CHAPTER: I

The Theory of Influence

Before we discuss the poetic influence of T.S.Eliot on A.J.M.Smith, one of the leaders of Canadian poetic modernism and who has been described by W.H.New, as 'The Eliot of Canada' (12), it is a precondition to examine how the 'theory of influence' has been promulgated by Harold Bloom in his celebrated work The Anxiety of Influence (1973).

While referring to 'Presupposition and Intertextuality' in his The Pursuit of Signs, Jonathan Culler observes that:

One critic who has unhesitatingly taken this road, who has a relationship between a poet and his major predecessor, is Harold Bloom. (118)

He further quotes the following to comment on the intertextual nature of text and meaning:

Few notions are more difficult to dispel than the 'commonsensical' one that a poetic text is self-contained that it has an ascertainable meaning or meaning without reference to other poetic texts... unfortunately, poems are not things but only words, and so on into the densely over populated world of literary language. Any poem is an inter poem, and any reading of a poem is an inter-reading. (118)

Culler is of the opinion that Bloom's theory looks like an account of intertextuality and presupposition. He further says that:
Bloom's work is not to be dismissed: on the contrary, he has done much to rejuvigate interpretive criticism, which had lost its sense of purpose as the moderate humanism of the New criticism came to seem dated... the main tradition of western poetry since the Renaissance 'is a history of anxiety and self-saving-caricature, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisions without which modern poetry as such could not exit'.

(121)

In Culler's formulation a text is an intertextual construct. His emphasis is on signification and meaning. However, Harold Bloom's theory of influence which he expounded in his important work *The Anxiety of Influence* connotes several things. Basically, 'the anxiety of influence', consists in a direct 'borrowing' or assimilation of the materials and features found in earlier writers. Bloom's own view is that in the composition of any poem influence inescapably involves a drastic change of the work of a predecessor. Bloom uses this concept of influence to deal with the reading as well as writing of poetry.

In Harold Bloom's theory, a poet is motivated to compose when his imagination is seized upon by a poem or poems of a precursor or a father poet. The belated poet's attitudes to his precursor are ambivalent; that is they are compounded not only of admiration but also of hate. The belated poet unconsciously safeguards the sense of his own autonomy and priority by rereading a parent-poem defensively, in such a way as to distort it beyond his own conscious recognition.

Harold Bloom has presented his own theory of reading and writing poetry in his highly influential critical work *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). The book offers a
theory of poetry by way of a description of poetic influence, or the story of intra-
poetic relationships. Bloom points out that the aims of this theory are corrective. He
says: “to deidealize our accepted accounts of how one poet helps to form
another”. Another aim is “to try to provide a poetics that will foster a more adequate
practical criticism”. (5)

While commenting on Oscar Wilde’s failure as a poet as he could not
overcome his anxiety of influence, Bloom considers Wilde’s idea of influence. As
quoted by Bloom in his *Anxiety of Influence*:

Influence is simply transference of personality, a mode of giving away
what is most precious to one’s self, and its exercise produces a sense,
and, it may be, a reality of loss. Every disciple takes away something
from his master. (6)

For Wilde this is the anxiety of influence. Bloom is of the opinion that poetic
influence makes poets more original though not necessarily better. The profundities of
poetic influence cannot be reduced to source study, to the history of ideas, to the
patterning of images. Poetic influence or poetic misprison is necessarily to the study
of the life-cycle of the poet-as-poet. In this connection in a different context the well-
known critic Walter Jackson Bate observes in his *The Burden of the Past and the
English Poet* as cited by Bloom in his *Anxiety of Influence*:

The modern poet is the inheritor of a melancholy engendered in the
mind of the Enlightenment by its skepticism of its own double heritage
of imaginative wealth, from the ancients and from the Renaissance
masters. (8)
But Harold Bloom has neglected the area what Walter Jackson Bate has explored with great skill, in order to center upon intra-poetic relationship as parallels of family romance.

Harold Bloom acknowledges that Nietzsche and Fread are the prime influences upon his theory of influence. Both of them have underestimated poets and poetry. They yielded more power to phantasmagoria than it truly possesses. They also despite their moral realism over-idealized the imagination.

The main purpose of *The Anxiety of Influence* is to present one reader’s critical vision in the context both of the criticism and poetry of Bloom’s own generation and in the context of his own anxieties of influence. As the words ‘anxiety’ and ‘influence’ are going to be the terms of reference in the discussion of Bloom’s theory of anxiety of influence, these terms need to be clarified. The word ‘influence’ is derived from the Latin word ‘influxus’ from ‘influere’ which means ‘the power of producing an effect, the effect of power exerted; something having such a power. In Harold Bloom’s concept the word ‘influence’ had received the sense of “having power over another”. Its prime meaning is of an emanation or force coming in upon mankind from the stars. As first used:

...to be influenced meant to receive an ethereal fluid flowing in upon one from the stars, a fluid that affected one’s character and destiny, and that altered all sublunary things. A power-divine and moral-later simply a secret power-exercised itself, in defiance of all that had seemed voluntary in one. In our sense-that of poetic influence-the word is very late. In English it is not one of Dryden’s critical terms, and is
never used in our sense by Pope. Johnson in 1755 defines influence being either astral or moral, saying of the latter that it is “Ascendant power; power of directing or modifying, but the instances he cites are religious or personal, and not literary. (26-27)

In Bloom’s formulation poetic influence is not unidirectional but multi-dimensional. Bloom examines what influence means to other important writers. For Malraux:

Every young man’s heart is a graveyard in which are inscribed the names of a thousand dead artists but whose only actual denizens are a few mighty, often antagonistic ghosts. (26)

He further opines; The poet is haunted by a voice with which words must be harmonized.

