. In the Poetics Aristotle remarks that poetry demands a man with a special gift or a touch of madness about him. But the dominant critical tendency of the neo-classical age was to stress the importance of craftsmanship in art and to underestimate the role of inspiration which was quite in keeping with its mechanical world-view. Hobbes hailed Davenant's attack on the poets' claim of inspiration. The main
emphasis in Pope's Essay On Criticism is on the importance of art although he believes that there are some nameless graces which a master hand alone could reach. "True ease in writing comes from art and not chance" says Pope. Dr. Johnson was skeptical about Gray's notion that he could compose poetry only at happy moments. Even those of the neo-classical writers who invoked the muse and set some store by inspiration believed that it should always be under the control of judgement.

In contrast to the above view the Romantics assert their faith in the doctrine of inspiration in unmistakable terms. Blake asserts again and again that he wrote his poems from dictation although the dictating agency lies within him: it is the divine imagination. Speaking of one of his prophetic books he wrote in a letter (6 July 1803) to Thomas Butts:

I may praise it, since I dare not pretend to be any other than the Secretary; the Authors are in Eternity. 17

16 See for instance his preface to Milton (Complete Writings, p. 460) and Jerusalem, Plate 3 (Complete Writings, p. 621)

17 Complete Writings, p. 925. For Blake imagination itself is eternity.
Wordsworth's emphasis on spontaneity and his belief that a poet is different from other men in having a more lively sensibility and more enthusiasm and tenderness have obvious affinities with the doctrine of inspiration which is unmistakably suggested in his postscript to 'The Waggoner':

Nor is it I who play the part,
But a shy spirit in my heart,
That comes and goes — will sometimes leap
From hiding places ten years deep.

Above all, in Kubla Khan Coleridge has left us one of the most marvellous accounts of the inspired poet:

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of paradise.

One of the cardinal tenets of Shelley's theory of poetry as propounded in A Defence of Poetry is that poetry is the product of an involuntary inspiration which is
momentary in nature so that "when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline." According to him, the finest passages of poetry are not a result of labour and study and he recommends Plato's discussion of poetic madness in Phaedrus to Peacock (the author of the *Four Ages of Poetry*) as a corrective against such erroneous notions.

Keats told Woodhouse that to compose poetry he would wait for the 'happier moment', the moment when he found all his faculties in full play and wrote as one who was 'almost inspired'. After he had written something, Keats would be astonished at it as if he were looking at the production of another man. It seemed to him to come by chance or magic, to be as it were something 'given to him.' His thinking on the subject is summed up in his axiom:

*If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all.*

The belief of the Romantics in inspiration, however,

---

18 *Shelley's Literary and Philosophical Criticism*, p. 53.

19 *Letters*, p. 108.
does not imply that the role of the conscious mind is altogether excluded from art. The heavily corrected manuscripts of their poems show that they bestowed a good deal of care upon their productions. What they are sure of is that in its origin and inception a poem is always involuntary and unanticipated.

Organic versus Mechanical Form

How does a design emerge in a work of art which is fundamentally a product of inspiration? The Platonic explanation of this problem is that there are certain innate ideas permanently engraved on human mind. It is these ideas which unconsciously inform a work of art and give it a design and form. Another explanation is to refer its origin to the instinct such as the one found in bees and birds. The Romantics explained this problem by comparing a work of art with a living being. The work of art was not to be thought of as a consciously contrived object, like a mechanical device, but as an autonomous and living entity. Metaphors of vegetable and animal world are therefore employed in all Romantic criticism to explain the form and design of a work of art.

In the sonnet 'A Poet', Wordsworth exhorts the poet that his work should grow like a forest tree and a meadow
Shelley in *A Defence of Poetry* compares a poem with a child growing in the womb of a mother. Blake does not use animal metaphors but is clear about the work of art being a unified whole. Speaking of Homer's poetry he wrote that every poem must be a perfect unity. He also rejects Burke's theory of art which is based on a dichotomy between conception and execution. In Blake's view such a distinction does not exist in art; here conception is execution.

Among the English Romantics, however, Coleridge is the greatest advocate of organicism. His distinction between fancy and imagination is, in fact, a distinction between categories of mechanical and organic psychology. His famous definition of imagination in chapter XIII of the *Biographia Literaria* is preceded by a lengthy and severe criticism of mental mechanism culminating in Hartley's associationism. Fancy is that faculty of mind which acts in accordance with the law of association. Formerly this was considered to be the mode of poetic invention but Coleridge finds it insufficient to explain the works of creative art. They are the products of secondary imagination which is vital and creative in nature and "dissolves, diffuses and dissipates in order to recreate." It is referred to as a 'permeating power' and a 'coadunating faculty'. Coleridge uses biological
metaphors to describe the working of the human mind. His comparison of a work of art to a plant and its growth and assimilation and conversion of nutriment to its own form is comparable to the views of Schelling and A. W. Schelling on the subject. Knowing too is described by Coleridge as growing and in the memorable coinage of I. A. Richards knowledge is equated with growlode. 20 Beauty is defined as "multitude in unity," "that in which the many, still seen as many, becomes one." 21 The greater the diversity and multitude of the parts which have been assimilated into a unity, the greater the beauty.

Coleridge's substitution of organicism for mechanism has far-reaching implications for literature some of which have been elaborated by Coleridge himself in his literary and non-literary writings. Thinking of a work of art in terms of a plant implies that it grows and evolves like the plant from a seed and is a whole — a whole which is not a mere combination of the parts; the parts, in fact, owe their existence to the whole. The emphasis on growth and evolution also implies that due attention should be paid to the processes of creation, which gives a psychological dimension

20 See Coleridge on Imagination (London: Routledge, 1934), p. 52. Richards's name in the text is not the same as Richards in the references.
to Coleridge's criticism.

In the course of its growth and development a plant assimilates to its own substance alien and diverse elements like those of earth, air, sun and water. A work of art too is not a mere combination of external impressions. Such alien elements are diffused and dissipated in order to be recreated by the artist. In one of his philosophical lectures Coleridge criticised Locke for clearly implying that wheat and barley are merely the products of earth, water and sunshine.

