

Romance and Revolution in the Writings of Khalīl Muṭrān and Percy Bysshe Shelley

A Comparative Study

Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the
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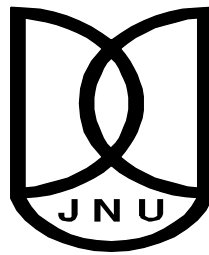
Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation "Romance and Revolution in the Writings of Khalil Mutran and Percy Bysshe Shelley" is in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of this university. The work provided in this dissertation, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.


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Acknowledgements

Five years ago I was formulating a research topic for my PhD work. Since I was very much interested with comparative study, I was pondering on a comparison between Arabic and English Romantic literature since both were deeply influenced with each other in several ways. Already the writings of P. B. Shelley that held a special allure for me and I was thinking about a poet from the Arab romantic genre corresponding to his literary and political activities. Suddenly sprang to my mind Khalīl Muṭrān, who was the first Arab poet, leaned towards romantic tendencies, but at first not his literary writings, but rather his political activities and his ensuant escape to France attracted my attention, which was almost similar to Shelley's early political activities. When I realized that both the poets' political and revolutionary views were moderate, I thought about the other part i.e. their romantic concepts. But here more dissimilarities, but not similarities, jostled for my attention. Shelley was the second generation romanticist, who comes from the background of philosophical and intellectual thinking of Enlightenment and Muṭrān was the beginner of Arab Romanticism when Arabic literature was vying for modernization. When I broached the subject to my respected supervisor Prof. Faizanulla Farooqi, he gave me a thumbs-up sign. I discussed the topic with several scholars from the Center of English Studies, among whom Umar Nizarudeen was the one who offered me endless encouragement with his scholarly suggestions and material support such as books, articles, magazines and so forth. Through more discussions with him I further developed the idea.

A number of friends from inside and outside J.N.U. helped me to complete this thesis in several ways, among whom the most notable are Subneeth Kaushik, Christy Perayil (both are from CHS), Salih M. (CES) Abdullah Najeeb, Muhammed P. M. (CAAS), Niraj Khemka (SCIS), Tresa (Oxford University Press, New Delhi), Haneefa Muhammed, Najeeb V.R. (both are from CSSS), Joydeep Saha (CSR), Reenu E. P. (Center of Linguistics), Abdulla Edachalam (CRS), Abdul Basith, Farsana (both are from CSMCH), Ajmal K. P. (Kannoor) and sever others. I express my heartfelt gratitude to my parents and other family members for their support in all possible ways, especially the helps of my niece Sakkiya Mol. M. (TKM College of Arts, Kollam). And for the support and encouragement of my several other well-wishers in this regard I am thankful.

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Introduction

The comparison between both Muṭrān's and Shelley's Romantic and revolutionary ideals is a daunting task due to several reasons. English and Arabic literary traditions are the two major streams of world literature with all of its literary, philosophical, intellectual and other dimensions and contributions, and in several ways both were influenced by each other. Besides, Shelley was one of the towering figures of the second generation English Romanticism with his philosophical, theoretical, ideological and political implications, which had already brought to light by a host of academic studies. Muṭrān was, on the other hand, the first Arab poet who leaned towards Romantic tendencies, even though that was not in full-scale, and he was deeply influenced by Shelley, and he comes from the Arab Christian background of the Lebanon and later he migrated to Egypt, where the political and social situations were different. After the failure of the French Revolution Shelly held on to the revolution's principles in a more idealistic, if somewhat cautious way and he avoided direct representation of revolutionary action utilizing sometimes some mythological frameworks and Muṭrān was also standing somewhat in a selfsame perspective, especially after his migration to Egypt. Moreover, when Muṭrān sets out his literary journey, Arabic literature was in the process of modernization influenced by European literature, and when he started Romantic writings which had already spirited off in Europe almost a century before. All these background events were considered in this thesis as a prerequisite for a valuable comparison.