Soren Kierkegaard opines that, ‘He who is willing to work gives birth to his own father.

‘Ben Jonson sees influence as health of imitation, he says, he means:

to be able to convert the substance or riches of another poet to his own use. To make choice of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him till he grow very he, or so like him as the copy may be mistaken for the original. (27)

For Ben Jonson art is hard work. Bloom further says that according to T.S. Eliot influence means: “The good poet steals, while the poor poet betrays an influence, borrows a voice?” (31)

Lichtenberg, who is one of the sages of poetic influence, says:
To do just the opposite is also a form of imitation, and the definition of imitation ought by rights to include both. (31)

He implies that poetic influence is itself an Oxymoron. Poetic influence is a part of the larger phenomenon of intellectual revisionism. And revisionism has changed its nature in our time. Poetic influence is a disease of self-consciousness. One poet influences another, or more precisely that one poet’s poems influence the poems of other. Bloom arrives at his argument’s central principle, which is not more true for its outrageous, but merely true enough:

Poetic Influence—when it involves two strong, authentic poets, -always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an art of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist. (30).

W.B. Yeats rightly considers Shelley’s “A Defence of Poetry” the most profound discourse upon poetry in the language. He also observes the prophetic voice trumpets freedom:

Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present. (40)

Thus, the study of poetic influence is a necessary branch of pataphysics.

The word ‘anxiety’ is derived from the Latin word the ‘anxius’, which means a state of being anxious; a state of chronic apprehension as a symptom of mental
disorder. Whereas Freud, in defining anxiety, speaks of “angst vor etwas”. Anxiety before something is clearly a mode of expectation like desire. We can say that anxiety and desire are the antinomies of the ephebe or beginning poet. The anxiety of influence is an anxiety in expectation of being flooded. Freud reminds us that:

Anxiety is something felt, but it is a state of unpleasure different from sorrow, grief, and mere mental tension. Anxiety, he says, is unpleasure accompanied by efferent or discharge phenomena among definite pathways. These discharge phenomena relieve the “increase of excitation” that underlies anxiety. (57)

He further says:

When a poet experiences incarnation Qua poet, he experiences anxiety necessarily towards any danger that might end him as a poet. The anxiety of Influence is so terrible because it is both a kind of separation anxiety and beginning of a compulsion of neurosis, or fear of death that is a personified superego. (58)

Poems may be viewed as motor discharge in response to the excitation increase of influence anxiety. Anxiety of influence is strongest where poetry is most lyrical, most subjective, and stemming directly from the personality.

Harold Bloom identifies six processes, which operate in reading a precursor. He calls these processes as “revisionary ratios” and he defines them mainly on the model of Freud’s defense mechanisms. In Bloom’s view the revisionary ratios are the categories through which all of us necessarily read our precursors. His conclusion is that we can never know “the poem-in-itself”, all interpretation is “a necessary
misprision”, and all reading is therefore “misprision-or-misreading”. A weak misreading is an attempt to get at what a text really means. A strong misreading is one in which an individual reader's defense mechanisms are unconsciously licensed to recast in an innovative fashion the text that the reader undertakes to interpret.

It is necessary to have a clear understanding of Bloom's processes of influence which he calls revisionary ratios before we discuss his theory of influence in the poetry of T.S. Eliot and A.J.M. Smith.

In Bloom’s formulation anxiety is both source and strength of significant writing. Bloom observes, influence ‘always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative corrections that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation’. Bloom gives a list of strategies of influence; Clinamen, Tessera, Kenosis, Daemonization, Askesis, Apophrades which provide insights into the subtle differences of influence. A discussion of these may be useful in the analysis of the poems of T.S. Eliot and A.J.M. Smith in the forthcoming chapters of the thesis.

(1) Clinamen or POETIC MISPRISON

According to Harold Bloom Clinamen is poetic misreading or misprision proper. Harold Bloom has taken this word from Lucretius, Roman philosophical poet, where it means a “Swerve” of the atoms so as to make change possible in the universe. A poet swerves away from his precursor by so reading to it, This implies that the precursor poem went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved precisely in the direction that the new poem moves. The poet uses Clinamen as a corrective movement in his own poem.
In the beginning of the first part of Clinamen, Harold Bloom points out some of the observations made by important poets and critics.