Unlike an artefact which is artificially made, the growth of a plant is innate and spontaneous. In life, says Coleridge, unity is produced \textit{ab intra} but in mechanism it is produced \textit{ab extra}. If a predetermined shape is impressed upon a given material, the form is mechanical but if the form develops from within, the form is organic. In \textit{Poesy or Art}, Coleridge states the difference as one between "form as proceeding and shape as superinduced."

This kind of explanation raises its own problems. If everything has the capacity of growing to its full form embedded within it, what is the role of consciousness

\footnote{\textit{Biographia Literaria}, vol II, p. 262.}
which Coleridge characterizes as vital? Is artistic creation an unwilled and unconscious process of mind? Coleridge's reply to this question will be in the negative. Organicism does not imply the nullification of the role of the will and the conscious mind. The author brings his product into being in some sense although in this process his intellect and conscious intention play only a secondary part. Coleridge illustrates this point with the example of Shakespeare whose judgment, in his view, was as great as his genius. Shakespeare wrote from natural genius and his works have an organic form which proceeds from within them and is not superimposed from without by following certain rules. This however does not mean that these works are products of a lawless process. Genius is not free from law but evolves its own laws. There is an inherent lawfulness in all organic development.

Iqbal on Art

In his thinking on aesthetics and its epistemological foundations Iqbal belongs to the Romantic tradition. According to him the mind in perception is not merely imitative but active and creative and the artist is not a manipulator but a creator. The metaphor of creation is used both by Iqbal and the English Romantic poets as a
live and thoroughly functional metaphor. For them it is not a lifeless word like other words which have lost all their original metaphorical associations. In their usage it always suggests the analogy between God and the poet as creator. Iqbal, however, going a step further, casts off the veil of metaphor and speaks, in the same breath, of God as well as man as creator:

\[ \text{Iqbal writes:} \]

\[ 

god created the world, man beautified it
Perhaps he is co-equal with God.
\]

Iqbal believes that the source of the beauty with which man, in his creative capacity, invests the world lies within him. Art is the supreme form in which man's creative potential finds expression and an artist's self is an infinite source of beauty and sublimity. In *Asrar-i-khudi* Iqbal writes:

\[ \text{Iqbal writes:} \]

\[ 
A poet's bosom is the home of Beauty's illuminations;
From his Sinai gush forth the beams of beauty;
His vision makes the fair look yet more fair;
His magic makes the lovable nature yet more lovable.
\]

\[ ^{23} \text{Kuliyat, p. 193.} \]

\[ ^{24} \text{Ibid., p. 25.} \]
Art from this point of view is self-revelation and every work of art is a mirror which reflects its creator:

The work of art leads to the artist's self
And supplies a clue to his heart.

Iqbal's thoughts on this subject reflect an astonishing closeness to those of the Romantic poets.

In Childe Harold (IV, CXII) Byron says:

Where are the forms that the sculptor's soul hath seized?
In him alone. Can Nature Show so fair?

In Zarb-i-Kalim Iqbal poses a similar question:

what is the source of the ecstasy in the tune of the flute.
Is it the wood of the flute or the heart of the flute player?

26 poetical Works, p. 236.
27 Kuliyat, p. 576.
Iqbal believes that art can become immortal only to the extent to which it is true to and revelatory of the artist's self. A true artist does not slavishly imitate nature. He frees himself from its bondage and uses it as his raw material to produce original and immortal works of art. This is the point of Iqbal's short poem, 'Ahram-Lisr' (The Pyramids of Egypt). The poem reads as follows:

In the deep silence of this heart-burning desert
Nature built only dunes of sand.
The heavens bow in reverence to the grandeur of
the Pyramids;
Which hand has drawn this picture of immortality?
Free my heart from the bondage of nature;
The artists hunt and are not hunted.

Thus in Iqbal's view art is not, and ought not to be a mere reproduction of external impressions. The artist's imagination is free and creative and is mystically related


to God, the source of all life and creation. In blessed moments the artistic imagination receives grace and inspiration which becomes the genesis of a great work of art.

'The Spirit Bloweth as it Listeth'

For Iqbal the doctrine of inspiration was not merely a matter of belief but a phenomenon which he himself experienced frequently. His biographers have preserved vivid accounts of the Poet's condition at the times when he felt inspired. Iqbal was a frequent visitor to Sir Ross Masood's home and stayed there for long intervals every year. Some of his finest short poems were composed in Ross Masood's house. Lady Ross Masood reports that whenever Iqbal felt inspired he craved for loneliness and took leave of even his dearest friends and retired into seclusion. 30 His son and biographer, Javid Iqbal, tells us that the poet seemed to pass through agonizing spiritual restlessness in moments of inspiration which would show itself in unusual bodily movements such as moving about, or thrusting his head into his knees or turning on his sides if he were in bed. Peace would come only after he had composed the verses. 31


The author of the Rozgar-i-Faqir has preserved a vivid account of one of his conversations with Iqbal on the subject of inspiration. In answer to the question how the poet would describe the moment of inspiration, Iqbal said:

When the moment comes it is as though I were a fisherman who has cast his net to catch fish. The fish swarm in large numbers to the net so that the fisherman is perplexed which ones to catch and which ones to leave alone.

When asked whether such condition would last long, Iqbal replied:

These moments are not very frequent. Once or twice in a year I find myself inspired and when this happens I go on writing verses spontaneously for a long while. What is wonderful is that when the moment returns after a long interval I find a continuity between the two experiences so that what I had written last time is of a piece with what I compose now.

32 Rozgar-i-Faqir, vol I, p. 38.
33 Ibid., p. 39.
While reading this account we are reminded of the various Romantic statements about inspiration. It reminds us of Shelley, of Keats's belief in the happy moment, and more pointedly of Blake's assertion that he wrote only when the spirits commanded him to write and that when he wrote he saw words flying around him.