Since this academic study with comparative method emerges from the Center of Arabic and African Studies; not from the English Studies, which confines the scope of comparison of the romantic and revolutionary ideals of Muṭrān with those of Shelley's; not vice versa. In other words, since Arabic literary modernity including Romanticism was deeply indebted to its European forerunners, when connecting, comparing and analyzing some literary works from Arabic to English the chronological order will create some obstruction which can deter the flow of the thesis to a large extent. The order of setting chapters in this thesis is (a) Romance and revolution in Arabic literature (b) Romance and revolution in English literature (c) Romance and revolution in the writings of Khalīl Muṭrān (d) Romance and revolution in the writings of

Shelley etc., which is chronologically in reverse, so that definitely the reader lose the flow, and that may make him/her a bit dull and tedious. As it is impossible to get rid of this obstruction almost no initiative has been taken in this regard.

Analogous to other British romanticists, Shelley's romantic concepts were also deriving basically from the traditional European sources of romance, nonetheless, he managed further to interweave it with ideas and philosophical thinking and even sometimes he tinged it with political colors. From his early experiences of carnal loves he further moved forward in search of ideal love and ideal woman, in which he sometimes experienced the immortality of love, which can transcend the boundaries of personal and worldly limitations even towards self-immolation. He tried to believe that love is not subjected to fate, time, occasion, chance and change, and through which the communion with the Eternal reality (not God) and beauty is obtained. Even though sometimes he attains romantic ecstasy in his search for perfect love, most of the times his search ensues and ends up in deep sorrows and despair due to imperfection. But Muṭrān was almost fully melancholic from the outset, and due to the harrowing sorrows he sometimes tries to escape into some other celestial worlds, where he can find his soul achieves its perfection. He sobs out his agonies to a far-off bird and a star in the deadly silence of black midnight, in their companionship he feels comfort and he requests to them to preserve him in that ecstatic world. He depicted the loss of love and childhood happiness, malady, senility, death, and wrench of separation and so on through his unremitting melancholy. Whereas Shelley's Romantic concepts were intertwined with his own and adopted European philosophical and ideological elements, Muṭrān's concepts were denude of these elements since Arabic literary modernity was not buttressed by any ideological or philosophical undercurrents.

Since the medieval romance was almost an unrealistic, fanciful and emotional genre of literature, the common understanding attached even to the late eighteenth-century Romanticism almost all these same characteristics. This created the misunderstanding that both romance and revolution are two extremes or diverse areas in literature. But the reality was that after the first half of the seventeenth-century romance became unfashionable when the neoclassical thought assumed more aesthetic dominance, and when the medieval romance later turned into Romanticism, which managed to restore an enhanced position and lost many of its negative connotations chiefly due to the efforts of the German cultural theorists and the ascendance of Gothicism.

When Enlightenment modernity, Industrial Revolution, American and French Revolutions etc. brought about drastic changes in the living conditions and outlooks of the general public on the one hand, which was reflected on the other as its offshoots were soulless intellectualism, gigantic factories and chaotic city life, returning despotism in the form of Napoleon etc., so that Romanticist could not be an over-sensitive dreamer, but heroic genius encountering with painful realities of life and the begetter of hope and freedom.

Even the medieval romance had dealt with several issues other than love, such as chivalric, supernatural, adventures, fight with giants and dragons, killing Saracens, innocent princess defeating their cruel adversaries, rightful heirs regaining their belongings etc. Since love had long been condemned by religious and conventional erudition, some fanciful romances in the shape of legend had advanced anew to challenge the general male view of love. Even though the main themes of these romances bordering on searching for lost loved ones, immortality, earthly paradise, great treasure etc., it had some meager revolutionary aspects too, which were literary revolt against earlier religious tradition and feudalism, giving more importance to women than ever and higher ideals of conduct towards them, and so on. Since not only Romanticism, but also the medieval romance has also some revolutionary connotations, looking down upon the term *romance and revolution* and thinking about it as intrinsically paradoxical are not endorsed by historical realities, but rather, which was the creation and reinforcement of stereotypes and misapprehensions.