Shelley speculates that ‘poets of all ages contributed to one great poem perpetually in progress’. Jorge Louis Borges remarks that ‘poets create their precursors’. T.S. Eliot insists if the dead poets constituted their successors’ particular advance in knowledge, that knowledge is still their successors’ creation, made by the living for the needs of the living. Noam Chomsky remarks that when one speaks a language, one knows a great deal that was never learned. The effort of criticism is to teach a language, for what is never learned. Bloom derives from Shelley’s remark that every language is the relic of an abandoned cyclic poem. Harold Bloom means that criticism does not teach a language of criticism but a language of influence, of the dialectic that governs the relation between poets as poets. He further observes that:

The poet in every reader does not experience the same disjunction from what he reads that the critic in every reader necessarily feels. What gives pleasure to the critic in a reader may give anxiety to the poet in him, an anxiety we have learned, as readers, to neglect, to our own loss and peril. This anxiety, this mode of melancholy, is the anxiety of influence, the dark and daemonic ground upon which we now enter.

(25)

The Clinamen or swerve is necessarily the central working concept of the theory of poetic influence. It divides each poet from his poetic father. We must understand that the Clinamen stems away from a pataphysical sense of the arbitrary.
Contemplating on the Clinamen of Lucretius, we can see the final irony of poetic influence. This Clinamen between the strong poet and the poetic father is made by the whole being of the later poet. The student of poetic influence is compelled to be an impure pataphysician; he must understand that the clinamen always must be considered as though it were simultaneously intentional and involuntary. In this context Blake’s view seems to be relevant and he says:

Poetic influence is the passing of individuals through states but the passing is done ill when it is not swerving. The strong poet indeed says: “I seem to have stopped falling; now I am fallen, consequently, I lie here in Hell”, but he is thinking as he says this “As I fell, I swerved, consequently I lie, here in a Hell improved by my own making. (45)

(2) Tessera

As Harold Bloom explicates is his The Anxiety of Influence, ‘Tessera’ is word taken from the ancient mystery cults where it means a token of recognition, the fragment say of a small pot which with the other fragment would reconstitute the vessel. Harold Bloom has taken the word ‘Tessera’ from the psychologist Jacques Lacan. Bloom has used the word antithetical in its rhetorical meaning. A poet antithetically completes his precursor as though the precursor had failed to go far enough by so reading the parent poem as to retain its terms.

Bloom uses the term ‘antithetical’ in its rhetorical meaning; the juxtaposition of controlling ideas in balanced or parallel structures, phrases, words. Yet he used the
term to describe a kind of man, a quester who seeks his own opposite. Freud used it to account for the opposed meanings of primal word.

In _tessera_, the later poet provides what his imagination tells him would complete the truncated precursor poem and poet, a completion that is as much misprison as a revisionary swerve is. Bloom claims Jacques Lacan’s own reversionary relationship to Freud might be given as an instance of _tessera_. As cited in Bloom’s Anxiety of Influence Lacan says: “This metaphor is sufficient to remind us that the word, even when almost completely worn out retains its value as a _tessera_.” (67)

He says that the idea of _tessera_ is a token of recognition. Lacan’s translator Anthony Wilden says that:

allusion is to the function of the tessera was employed in the early mystery religions where fitting again the two halves of a broken piece of pottery was used as means of recognition by the initiates. (67)

In this sense of a completing link, the word _tessera_ represents any later poet’s attempt to persuade himself that the preceorsor’s word would be worn out if not redeemed as a newly fulfilled and enlarged word of the ephebe.

For instance Stevens abounds in _tessera_, for antithetical completion is his central relation to his American Romantic precursors. At the close of _The Sleepers_ in its final version, Whitman identifies night and the mother:

I too pass from the night
I stay a while away o night, but I return to you again
And love you.

Why should I be afraid to trust myself to you?
I am not afraid, I have been well brought forward by you,

I love the rich running day, but I do not desert her in

Whom I lay so long,

I know not how I came of you and I know not where I go

With you, but I know I came well and shall go well.

I will stop only a time with the night, and rise betimes,

I will duly pass the day O my mother, and duly return

To you.(67-68)

Stevens antithetically completes Whitman by “The Owl in the Sacrophagus”,
which can best be read as a large tessera in relation to The Sleepers.

Harold Bloom also gives the contrasting ideas between British poet and the
American poets. Generally the British poets swerve from their precursors, while
American poets work hard rather to complete their precursor or fathers. The British
are more genuinely revisionists of one another but Americans tend to see their fathers
as not having dead enough.

Harold Bloom opines The study of poetic influence as anxiety and saving
misprison should help to free us from these absurd myth of literary pseudo history.

(3) Kenosis

According to Harold Bloom, Kenosis is a breaking-device which is similar to
the defense mechanisms. When our psyches employ against repetition compulsions
then we can consider Kenosis as a movement towards discontintinecity with the
precursor. Harold Bloom has taken the word ‘Kenosis’ from St. Paul, where it means
the humbling or emptying out of Jesus by himself, when he accepts reduction from
divine to human status. The later poet, apparently emptying himself of his own
afflatus, his imaginative Godhood, seems to humble himself as though however
ceasing to be a poet. This ebbing is performed in the case of a precursor that means he
also empties out. But the later poem of deflation is not as absolute as it seems. Then
the later poet may discontinue from the precursor.