Iqbal's position on the subject of inspiration is, however, a good deal complex. Inspiration may be involuntary but its character is ultimately determined by the kind of person who is receiving it although he too cannot see it before having accepted it. Besides this, products of inspiration have a deep impact on society. That is to say, the poet as vates or seer does not only reveal and illuminate but also moves and incites, and this is a belief common to the Romantics and to Iqbal. In his foreword to Muragga-i-Chughtai Iqbal writes:

The spiritual health of a people largely depends on the kind of inspiration which their poets and artists receive. But inspiration is not a matter of choice. It is a gift the character of which cannot be critically judged by the recipient before accepting it. It comes to the individual unsolicited, and only to socialize itself. For this reason the personality that receives and the life-quality of that which is received are
matters of the utmost importance for mankind.
The inspiration of a single decadent if his
art can lure his fellows to his song or
picture, may prove more ruinous to a people
than whole battalions of an Attila or a
Changez.34

Iqbal also believed that the involuntary nature of
inspiration does not nullify the role of consciousness in
art. His views on this point are closer to modern views,
particularly to T.S. Eliot's idea of the artistic process
as a process of incubation which Eliot discusses in the
conclusion of The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism.
The creative process is not a sudden development but a
gradual shaping and ripening of something in the artist's
mind for a long time until it is mature for delivery. At
the moment of expression, however, it seems to the poet
as if he is writing from dictation. As Iqbal writes in
Makhzan (April, 1909):

I do not consciously prepare myself to write
poetry. Generally something seems to persist
in my mind for long and then unintentionally
expresses itself in the form of poetry. Often
I would write a quatrain or a poem all at once
as if they were dictated to me.35

34Muraqqa-i-Chughtai: Paintings by M.A. Rahman Chughtai
(Lahore: Ahsan Brothers, 1928), the work is unpaged.

35Quoted by Masood Hussain Khan in Iqbal Ki Nazari-u-Amali
Shariyat (Srinagar: Iqbal Institute, University of Kashmir,
Like the Romantics Iqbal believed that creative imagination is stirred by strong feeling and that the moment of inspiration is in some significant way related to a state of passion. Feeling or emotion is the principle of integration in art, the source of its vitality and the sole guarantor of its authenticity. The term that Iqbal has chosen to describe 'feeling' or 'passion' in Urdu and Persian is Khun-i-jigar, literally the 'blood of the heart.' This is one of the most recurrent expressions in his poetry and has been presented by him again and again as the basis of the colour, the charm and the lasting interest of all fine arts. In Masjid-i-Jurtubah (The Mosque of Cordova) he writes:

Be it colour, brick and mortar, harp or word and sound, The miracle of art is wrought by the blood of the heart. A drop of heart's blood converts a rock into a heart Heart's blood always lends ecstasy and melody to art.

Kuliyat, p. 387.
It is through the operation of feeling or 'heart's blood' that a work of art emerges as an organic unity. Iqbal's position on organicism is perhaps more akin to Blake's than to Coleridge's. Without using biological language he stresses the importance of the principle of organic unity. His organicism comprehends art as well as language. In fact he views the whole process of articulation as an organic process in which feeling and idea, idea and words, and conception and execution are all one. Feeling tries to express itself through thought and thought is grasped only through words. In the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* Iqbal writes:

In fact it is the nature of feeling to seek expression in thought. It would seem that the two — feeling and idea — are the non-temporal and temporal aspects of the same unit of inner experience. ...

Inarticulate feeling seeks to fulfil its destiny in idea which in its turn, tends to develop out of itself its own visible garment. It is no mere metaphor to say that idea and word both simultaneously emerge out of the womb of feeling, though logical understanding cannot take them but in a temporal order and thus create its own difficulty by regarding them as mutually isolated. There is a sense in which the word is also revealed. 37

37 pp. 21-22.
Iqbal knew from personal experience as an artist that in art there was no dichotomy between conception and execution. Once he was asked by Dr. Lucas, the then principal of the Christian College, Lahore, whether he too believed like a common Muslim that the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad both in letter and spirit. Iqbal replied in the affirmative saying that with him it was not a question of belief but of experience. A verse would come to him as an organic whole, why then should this not be true of the Quran? 38

Forms of Poetry

The rise and growth of an art-form is closely related to its intellectual and socio-political background. The popular art-forms of ancient Greece, for instance, had their roots in the religion and culture of the Greeks. A people who regard the gods as supreme and man as a mere puppet of fate cannot but think of life in dramatic terms and the belief that reality lies not in us but outside of us naturally breeds a mimetic outlook. It was therefore natural that Aristotle should consider tragedy to be the highest kind of poetry and plot, as the imitation of an

38 See Rozgar-i-Faquire, p. 38.
action, to be the soul of tragedy. The post-Renaissance art-forms reflect the humanistic fervour and the spirit of quest and adventure that characterize the movement. Even the existing art-forms had to undergo considerable modifications in order to be responsive to the changed atmosphere. The ranking and popularity of various forms of art in the neo-classical age was determined by its mechanical and pragmatic outlook and imitative-rationalistic aesthetic. Epic and tragedy, both from the point of view of their subject-matter and its effect on the audience, were regarded as the king and queen of poetic forms. Prose, satire, comedy of manners and long poetic essays written in the heroic couplet are the forms for which the age is remembered and all of them are in accord with the rational and mechanistic outlook of the day.

The English Romantic movement of the 19th century marked a shift from the imitative-rationalist aesthetic of the neo-classicists to the expressive view of art. From the expressive point of view the artist and not the external world became the centre of interest. Art was now regarded not as an imitation but the product of creative imagination and expression of the inner feelings of the artist and this became the criterion to evaluate various modes and forms of expression. The marks of this shift are first seen in Blake, A worshipper of unfettered imagination,
he found the conventional modes of expression acting as a
clog upon his creativity. In Jerusalem, Plate 3, he
therefore declared that he was discarding the neo-classical
verse forms as “fettered poetry” and “poetry fettered
Fetters the Human Race.” Wordsworth’s Preface to the
Lyrical Ballad was a manifesto of the new aesthetic. In
place of artificiality and lifeless conventionality, it
laid stress on sincerity and spontaneity and on the natural
expression of feeling. Coleridge laid the philosophical
foundations of the new theory of art through his active/
projective view of human mind, his theory of imagination
and his doctrine of organicism. Shelley, Byron and Keats
all emphasize the role of imagination in art and the
importance of intensity as a criterion of value.