This volume widens the dimensions of comparison between Muṭrān's and Shelley's Romantic and revolutionary ideals into the social, cultural and political backgrounds of both European and Arab Romanticisms. Because, since almost every literary or cultural development everywhere in the world is interlinked with or influenced by each other, especially which is clearly discernible in the influence of European literature on several others after the emergence of European modernity and its colonial roving, restricting the area of research only into the parameters of lingual dimensions may cause to lose the integrity and reliability of this study. Instead, this thesis cottons on to the need for analyzing and connecting the background elements too, by which it can see to it that this thesis neither linger over any uncalled-for areas of study chasing around after any superficial aspect of either Muṭrān's or Shelley's concepts. This thesis leeches onto the concept that picking out some specific aspects and deliberately neglecting something else from

the connected flow of history will end up in corroborating essentialist distinctions among diverse cultures and civilizations, so that this thesis deviates from conventional ways of comparisons. The political and social contexts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe which Shelled had encountered is definitely different from the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century Middle East Muṭrān addresses. Given all these backgrounds, the comparison of Muṭrān's writings with those of Shelley's requires more meticulous attempts to take issue with all kinds of biases and to move beyond from studies galore which do not inclined to see beyond their noses.

The first chapter of this thesis focuses on sketching very briefly the historical emergence of romantic and its revolutionary ideals in Arabic literature. The reinvigoration of neo-Classicism in the second half of the nineteenth-century, the romantic tendencies of Khalīl Muṭrān, the modernist and romantic inclinations of the Dīwan group of poets and their literary battles with neo-Classacists, the emergence of fully-fledged Romanticism in the Maḥjar, Egypt, the Lebanon and elsewhere in the Arab world, the lack of philosophical, ideological and political implications of Arab Romanticism, the link between Arab nationalism and Arab Romanticism, the differences between the North and South Maḥjar Romanticisms, the romantic concepts of Maḥjar Romanticists such as Khalīl Gibrān, Mīkha'īl Nu'ima, Amīn Rihāni etc., Ilyās Abu Shabaka's romantic activities in the Lebanon, romantic writings of al-Zahāwī, Rasāfī, Husain Mardān and Baland Haidari in Iraq and the later abandoning of romantic ideals by Nāzik al-Malā'ika, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti etc, Abu al-Qāsim al-Shābbi's Tunisian Romanticism, Mutlaq 'Abd al-Khāliq's Palestinian Romanticism, the romantic concepts of Nadim Muhammad and 'Umar al-Nuss in Syria, Al-Tījani Yusuf Bashīr of the Sudan, the romantic activities of the Apollo group and the Shi'r magazine, revolutionary concepts of Arab Romanticism and the abrupt end of Arab Romanticism etc. are some of the main points of discussion in this chapter.

The second chapter does a truncated sketch of the European romantic and its revolutionary concepts from the medieval romance to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Romanticism. The chapter begins by broaching the matter that how in general understanding the medieval romance was understood as an emotional genre which deals with the themes of mere love. Then the discussion progresses toward the semantic tracing of the term *romance*, and

raising the question whether Romanticism was a movement or not, and elaborates on the diverse characteristics of Romanticists politically, ideologically and philosophically. The chapter underscores the perspective that there emphatically were some resemblances and certain ideas and attitudes which rejected the vital concepts and poetic practices of earlier period – for lack of any other brief name, in Arthur O. Lovejoy’s opinion – may it still be called a Romantic “Period” or “Movement”. The chapter also briefs the Romantic sublime, the key features of Romanticism, the political, social and cultural milieus which led to the emergence of Romanticism in Germany, England and France and the Romantic revolts in these countries and so on. The discussion on the Romantic concept of freedom and Revolution, and finally the portrayal of some of the most important British Romanticists and their concepts etc. are also the key areas of discussion in this chapter.

The third chapter analyzes the Romantic and revolutionary writings of Khalīl Muṭrān in detail. His early life and education in the Lebanon, his escape to France after an attempt on his life due to his alleged connection with some political groups which planned to topple the Turkish rule in the region, his migration to Egypt after two years of stay in Paris, his early involvement in journalistic, commercial and industrial activities to make both ends meet, and after all these endeavors became total collapses his appointment as the Secretary of the Khedivial Agricultural Society by Abbas II, and his literary writings and translations etc. are the first focus of this chapter. Since the discussion on the literary background of Egypt during Muṭrān’s literary debut is also very significant to analyze his oeuvre, the literary clashes between neo-Classicists and the Dīwan group of poets, the emergence of the Apollo group of poets, the reasons behind why Muṭrān’s writings did not flourish into the thoroughgoing Romanticism etc. are also opened up for discussion. The amalgamation of classical and modern tendencies, equal emphasis on personal emotions and social issues, celebrating the Egyptian Pharaonic patrimony, his historical narrative and social narrative poems, depiction of Nature, harrowing melancholy even from his early writings and sometimes he shares it to his nocturnal friends such as a bird or a star, the reflection of his personal feelings in Nature, depicting the natural beauty and historical monuments of the Lebanon and the pastoral life of Egypt etc. are some of the important characteristics of his Romantic concepts. His revolutionary literary interference include condemning Arab indifference against colonial invasions, denouncing Turkish suppression and their brutalities and injustices, British colonial atrocities in Egypt, his criticism against despotic