Harold Bloom adds that *Kenosis* or “emptying” at once an “undoing” and an
“isolating” movement of the imagination. He has taken the word *Kenosis* from St.
Paul’s account of Christ “humbling himself from God to man. In strong poets the
Kenosis is a reversionary act in which an emptying or ebbing takes place in relation to
the precursor. This emptying is a liberating discontinuity, and makes possible a kind
of poem that a simple repetition of the precursor’s afflatus or godhood could not
allow.

According to Freud, The daemonic in oneself yields to a “repetition
compulsion”, overruling the pleasure principle. Every emotional effect, whatever its
quality, is transformed by repression into morbid anxiety. Among cases of anxiety he
finds the class of uncanny, in which the anxiety can be shown to come from
something repressed which recurs.

In general the critics are of the opinion that if a poet lives with continuity he
cannot be a poet. Because poets need change often. But only the ideal truly common
reader loves discontinuity, and such a reader still waits to be born. Most of us call
poetry is for discontinuity as it gives enlightenment. Repetition belongs to the watery
shore and error come only to those who go beyond discontinuity.
The strong poets who enter into the contest of wrestling with dead are few who attain the poetry of discontinuity (Hardy, Yeats, Stevens) in which a poem of the air is achieved. Bloom opines that:

Repetition as the recurrence of images from our own past, obsessive images against which our present affections vainly struggle, is one of the prime antagonists that psychoanalysis courageously engaged. (80)

According to Freud:

Repetitions was primarily a mode of compulsion, and reduced to the death instinct by way of inertia, regression, entropy. (80)

Kierkegaard says that:

Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has been, is repeated backwards whereas repetition properly so called is recollected forwards. Therefore repetition, if it is possible, makes a man happy, whereas re collection makes him unhappy—provided he gives himself time to live and does not at once, in the very moment of birth, try to find a pretext for stealing out of life, alleging, for example, that he has forgotten something. (82)

The strong poets survive because they live the discontinuity of an “undoing” and an “isolating” repetition. But he would cease to be a poet unless he kept living the continuity of “recollecting forwards”, of breaking forth into a freshening that yet respects his precursors’ achievements.
When we consider certain poets, like Dante, Chaucer, even Spenser it is read that they can make their own recantation into poetry. But Milton, Goethe, Hugo recant their precursors’ errors, and some poets like William Blake, Wordsworth, Baudelaire, Yeats, Stevens, every Kenosis voids a precursor’s powers. In the poetic reversionary sense, Kenosis appears to be an act of self-abnegation, Yet it tends to make the fathers pay for their own sins and perhaps for those of the sons also. Bloom arrives at the pragmatic formula:

Where the precursor was, there the ephebe shall be, but by the discontinuous mode of emptying the precursor of his divinity, while appearing to empty himself of his own. (91)

However, plangent or even despairing the poem of Kenosis St. Paul found a pattern that no poet whatever could bear to emulate as poet. We can conclude that every poet is a being caught up in a dialectical relationship, transference, repetition, error, communication with another poet or poets.

Against this Kenosis, one can set a characteristic daemonic parody of it which is the poetic Kenosis proper. It is not so much humbling of self as of all precursors, and necessarily a defiance unto death. Blake cries out to Tirzah:

Whate’er is Born of Mortal Birth
Must be consumed with the Earth
To rise from Generation free;

Then what have I to do with thee? (92)

Harold Bloom’s concept ‘Kenosis’ refers to breaking away or ‘discontinuity’ from the tradition or from the precursors. This is very much evident in the poetry of
T.S. Eliot who ‘broke away’ or discontinued from the nineteenth century precursors or even beyond 19th century poets going back to Geoffrey Chaucer. The similar kind of ‘breaking away’ or ‘discontinuity’ is also evident in the poetry of A.J.M. Smith in the sense that he rejected the literary tradition of the confederation poets which will be discussed in the later chapters of the thesis. As pointed out by Bloom ‘the later poems of deflation is not as absolute as it seems’.

For Bloom anxiety of influence is a variety of the uncanny. Bloom is of the opinion that since the enlightenment there is a quest for discontinuity. According to Bloom Hardy, Yeats and Stevens attained the poetry of discontinuity. The actual problem for the latecomer is repetition but in the latecomer this repetition is dialectically raised to re-creation leading him not to find himself only a replica or a copy of his predecessor.

Bloom points out that:

To swerve (Anglo-Saxon swearfan) has a root meaning of “to wipe off, file down, or polish”, and, in usage, “to deviate, to leave the straight line, to turn aside (from law, duty, custom). (85).

He further says:

Discontinuity, for poets, is found not so much in spots of time as in moments of space, where repetition is voided, as though the economics of pleasure had no relation to the release of tension but only to our being lost in mind. (86)
Kenosis is ‘undoing’, emptying or isolating movement of the imagination. In strong poets, the kenosis is a revisionary act in which an “emptying” or “ebbing” takes place in relation to the precursor.

(4) Daemonization or the counter sublime

According to Harold Bloom, this aspect of influence is, “Daemonization or a movement towards a personalized counter-sublime, in reaction to the precursor’s sublime”. (15) Bloom has taken this unusual term ‘Daemonization’ from the later theory of Plato or ‘neo-Platonic usage’. It is a middle state between god and human. It means an extraordinary power of talent, inheritance from the precursors to the later poets by assuming the special spirit. So, generally later poet always tries to show the better performance over the poet precursors by assuming the extraordinary spirit. That is why this aspect is known as an individuating movement to personalized counter-sublime.