From this point of view the literary kinds and their
ranking undergo a drastic revision. The lyric now becomes
the poetic norm as of all the poetic forms it accords best
with the Romantic view of poetry as the spontaneous overflow
of powerful feeling and art as self-revelation. Both
Coleridge and Mill regard the lyric as the most poetic of all
forms of poetry. The lyric in all its forms — elegy,
sonnet, song, ode etc. — is the purest expression of
feeling, rendered generally in first person ‘I’ which is

39 Jerusalem, Plate 3 in Complete Writings, p. 621.
not the I-representative (as Coleridge phrases it) but stands for the proper person of the author. Naturally the lyric is the most popular art-form with the Romantics and achieves, in their hands an unprecedented freedom, flexibility and intensity.

Lyricism is so predominant in the Romantic age that the narrative poems and dramatic works of the period are also characterized by it so that it generally interferes with their narrative continuity and objectivity. In 'A Long Poem in Wordsworth's Age', A.C. Bradley points out that here "the centre of interest is inward. It is an interest in emotion, thought, will, rather than in scenes, events, actions." The long poems of the Romantics often seem to be strings of lyrics rather than continuous pieces. The voice in these long poems is the first voice, the voice of the author. It is avowedly present in such poems as The Prelude and ChildHarold's Pilgrimage. It is also present in such poems as portray the Romantic hero like Byron's Don Juan. This tendency can also be seen in such works of fiction as Rousseau's Nouvelle Heloise and Goethe's Werther and it also accounts for the popularity of the confessional writings like the Confessions of Rousseau and De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater.

The climax of the 'egotistical sublime' is, however, to be found in Wordsworth. He planned his incomplete masterwork, The Recluse on the analogy of an epic like Paradise Lost. But before he began it, he found himself constrained to review his own mind and record his findings in the fourteen autobiographical books of The Prelude. The Recluse itself, as Wordsworth tells us, was to be a record of "the opinions of a poet living in retirement" incorporated in a poem "of which the first and the third parts ... will consist chiefly of meditations in the author's own person." 41 This is not true, Wordsworth tells us, of his contemplated masterpiece alone but that all his poems whether they are long or short should be regarded as "the components of a Gothic Cathedral in which the poet himself constitutes the principle of unity." 42 The preoccupation of an author with his own self closes on him nearly all possibilities of becoming a dramatic artist. This is why drama fared worst in the Romantic age in spite of manifold theatrical opportunities. The plays written by the Romantic poets bear a deep imprint of their

41 Preface to 'The Excursion' in Poetical Works, p. 754.

42 Ibid., p. 754.
lyrical temper but the subjectivity and freedom that go with this temper preclude them from becoming dramas. Byron’s Manfred and Cain, Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound and Hellen are dramatized poems and lack real dramatic tension and conflict. The predominance of a lyrical temper makes these plays unsuitable for the stage. With very few exceptions, like Shelley’s The Conch, most of the Romantic plays suffer from this defect. Certainly Wordsworth is not remembered for The Borderers, nor is Coleridge remembered for Remorse nor Keats for Otho the Great.

In the true tradition of the Romantic, Iqbal was a lyrical poet both by temperament and inheritance. By inheritance is meant the poetical heritage of the whole Orient in general and Arabic, Persian and Urdu poetry in particular. The oriental temper has generally always been subjective and this subjectivism is reflected in all the art-forms that developed in the East. Ghazal, the most practised poetic form in Persian and Urdu, is essentially the expression of the psychological states of a writer. Age-old tradition has built around it a tight matrix of subjectivism and if it is broken, the ghazal seems to lose its essential nature. By its very nature, the ghazal is so lyrical that one of its derivatives, tagazzul, has now
actually come to mean 'lyricism'.

Lyricism also characterizes the other poetic forms of the Orient whose very nature requires them to be objective and whose success as works of art is proportionate to the degree of objectivity they possess. Mathnavi (a long verse-narrative in heroic couplets) and qasidah (an adulatory poem, a panegyric in verse) where undue lyricism becomes a hindrance rather than a help. Ideally they should be as objective as possible but actually lyricism is predominant in them as in the ghazal. Parts of various qasidahs are separated from the main poems and printed and read as independent ghazals with little or no loss of enjoyment. Firdousi's Shahnamah in Persian and Mir Hasan's Sihr-ul-Daven in Urdu are examples of mathnavis where lyricism is predominant. Besides this many mathnavis are interspersed with ghazals to make good the loss, if any, of lyricism.

This is one of the reasons why the Orient, particularly as far as Arabic, Persian and Urdu literatures are concerned, has no real tradition of drama. Although some prose plays

43 Literally ghazal means to converse with women and to admire their charm and beauty. The term was originally adopted for ghazal because its main theme was, and still continues to be, love.
are now being written under the impact of the West, drama still stays at the periphery of the domain of literature. Imra-ul-qais, Mutanabbi, Hafiz, Sadi, Omar Khayyam, Ghalib and Iqbal are still the prominent representative poets of Arabic, Persian and Urdu and all of them are essentially lyrical poets.

Iqbal found the lyrical form completely in accord with his aesthetic outlook and temperament and did not feel the need of going out of the existing tradition. He used the traditional forms of ghazal, rubai, naat and mathnawi side by side with some new experiments in his Urdu and Persian poetry but nowhere does he seem a nonconformist as far as the question of genres is concerned. Even in the new experiments the traditional metre and the traditional rules of prosody are intact. Those who object to this conventionality ignore the important fact that there was no impelling need for him to go out of the existing forms. His great achievement here lies in the revolutionary change that he brought about in the content and subject-matter of these forms. He changed them from within without interfering with their external framework.

He freed the ghazal from the traditional shackles which had circumscribed its scope to the conventional treatment of beauty and love. Ghalib, when treating a
different subject, i.e., expression of admiration for one of his benefactors, found it like a clog upon his freedom of expression and complained:

بندر هم فرو رحیم
کبود از میهن و فرصت کبودان نلی

The scope of the narrow strait of ghazal is incommensurate with my desire;
My description craves for greater expansion.