It is interesting to know what Bloom’s overreaction of the meaning of Daemonization:

Daemonization, as a revisionary ratio, is a self-crippling act intended to purchase knowledge by a playing at the loss of power but more frequently resulting in a true loss of the powers of making. (109)

By that we understand that Daemonization is a revisionary ratio in relation to the precursor poets. However, Bloom speaking about the poetry opines that poetry does not rise in response to the time but it rises in response to the precursor’s poems.
That means there is a revisionary ratio of daemonization which is superior to the precursors.

Harold Bloom further observes that “The power which makes a man a poet is daemonic”. (100) It is some kind of power or intelligence more than the human. These daemons are like influences moving from higher to the lower. But, according to Bloom, the strong poet never possessed by a daemon. When he grows strong he becomes a daemon, unless and until he weakens again. With reference to Daemonization, Angues Fletcher observes that

Turning against the precursor’s sublime, the newly strong poet undergoes daemonization, a Counter Sublime whole function suggests the precursor’s relative weakness when ephebe is daemonized, his precursor necessarily is humanized and a new Atlantic floods outward from the new poet’s transformed being. (100)

It is interesting to note that “Daemonization or the counter-sublime is a war between pride and pride, and momentarily the power of newness wins. For any society, as the change is law of nature, always seeks newness. That is the reason why the aspect is known as revisionary ratio. For that Harold Bloom gives the example of Shelley and Wordsworth. Here Shelley became a strong poet against Wordsworth by having a “new kind of questing flight”. Shelley struggled very hard by identifying his own illuminating power in writing poems. At the time of writing the “Intimation Ode” as his Hymn to Intellectual Beauty Shelley underwent a daemonization or the counter-sublime. That type of anxiety made him to write like that. That means every daemonization attempts to enlarge the power of the precursor.
By this we can understand that Daemonization commences a revisionary ratio of de-individuating the earlier poet by sacrificing themselves to accumulate the extraordinary poetic talent. That means if somebody wants to daemonize to become a poet he has to reach the antecedent state of psychic organization with passion or different spirit which makes him to write poems.

Harold Bloom’s concept Daemonization the counter-sublime refers to the individuating movement from the tradition or from the precursor to the modern. This aspect is very much evident in the poetry of T.S. Eliot who became a counter sublime to the Romantic poets or his precursors. The similar kind of “Daemonization” or “Counter-Sublime” is evident in the poetry of A.J.M. Smith. Smith becomes daemonic against the Pre-Confederation or the confederation poets’ tradition which will be discussed in the later chapters of the thesis.

(5)  *Askesis or Purgation and Solipsism*

This aspect of influence according to Harold Bloom is “Askesis or a movement of self-purgation which intends the attainment of a state of solitude”. It is a practice of disciplining one self in writing poetry. Harold Bloom has taken the term “Askesis” from “the practice of Pre-Socratic shamans like Empedocles”. In this aspect of influence the poet curtails himself and he yields up his own human and imaginative power in order to become a strong poet by separating from their senior poets or precursors. By that the poet makes himself to attain a state of solitude in creating a poem, which undergoes an *askesis*. 
Bloom observes that ‘poetic sublimation is an *askesis*’, a way of purgation intending a state of solitude as its proximate goal.(115-116) In this aspect the strong poet turns his energy upon himself by assuming daemonic power and achieves his success in fighting with strong dead poets. However, Freud observes that sublimation can provide a kind of thinking and liberates from its own sexual past. It can also modify an instinctive impulse without making any destruction. In his book, the *Ego and the Id.*

Bloom points out the Freud speculation as:

> Sublimation was closely related to identification, an identification itself reliant upon distortion of aim or object, which may go so far as transformation into the opposite. If we convert this speculation into the context of our typology of evasions, then sublimation becomes a form of askesis, a self-curtailment which seeks transformation at the expense of narrowing the creative circumference of precursor and epheke alike. The final product of the process of poetic *askesis* is the formation of an imaginative equivalent of the superego, a fully developed poetic will.

(119) However, poetic *askesis* begins at height of counter sublime, It can be acquired by involuntary action at his own daemonic expanding energy. Without attaining the purification from all evils or askesis even the strong poet becomes weak poet. Because askesis is a successful defense against the anxiety of influence. It shows a new kind of reduction in the poetic self. It is most generally expressed as a purgatorial blinding or at least a veiling.
Bloom suggests in his purgatorial askesis the strong poet knows only himself and he further says that:

For *Clinamen* and *Tessera* strive to correct or complete the dead. Kenosis and daemonization work to repress memory of the dead, but askesis is the contest proper, the match-to-the death with the dead.

(122)

Askesis being a revisionary ratio, is in the strong poets like William Wordsworth, Keats, Browning, Whitman, Yeats and Stevens. It concludes in the border of solipsism. Among all the above strong poets, Keatsian askesis is more drastic. In Keats purgation become wholly explicit.

Bloom considers Freud’s notion of sublimation is quantititative. As a revisionary ratio, poetic askesis is also quantititative, for the purgatory of poets is rarely a very populated place. In strong American poets Askesis emphasizes the goal of the process, self-sustaining solitude, rather than the process itself.

Bloom observes that Stevenson, who had a “passion for ‘yes’ resisted his own rigorous sublimation. The primary passion in him is the orphic aspiration of influence malformed this passion. Thought, Steven’s poetry the purgation by solitude reaches after amplitude even in Emerson.

Freud concludes this aspect of influence by revising himself that:

It was anxiety that produced repression and not repression that produced anxiety; a realization exemplified by Steven’s poetry (135)

Stevens demonstrated that ‘the strongest modern poetry is created by askesis’. (135-136)
The poet tries to attain a distinguished position on his own by sacrificing the relationship of others in writing poetry. This aspect is very much evident in the poetry of T.S. Eliot who refused the style of Romantic poets in writing poetry and attained his own theory like modernism and impersonality in creating literary work. It is very clear from his work that he attains a man of solitude or sainthood in his life as well as in literary work. That is why, T.S. Eliot says about himself, ‘I am classicist in literature, royalist in politics and Catholic in religion’.

The similar kind of *Askesis* or purgation and solipsism is very much evident in the poetry of A.J.M. Smith. He attained that through his literary works as they are written in modernist and with eclectic detachment. That will be discussed in the later chapter of the thesis.

(6)  *Apophrades or the Return of the dead*

Harold Bloom has taken the word “Apophrades” from the “Athenian dismal or unlucky days upon which the dead returned to re-inhabit the houses in which they had lived”.(15) It means to write the poem in the same manner as their father or precursors without knowing the ideas and techniques of their precursors. Here, the later poet holds his poem open again to his precursor’s work. As it is revisionary ratio the later poet writes his poetry in the same manner or character of how the precursor had written. However, Harold Bloom observes that:

The *apophrades*, the dismal or unlucky days upon which the dead return to inhabit their former houses, come to the strongest poets, but with the very strongest there is a grand and final rivisionary movement
that purifies even this last influx. Yeats and Stevens, the strongest poets of our century, and Browning and Dickinson, the strongest of the later nineteenth century, can give us vivid instances of this most cunning of revisionary ratios. (141)

According to Empedocles, a Greek philosopher that our psyche returns to the fire at the time of death. The psyche or poetic power does not come from the fire but it comes from the father to the later generation through heredity from the fathers. The heredity influences a lot in writing poetry as it is a creative work. So again at the time of his death the poetic power passes on to the next generation through heredity. That is how, the poet generally always returns to the precursor’s style.

Bloom observes that the strong poet has to fill the damage for the work of precursor. Why because it is the later poet’s duty to clean or correct their precursor as he has innovative vision. But the strong dead poet returns exactly in the poems of later poets. But they do not come back without darkening the living. So it is known that the strong poets keep returning from the dead through the quasi-willing membership of the strong poets.

In order to illustrate this aspect of influence Bloom gives the example of Johnson and Gray. Johnson who used to hate Gray’s style of writing, later understood that in Gray’s poetry there is anxiety of style and anxiety of influence. Then Johnson forgave Gray for his universalized anxiety of self-preservation into a more general pathos. Johnson observes and writes to his friend Collins by having Gray in his mind:

He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later
candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry.

(150)

Bloom observes that mad Artaud carried the anxiety of influence into a region where it could not be distinguished. If the later poets wanted to avoid imitating their precursors they need to know the richer knowledge than their precursor why because the dead poets do not consent to make way for others. Harold Bloom says:

Our poets who are capable of unfolding in their strength live where their precursors have lived for three centuries now, under the shadow of the Covering Cherub. (155)

Harold Bloom’s concept “Apophrades” or “Return of the Dead” is very much evident in the poetry of T.S. Eliot who wrote his poems like metaphysical poets or by following old tradition of writing poetry. The similar kind of Apophrades is also very much evident in the poetry of A.J.M. Smith. He also returned to the dead by keeping certain style and techniques of his precursors in writing poetry. That will be discussed in detail in a later chapter of the thesis.

After examining the various aspects of influence as promulgated by Bloom in his The Anxiety of Influence, it is interesting to note that Brian Trehearn’s illuminating study, Aestheticism and the Canadian Modernists: Aspects of Poetic Influence deals with how A.J.M. Smith, the most influential poet, critic and anthologist who ushered in poetic Modernism in Canadian literature, is influenced by Aestheticism as well as Modernism. A detailed discussion will be taken up in the later chapters.
Canadian critics have tended to argue that the relation between Canadian poets and their British counter-parts such as the Romantics, Victorians and the Moderns are one of direct influence. This idea has become almost axiomatic in the criticism of Canadian poetry. “In Canadian poets and the Great Tradition” Sandra Djwa observes that:

...much verse written in Canada in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century can be characterized as a response to the picturesque landscape of Canada filtered through the prevailing British model. Hayman borrowed from Owen, Goldsmith from his English grand uncle, Heavysage from Shakespeare and,... Isabella Valancy Crawford and Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, often hailed as Canadian originals, were actually highly indebted to their contemporaries and predecessors. Crawford borrowed from Tennyson, Longfellow and Dante; Roberts’ *Orion* (1880) is modeled on the *Orion* (1843) of Richard Henry (later Hengist) Horne, an English Victorian.