Following Chalib Iqbal extended the dimensions of the ghazal by treating in it all kinds of subjects relating to the individual and collective life of man and, at the same time, investing them with such passion and sweetness as not to disturb the lyrical temper of the genre. In rubai (quatrain) he brought about a more significant change by modifying not only its subject-matter but also its metre. The metre of the bahar-i-hafiz which has twenty-four variants, all of which rubai is based on one of the famous holy texts of Islam which bahar-i-hafiz which, greatly its twenty-four variants, is reader highly serious, almost sombre. This new metre

"There is no might and power except that which lies with God."

44  
This grave metre is suited to the contemplative nature of
the conventional rubai which generally treats esoteric
subjects in an epigrammatic style. Iqbal has singled out a supple
and lively metre (mafailun, mafailun, furqulun) for the
rubai in keeping with the diverse subjects that he treats
in it.

Iqbal's na't, unlike that of his great predecessors
in the genre, Hassan bin Thabit, Jami, Sa'di and Amir 'Anai,
is not merely devotional but concentrates on the
revolutionary aspect of the prophet's mission and the
importance of his achievement for humanity while it
remains unsurpassed in the intensity of its devotional
tone.

A large portion of Iqbal's Persian poetry consists
of his mathnavis — Asrar-i-Khudi, Rumuz-i-Bakhudi, Pas
Chi Bayad Kard, Mussafir and the great Javid Namah. For
these poems Iqbal has used the metre of Rumi's famous
mathnavi. Most of these mathnavis are philosophical in
theme dealing with vital issues of human destiny. Javid
Namah cuts across various forms and is a genre by itself.
Its basic technique is the one used in mir'ainamaha, the
technique which Dante used in his Divina Comedia, but it
compasses such a wide and complex diversity of themes
that it is difficult to fit it into the strait-jacket of a
single genre.
What is most remarkable about Iqbal's poetry irrespective of the form that he is using is its subjective dimension and lyrical tone. In the ultimate analysis every poem of his is the reflection of his inner feelings, his hopes and fears and his sense of elation and agony although it is very difficult to disentangle his person from man taken as a species as he is always obsessed with the destiny of mankind. But so passionate and personal is this involvement that it becomes a real poetic experience and a rich source of lyrical poetry. Surely it would have been difficult for Iqbal to understand Eliot's distinction between the man who suffers and the poet who creates. For him, as for Shelley, both are one.

The lyrical strain is predominant even in the dramatic poems of Iqbal, but in contrast to the romantic poets he exhibits a greater measure of objectivity here. These dramatic poems, particularly those written in the dialogue form, are among the best of his achievements. Notable among these poems are Khizr-i-Nah in Jang-i-Dira, 'Jibril-u-Iblis' in Bati-Jibril, Shua-i-Umid in Zarb-i-Kalim, several dialogue-poems in Payam-i-Nasirih such as, 'Tanhai', 'Muhavarah ma Bain Khuda-u-Insan', and 'Zatra-i-Alb' and Iblis Ki Hafta-i-Shura in Ammughan-i-Hijaz. Besides these the whole of Javid Namah is cast in the dramatic mould. In
these poems Iqbal successfully controls his egotistical tendency and lets the various characters assume a measure of individuality which gives them convincing identity. The character of Iblis is drawn with great sympathy in Jibril-u-Iblis, Iblis Ki Maillis-i-Shura and Javid Namah. This is, undoubtedly, partly due to the fact that Iqbal's view of the role of Iblis as an embodiment of evil in the drama of human history was different from the commonly held view but it shows at the same time the capacity of the poet to identify himself momentarily with the character whom he is portraying. Jibril-u-Iblis and Iblis’s Complaint (Nala-i-Iblis) in Javid Namah are masterpieces of lasting value and interest. This is also the case with Nauha-i-Bujahal (The Wailing of Abu Jahl) in Javid Namah, where Abu Jahl, the arch-enemy of prophet Muhammad is presented with utmost sympathy as the guardian of the old system of values. Khizr’s character in Khiz-i-Rah is in keeping with the legendary account of him as enjoying an immortal life and possessing the experience and wisdom of ages.

When the poem was published, Iqbal's friend, Girami, himself a Persian poet of some note, objected to the absence of passion in the speeches of Khizr. Iqbal replied:

Khizr possesses a particular personality. Because of his everlasting life he is the most experienced of men and as such his realism predominates his imagination. In
him we should look for ripeness and maturity
and not for imaginative flights. If his
speech is coloured by imagination he is apt
to fail in discharging the duty of guidance,
particularly when guidance is sought in
political and economic affairs.45

A similar objection had been raised against a part of
Keats's *Endymion* by Leigh Hunt to which Keats replied in
his letter to George and Tom Keats (23-24 January, 1818)
in the following words:

He (Leigh Hunt) says the conversation is
unnatural and too high-flown for the Brother
and Sister. Says it should be simple
forgetting do ye mind, that they are both
overshadowed by a Supernatural Power, and of
force could not speak like Franchesca in the
Rimini.46 He must first prove that Caliban's
poetry is unnatural.47

It must, however, be granted that Iqbal did not possess
the quality of 'negative capability' to the same degree
as Keats had found in Shakespeare, nor did Keats, the
poet, possess it himself to the same extent. In the
ultimate evaluation Iqbal is nearer to the Wordsworthian

46 Hunt's *The Story of Rimini* (1816)

47 *Letters*, p. 98.
"egotistical sublime" than to the tradition of negative capability.

Poetic Diction

The Romantic view of style and diction is based on the most central Romantic doctrines of individualism and the belief in creative imagination. A true and authentic style should reflect the individuality of its author and the creativity of his imagination. Its being individual implies that it is not general and its being creative implies that it is not imitative and conventional but expressive of the peculiar genius of a writer. Such a style has a clearly definable identity of its own which distinguishes it from other styles and modes of expression. It is not worn like a borrowed garment by the thoughts and feelings of the author but is simultaneously born with thought and feeling. In fact the author realizes and grasps his thought through diction and therefore thought and diction constitute an inseparable unity.

The neo-classicists believed in a commonly-agreed-upon style which could be used as a mechanical tool. The mainstay of their theory was Aristotle who, in *Poetics*, recommends a style of poetry which is neither too ordinary nor too unfamiliar. Aristotle does so on the ground that
he was looking at style from a reader's point of view and not from the point of view of the creative writer, but the neo-classicists carried his view to an extreme point and made it the basis of their view of style as prescriptive. Echoing Aristotle Dr. Johnson said that style should be familiar but not coarse and elegant but not ostentatious and recommended Addison as a model for those who wanted to acquire a good English style. Although Dr. Johnson's criticism shows that he is not unaware of the existence of individual traits in an author's style, his main emphasis is on certain defining characteristics of a literary style which a writer should try to attain. The Romantics believe that this view of style is based on a wrong premise as it ignores the essential individuality of every writer which is reflected in his use of language. Buffon's saying, "style is the man" acquires new meaning and signification in the Romantic context as it is fitted into the framework of an organic view of style.

This view of style is the basis of Wordsworth's Preface to Lyrical Ballads whose essence and lasting value consists in its emphasis on the correlation between thought

and diction. There is no common and conventional diction and hence Wordsworth drops "a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of poets."\(^4^9\) Poetry is not mechanical artistry but spontaneous expression of feeling which is naturally figurative but admits of no artificiality. Wordsworth writes:

The reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose.\(^5^0\)

Diction is not the dress of thought but its incarnation. In *Essays Upon Epitaphs* Wordsworth writes:

If words be not an incarnation of the thought, but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift.\(^5^1\)

This significant remark of Wordsworth served as the basis of De Quincey's distinction between style as 'a separable

\(^{4^9}\) *Prose Works*, vol I, p. 133.

\(^{5^0}\) Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1850) in *Prose Works*, vol I, p. 131.

\(^{5^1}\) *Essays upon Epitaphs* III in *Prose Works*, vol II, p. 84.
"ornament" and style as 'incarnation of thought.' In Coleridge's view a truly creative style is so organic that each word of it is irreplacable and untranslatable. In *Biographia Literaria* he tells us that true poetic style is an indivisible unity and not a single word of it can be changed without destroying the harmony of the whole.

Whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense or in association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction....

I was wont boldly to affirm, that it would be scarcely more difficult to push a stone out from the pyramids with the bare hand, than to alter a word or the position of a word, in Milton or Shakespeare (in their most important works at least) without making the author say something else, or something worse than he does say.52

The underlying idea of this view of style is that creative imagination, stirred to action by a powerful feeling, finds expression, naturally and spontaneously, in a language which is inevitable and irreplacable. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge criticize the use of personification of an abstract idea in a state of insensibility. The

examples cited by Coleridge of the secondary or recreative imagination are those of the metaphoric and figurative use of language in a state of passion.

Individualism and creativity distinguish Romantic vocabulary and imagery. Reginald Foakes has rightly called this vocabulary the vocabulary of assertion. The Romantic poetry abounds with value-words representing certain concepts and feelings, such as beauty, truth, liberty, love, sympathy and harmony; "words endowed by religious associations with a special sanctity, such as grace and ministry; and words expressive of the greatest human endeavour and aspiration such as power, might, awful and sublime." Examples of expressive imagery range from an image like 'harp' which serves as the emblem of poetic process throughout Coleridge, or the "correspondent breeze" which occurs as a sign of spiritual activism in Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Byron, to the esoteric imagery of Blake.

One of the functions of Romantic imagery is to tame the chaos with which the poets were faced following the loss of the harmony which the world of their predecessors possessed.

To serve this purpose some of the images are more useful than others. The image of light for instance is very important from this point of view. It is an image of illumination and suits the Romantic concern to express and bring to light what is hidden and dormant. This accounts for the abundance of the sun, the moon, the stars and other illuminating objects in Romantic poetry. The sun and the stars are present as significant symbols throughout Blake's poetry. Wordsworth's poetry is dominated by the imagery of light. "The moon and the stars shine over his head" and "the sunrise is a glorious birth" for him. Better than any commentary on Wordsworth's imagery of light is this beautiful passage from The Prelude which is one of many such passages in the poem:

... I began
To love the sun; a boy I loved the sun,
Not since have loved him, as a pledge
And surety of our earthly life, a light
Which we behold and feel we are alive;
Not for his bounty to so many worlds-
But for this cause, that I had seen him lay
His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
The western mountain touch his setting orb,
In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess
Of happiness, my blood appeared to flow
For its own pleasure, and I breathed with joy.54

54 The Prelude, II, 176-187.
In Coleridge’s poetry, *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, for instance, the moon is present throughout symbolizing imagination. In Keats’s *Hyperion*, the sun-god is the most central figure and in one of his last poems, *Bright Star* he prays for the steadfastness of a ‘star’.

The longer poems of the period are governed by certain structural images, chief among them being those of love, the image of an individual as a rebel and the journey image. The image of love presents the Romantics’ sense of unity of mankind, the image of an individual as a rebel represents their idea of self-assertion and the journey image embodies their idea of self-development.

Some of the poems combine all or some of these images while others are dominated by a particular structural/image. The love image is, for instance, predominant in *The Eve of St. Agnes* while it is an important but not the dominating image in *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and *Ancient Mariner*. The image of rebellion is the central image of Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Revolt of Islam* and Keats’s *Hyperion*.

The journey image dominates *Ancient Mariner* where life is seen as a solitary journey of an individual. This interest in a solitary pilgrim also accounts for the interest of the Romantics in figures like Don Juan and the wandering jew. In a way journey as an image of development is
also the structural principle of *The Prelude*. The journey described in the poem is as complicated and meandering as the journey of life itself. Wordsworth seems to be aware of this. In Book III of the poem he says:

A Traveller I am,
And all my tale is of myself.  