And in her insightful essay “Lampman’s Fleeting Vision” Sandra Djwa describes Lampman as the ‘Canadian Keats’. (27) W.E. Collin in his “White Savannahs” observes that “the [A.J.M. Smith] mastered Eliot’s mannerisms”. (235) Many Canadian critics accept the view that the confederation poets such as Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman, Wilfred Cambell and D.C. Scott are influenced by Aestheticism as well as Decadence. But it is less documented. Aestheticism made a significant impact on the development of Canadian modernism by influencing a number of Canadian poets directly and forcefully. By adopting the themes, symbols, imagery and diction of the earlier movement, occasionally by
experimenting with prosody and form learned from the Decadents, poets such as Raymond Knister, W.W. E. Ross, Robert Finch, Leo Kennedy, F.R. Scott, John Glassco and A.J.M. Smith are influenced by Aestheticism. Aestheticism having been pervasive could alter the present appearance of Canadian literary history which one can see in their own works. In submission to the resulting scope of the study Brian Trehearn has divided the poets in his book into groups and then into chapters.

The first chapter “Influence, Aestheticism, and Modernism” deals with the aspect of influence on A.J.M. Smith. Apparently the three terms crucial to his argument are Influence, Aestheticism, and Modernism. Trehearn observes that ‘European Aestheticism worked a significant influence upon so many poets of the Modernist generation’. These poets welcomed the particular Aesthetic influence in their youth. Brian Trehearn suggests that:

We have been content, in the past, to study these poets by analyzing the canon largely as they have passed it on to us; we have paid too little attention to their journals, manuscripts, and private papers; and we have regularly failed to see in his or her critical prose an important measure of the poet’s work and thought (5)

Brian Trehearn has limited the study to the generation of the 1920s for a number of reasons. With reference to influence inarguably impressive influence theory of Harold Bloom and the delineation of intertextuality by Julia Kristeva and others have raised the question of influence on to a higher level of inquiry. Brian Trehearn argues that:
Intertextuality provides the critic with a dramatic, imaginative, and enriching approach to the relations between literary texts, and its rejuvenation of the study of such relations, after the arid hypertextuality of declining New Criticism, has been necessary and gratifying (194).

We can understand that influence makes intertextual which gives immense knowledge as well as pleasure to a critic or a reader.

Goren Hermeren startling and complex theoretical text *Influence in Art and Literature* describes precisely the real meaning of the terms “influence” and “transmission”. His intention is to make those terms as precise as possible which have been clouded by the misunderstanding or methodological sleight-of-hand. But his parable and algebraic definition of literary terms are of no use to the literary critic.

Brian Trehearne’s book *Aestheticism and Canadian Modernists: Aspects of Poetic influence* is a little complicated, it demanded by the centrality of the Aesthetic influence to most Canadian Modernist poetry of the 1920s. This study helps not only in source-hunting but also in one artist’s reception and development of the ideas and techniques of another. It also helps in an understanding of the nature of the Canadian poetic tradition. Trehearne’s book provides a very close approximation of “What actually happened” in the literary 1920s. It gives the general influence of a prior work to perform such a study with an ear for “different voices”.

Theories of influence involve in a significant ramification for the study of colonial and post-colonial literatures. Trehearne argues that:
In Canadian as well as in most colonial literature, poetry began in an effort to maintain as extend the artistic, social and moral standards of the mother country in a geographical and cultural situation that was perceived as inhospitable to received normal behaviour. (8)

Under such condition influence becomes something avidly sought, a life-giving transfusion of order and authority. So that the literature of the mother country dominates the literature of the colony for some time in technique or quality. The colonial literature finds its own development and seeks to demonstrate its viability as a national literature, independent of foreign models.

Edward Hartlet Dewart’s *Selections from Canadian Poets* is an astonishing publication from a modern point of view. Influence becomes a sign of intellectual subservience, lack of imagination, or insufficient national feeling, and the importation upon an otherwise mature group of artists. At such a juncture poets naturally throw off their influences and try to build a self-justified literature. That is how the influence has been the life blood of pioneering culture.

Influence has shaped the entire Canadian artistic tradition in literature. By that they have their own cultural security in adopting their own efforts, the tradition of other countries and of foreign artists. The influence of aestheticism on Canadian poets is very significant.

The term Aestheticism refers to a single movement and a single group of like minded artists. It connotes at once the entire movement-Pre-Raphaelitism, Aestheticism, Decadence, literary Impressionism, and so on- and one particular phase of that movement. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Algernon Swinburne and William Morris
are some of the important poets in writing Aesthetic poetry in the Pre-Raphaelite period. The word adjectival Aesthetic is forcefully refused to both the period Aestheticism as well as Decadence. The poetry written by Ernest Dawson and Arthur Symons are referred to as Decadent. "Aesthetic" poetry concerns with abstract beauty of whatever epoch. Aestheticism casts light on French, German and Italian Aestheticism during the Victorian period.