Later in Book XI he calls himself a pilgrim. The journey image operates at several levels in the poem. It describes various journeys of the poet; it deals with life as a journey in time and space; and above all it is, as in *Ancient Mariner*, a journey through death to redemption — metaphorically embodying Wordsworth's loss of faith in the wake of the reign of terror in France and his later restoration.

**The Poetic Style of Iqbal**

Iqbal's poetry is marked by its highly individualistic style. As Coleridge once remarked about some lines from

55 I am indebted to Reginald Foakes' *The Romantic Assertion* (pp. 51-52) in bringing out this aspect of *The Prelude*.

56 *The Prelude*, III, 196-7.

57 l. 392.
Wordsworth’s Prelude that if he met with these lines in the Arabian desert, he would cry out ‘this is Wordsworth’. Iqbal’s poetic style is unmistakably his own. This is in keeping with his cult of the ego which lays great emphasis on individuality and creativity. Right from the beginning of his poetic career, Iqbal was conscious of the importance of the correlation between the creative impulse and the form that is given to it. In the early stages of his life when he had neither developed his philosophy of the ego nor found his true voice in poetry, he declared his dissociation from blind acceptance of tradition. Urdu poetry was then dominated by two conventional styles of poetry known as the ‘Delhi School’ and the ‘Lucknow School.’ In an early poem written during his student days, Iqbal observes:

\[
\text{Iqbal, I am neither concerned with Lucknow nor with Delhi; I am only enamoured of the curve in perfection’s hair.}
\]

That creative individuality breaks the limit of convention and

58
extends, but does not violate, the tradition is clear from the poetic theory and practice of Iqbal. His creative handling of language sounded unfamiliar to the conservative and self-appointed guardians of conventional style and serious objections were raised against it. His critics included Nadz Fatehpuri, a mediocre Urdu prose-writer and Maulana Syed Suleiman Nadvi, the poet's friend and great Muslim divine. Iqbal defended himself on the ground that he was using language as a creative writer to express his meaning as precisely as possible; in fact, for him there was no dichotomy between word and meaning. This was difficult to understand for those who regarded convention and usage as inviolable. Faquir Wahid-ud-din reports about a conversation between Iqbal and Syed Abdullah. Syed Abdullah objected to Iqbal's phrase, mauj-i-qubaa (wave of dust), saying that it was unidiomatic as the speakers and writers of Persian language do not use it. Iqbal calmly replied that he had used it for what he had to say.59 Besides this, Iqbal told his critics that every language, particularly in its formative stage, was influenced by various temporal and spatial factors and no particular usage can be regarded as valid for all times.60

59 See Rozgar-i-Faquir, vol 1, p. 171.

60 Makhzan (October, 1902) quoted in Iqbal ki Nazri-umali Sharifat, pp. 24-25.
In keeping with his idea of the creative use of language as organic, and the elastic and assimilative character of a developing language, Iqbal largely extended the dimensions of the Urdu and Persian languages. This extension consists of new usages and coinages as well as an unprecedented enhancement in the connotative signification of various words and phrases already in use. Khudi, Sabab, nazir, Isha, Khirad, asd, hur, mumin, farang, and faqir are examples of words which had been in use before, but Iqbal has broken the limits which confined their scope and invested them with wider connotations and subtler associations. This aspect of Iqbal’s creative genius is at its best in the words that he has borrowed from the Quran and the Sunnah and from other branches of the literature of Islam. Words like iman, kufir, ilah, bashir, nazir, masjid, taubid, khilafah, taqdir, shahadah and ‘Islam’ itself, acquire new and wider meanings in his usage — meanings which are intimately related to his peculiar world-view.

One of the most valuable contributions of Iqbal to Urdu and Persian vocabulary is a wealth of words expressing intellectual content. It is obvious to any perceptive reader of the literatures of these languages that they abound in vocabulary which expresses emotional content but are comparatively deficient in words intended mainly for the expression of intellectual content. Although Iqbal’s poetry
is fundamentally rooted in an imaginative and emotional infrastructure, it is controlled and disciplined by a strong intellectual current. Like Coleridge, Iqbal believes that great poetry is a result of the combination of head and heart. His poem, *Munza Ghalib* refers to the presence of this great quality in Ghalib. Addressing Ghalib, he says:

\[
\text{It is not possible to equal the subtlety and felicity of your expression}
\]

\[
\text{Unless imagination is accompanied by great thought.}
\]

Iqbal's training as a philosopher also enabled him to strengthen the intellectual side of the vocabulary of Urdu and Persian.

One important aspect of Iqbal's vocabulary is that it is characterised by dynamism, power and hectic movement. He exhibits a special interest in words derived from such verbal nouns as describe life, vivacity, combat, and challenge, such as the following:

\[
\text{کشتین - ارزین - طپین - دمپن - رپمین - بپمین}
\]

curving or twisting, writhing, sprouting and infusing, dancing, restlessness, cutting and breaking, and trembling or quivering.

This is also the case with his imagery or symbolism which is always passionate and kinetic. Iqbal derives his imagery and symbolism from three principal sources: history, scripture and nature. He was a keen and serious student of history and believed in a concept of time which looked on history as a continuity, which we compartmentalize for our convenience into past, present and future. In reality the present carries the past with it into the future and the three are one. Great historical figures are not for Iqbal dead and gone; they are not spent forces. They represent truths which are imperishable and have, therefore, a lasting and flowing symbolic value for us. Ibrahim and Nimrod, Moses and Pharaoh, Mustafa and Bulahb and Husain and Yazid are potent symbols of good and evil whose conflict is eternal. Sidiq, Farooq, Haider (karan), Buzar and Salman stand for heroic virtues like truthfulness, fearlessness, bravery and steadfastness, independence and selflessness. Similarly personages like Rumi and Sanai stand for the life of the spirit and inward growth as against men like Razi and Farabi who stand for mere reason and appearance.

In making scripture — the Quran and its authentic exegesis, the Sunnah — as a principal source of his imagery
and symbolism, Iqbal is in the tradition of Blake most of whose imagery is drawn from the Bible. Like Blake again, Iqbal has assimilated scriptural imagery to his own system. Jibril, Israfil, Kalim, Khalil, Iblis, Sinai, Yadi-baidha, the tree of Tur (the Burning Bush), la takhaf, la tahzan, qum bi izn-illah, Miraj, Hijrah, an-Najm and the various names and attributes of God like Gaffar, Qahar, ahsan-ul-khaliquin, and ashkam-ul-hakimin are some of the salient examples of symbolic names, expressions and allusions derived from the Quran and the Sunnah. All of them, besides possessing rich historical and scriptural associations, assume still wider symbolic meaning in Iqbal.

Iqbal’s nature imagery consists of two sets of images — those which were already in use and which he changed considerably in order to assimilate them to his own system, and those which are his original contribution to Urdu and Persian poetry. Images like the reed, the rose and the bulbul, and the moth and the candle, were traditionally used in Urdu and Persian poetry. They had become fixed in their signification and rarely did a poet use any of them in an original and unconventional way. In traditional poetry the reed invariably weeps over its separation from the reed-bed; the rose and the bulbul stand for beauty and love respectively and so do the candle and the moth. Iqbal changed the connotation of these images to suit his creative purpose.
In his poetry the reed does not long to go back to the reed-bed but enjoys its separation as the very basis of its identity. The rose is not a mere symbol of feminine beauty, ephemeral in character, but represents a whole complex of meanings — will to self-expression, open-hearted acceptance of life and carving out one's path with one's own blood. The bulbul is not a hackneyed lover but a singer who lends colour to the garden, a mature observer of the beauties of spring as well as the ravages of autumn, a weak creature when compared to the eagle and, above all, the symbol of rejuvenating poetry. The moth is not the object of unqualified admiration but is contrasted with the glow-worm who does not hanker after an external light like the moth but generates light from its own inner resources. Similarly the candle merely burns but does not enjoy the pain of burning because unlike man it has no consciousness. 62

The eagle, the tulip and the glow-worm are symbols which constitute Iqbal's original contribution to Persian

62

The complexity of the symbolisms of 'rose', 'bulbul', 'moth' and 'candle' is demonstrated, for instance, in the following poems: Gul-i-Rangeen (The Colourful Rose), Gul-i-Pijmurdah (The Faded Rose), Gul-i-Nakhusteen (The Earliest Rose), Shama-e-Parindah (The Candle and the Bird) and Roche sur Sham (The Child and the Candle).
and Urdu poetry. The eagle is an embodiment of most of the virtues which, from the point of view of Iqbal's cult of the ego, are heroic. Its pure and independent life, its power and energy, self-respect and self-confidence, and, above all, its preference of a hard life to a life of ease, are qualities which Iqbal would like his ideal man to possess.

The tulip is a complex symbol. Like the eagle it is associated with deserts and mountains. It symbolises loneliness, a sense of alienation, a burning passion for self-knowledge and an agonizing inquisitiveness. Because of this inner anguish it carries a scar on its bosom. The poet uses it sometimes to describe his own condition and sometimes the condition of mankind in general.

The glow-worm, besides being a favourite image of light with Iqbal, is a sign of independence and self-reliance. It accepts with fortitude the challenge of darkness and seeks to illuminate the atmosphere as far as it can.

A significant contribution of Iqbal to Persian and Urdu poetry.

While the symbolisms of the eagle, the tulip and the glow-worm are recurrent in Iqbal's poetry, the following poems derive their titles from the three symbols: Shaheen (The Eagle), Shaheen-u-Kahfi (The Eagle and the Fish), Lala-i-Sahra (The Tulip of the Desert), Lalah (The Tulip), Jugnu (The Glow-worm), Parindah aur Jugnu (The Bird and the Glow-worm) and Kirmak-i-Shabtab (The Night-illumining Form).
poetry is his peculiar use of the imagery of light and water. He painfully realized the blinding and soul-extinguishing effects of modern materialism and aspired for a radical change which would lift modern man out of dust and open on him vistas of infinite spiritual evolution. He has, therefore, a special interest in images of illumination and ceaseless movement. The most potent images of light in Iqbal are the sun, the moon, the star and the candle. Among his earliest poems is a free rendering of the Vedic hymn to the sun, Gayatri, in which the sun is presented as a sign of spiritual illumination. This is also the theme of his 'Apostrophe to the World-Illuming Sun' in one of his last Persian poems, Mathnavi Pas Chi Rayad Kard. Some of the most powerful passages of Iqbal's poetry are those which describe the rising and the setting of the sun. The moon, the star and the candle are not only recurrent images in his poetry but also serve as titles of some of his poems.

In his water imagery Iqbal concentrates on images of moving water — fast-flowing rivers, streamlets rolling down the mountains, the dew falling steadily in small drops and filling the cups of flowers, and the wave tossing to and fro and struggling to maintain its identity in turbulent waters.

Iqbal's longest, and in a way greatest, poem is Javid Namah. Like most of the Romantic long poems it has the
journay image as the main principle of its structure. The journey described in Javid Nanah is a sublime journey, it is a pilgrimage into the high heavens like the one described in Dante's *Divina Comedia*. Iqbal undertakes the journey in the guidance of his master, Rumi. The pilgrimage enables him to meet the great makers of human history — thinkers, poets, legislators and revolutionary leaders. The pilgrimage is a quest pursued in the tradition of the romantic poetry, for understanding the forces that shape the universe and determine human destiny. Like Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley, Iqbal also probes into the history of the rise and fall of nations, the mystery of life and death and the problem of self-discovery. In this process he tries to come to grips with the Ultimate Reality itself. It is a sort of poetic ascension (miraj), a quest for truths which transcend the bounds of time and space. A poet of lesser imagination than Iqbal's might have faltered under the burden of such a stupendous subject, but Iqbal is not consumed by the journey, no, not even by the ravishing voice of the Absolute Beauty ('nida-i-jamal). He comes back like the Romantic seer and sage, with a renewed zest and enthusiasm to work for the amelioration of mankind. Javid Nanah fittingly ends on a prophetic note, with a passionate call to the new generation to reconstruct the world anew on the basis of a reconciliation of spirit and matter.