Walter Pater, in his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), writes:

Aestheticism as a self-conscious and increasingly organized movement required the work of Pater to coalesce and publicize certain of the themes and techniques of the earlier poets in a form that could be transmitted to the next generation tellingly enough to produce those odd variations in the œuvres and careers of the Aesthetes maturing in the 1890s. The more sensational principles of Paterian Aestheticism have been much belabored, the obvious being the adoration of beauty, the pursuit of intensity, "not the fruit of experience, but experience itself"; but as a theory of the arts Paterian Aestheticism is, at root, a doctrine of the removal of art and the artist from all other human activity and of pursuit in his specialized realm of affective beauty in objects commonly recognizable as "art". (12)

Walter Pater, the chef exponent of the aesthetic view of life observes that "beauty is something immediately experienced, felt upon the pulses-not a bloodless abstraction". Here Pater makes beauty a blanket term covering the impressions which
we generally receive and enjoy from literature and the arts and Wordsworth’s ‘mighty
world of eye and ear. Pater further observes about art and puts it:

Art comes to you proposing family to give nothing but the highest
quality to your moment as they pass, and simply for those moments
sake. (14)

According to R.V. Johnson, Aestheticism means:

Aestheticism was not one simple phenomenon, but a group of related
phenomena, all reflecting a conviction that the enjoyment of beauty can
by itself give value and meaning to life. (10)

‘Decadence’ as Brian Trehearn defines:

as an aesthetic term, descriptive of certain techniques, doctrines or
preoccupations of certain works of art, and has nothing whatsoever to
do with the personal histories of any poet involved in the discussion.

(13)

It begins when creative personalities are too active to perceive all of life as an
art work yielding, potentially, moments of extreme aesthetic pleasure.

Brian Trehearn claims that Aesthetic movement is a late and rarefied
development of English Romanticism. It is important to recognize that although
Aestheticism is a late version of Romanticism, it is the same as what we may call
“Late Romanticism”. He defines Aestheticism and Decadence as, Aestheticism is a
serious theory in which the arts are removed from other forms of human commerce in
an effort to preserve their beauty and integrity and Decadence as an inevitable
modification of the theory to the point where the poetry demonstrates little but woe,
rejection and failure to avoid their and partake of their peculiar and considerable gifts.

The definition of Aestheticism and Decadence shows the kind of poetic activity manifested in the two schools. Trehearne defines poetry as:

> The poetry of Aestheticism expresses an exhaustive appreciation of beauty, in an atmosphere more or less poignancy, and reflects a concomitant search for intensity that uplifts the lover to a vision of his beloved as “Blessed Damozel.” (14)

The Decadent writes a poetry observed with failure, which makes him suffer at his artistic failure. The transience of beauty, the brevity of impressions, a hated and fear of natural processes of inescapable decay are central to the Decadent literature. Decadent finds in pursuits of intensity, the past sensation which becomes a source of boredom. Then he goes out of his way to write about deeper and darker intensities to find heightened moments of Romantics. Thus he begins to record “dangerous” unnatural, or artificial intensities to create intensities rather than find them in nature or in the beauty offered by the company of others. This type of tendency or attitude gives rise to a fascination with the lurid, the sordid and the sinful in Decadence. In this way sexuality tends to perversion, beauty tends to evil, delicacy to corruption, each of which qualities are rarely announced openly in Decadent literature.

Critics of Canadian poetry see Modernism as a deeper, more pervasive and more serious Decadence and as a carry-over of the spirit of the Nineties. They see it as a breath-giving by overthrowing all that Decadence represented. Modernism has developed different from the Aesthetics and Decadence in an innovative way. Every school of thought delineates some form of influence in its own way.
Morse Peckham, in his “Aestheticism to Modernism; Fulfillment or Revolution?” argues that the various manifestations of nineteenth century Aesthetes were ‘logically necessary strategies for encompassing that break through into the comprehension of the very principle of self transformation which is Modernism’. He further argues that ‘Aestheticism occurs as a result of the abandonment of the superficial aspect of the Romantic Program’.

To refine or to innovate the pursuit style in art and literature one should sacrifice all the pleasures of life. Then only one can see the art as the highest of life’s goals. So that the artists have to take pressure to reach necessary degree. When we put adequate pressure then modern style emerges not in an embryonic form but almost at once in maturity. Like that the progress from “Aestheticism to Modernism” is a fulfillment. Peckham resolves in these terms the central tension underlying the history of Modernism.

J.E. Chamberlin in his “From High Decadence to High Modernism”, arrives at the conclusion with a different emphasis from those of Peckham. According to Chamberlin, the chief aesthetic link to be found between Aestheticism and Modernism is their mutual antagonism.

Modernists such as T.E. Hulme, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Virginia Woolf, and W.B. Yeats have inherited some aesthetic burden and at the same time they have been criticized revealingly in the light of their common Aesthetic inheritance. It is an unfortunate fact that there is no thorough critical volume, which exists to make such a theory solid. In the absence of such a fruitful text one must conclude that the notion of Aesthetic roots for Modernism is still thinly spread and it needs significant further
examination and development. Canadian Modernists are also devoted to the larger task to establish the profound continuity of Modernism with the prior literary tradition.
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