rules, attacking British endeavors to muzzle the freedom of the press, castigating the Italian invasion of Libya and praising Egyptian nationalist leaders and so on.

The discussion in the fourth chapter centers on the romantic and revolutionary writings of Shelley during his short life span of 29 years. His childhood life in an aristocratic Whig ambience of his family, his early education in Syon House Academy and Eton College and his expulsion from Oxford for writing *The Necessity of Atheism*, his elopement with Harriet to Ireland and their political activities there, his first political poem *Henry and Louisa* (1809) against the British invasion of Egypt in 1807, his first revolutionary narrative poem *Queen Mab* (1812), his second elopement with Mary and the suicide of Harriet etc were discussed very briefly in the beginning of the chapter. His poem *Alastor* (1815), *Mont Blanc*, and his several other political pamphlets and poems were described chronologically among whom the most prominent were *Rosalind and Helen*, *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, *Julian and Maddalo*, *Stanzas written in dejection near Naples*, *Mask of Anarchy*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *Sensitive Plant*, *To a Skylark*, *Witch of Atlas*, *Epipsychidion*, *The Triumph of Life*, and his pamphlets such as *On Love*, *A Philosophical View of Reform* and so on. The chapter carries out an analysis of some of his most important poems thematically in chronological order, and then the chapter enters into the discussion on his revolutionary ideals. From his childhood Shelley was a rebel who opposed the conventional religious and social ethos and he butted into contemporary political discourse to point up his reformist concepts, but that was in a moderate way and almost negating the use of violence. He criticized the British policies inside and outside Britain, the reactionary stands of his contemporary poets, the Turkish suppression of Greece, centralization of power in the hands of a few, despotic rules and other inequalities and injustices. Finally the chapter deals with his romantic concepts with its theoretical and philosophical implications, and his romantic search of ideal and perfect love and beauty. Confining to the limitation of space this chapter tried its best to cover almost all the areas of his concepts and this chapter remains as the longest chapter of this thesis.

Instead of entering directly into the comparison, the final chapter gives at first a succinct résumé of the European encounters with the Muslim world, which started with the Napoleon's invasion of Egypt with all of its political consequences and revolutionary rhetoric. Since Constantine Volney's oriental rovings was one of the inspirations for this invasion, which was also discussed.

Some of the very significant outlooks of the earlier and the recent literary historians such as Edward Said, Martha Pike Conant, Nigel Leask, Jerome McGann, and Makdisi etc were also utilized to mark out the directions of romantic orientalism. But Humberto Garcia's observations were discussed in detail about how Islamic republicanism influenced romantic writings in both positive and negative ways, and how by the eighteenth century, many Christian deists, nonconformists and Unitarians gave preference to Mahometanism over the dogmatic Christianity. Then the chapter enters into discuss about the romantic writers encounters with Islam and the most prominent among them were Goethe, Schiller, Coleridge, Southey, Landor, Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Byron and so on. The analysis of Shelley's encounters with Islam categorizes his approaches into several modes such as sympathetic, moderate, vehement celebration and negation, i.e. he makes almost a pro-Muslim/Islamic stand, as victims in *Henry and Louisa*, and *Zeinab and Kathema*, and a moderate stand in *The Moral Teaching of Jesus Christ* and he celebrates radical Islamism in *The Assassins*. But in his last two major works such as *The Revolt of Islam* (1817) and *Hellas* (1821) Islam becomes an assailant tyrannical faith in the form of Ottoman Empire. Connecting all these historical developments each other, the chapter finally enters into the comparison between romantic and revolutionary concepts of both the poets, and definitely the reading of the thesis from the beginning will give the reader a panoramic vision of divergences and convergences between the writings of both the poets in the realms of romance and revolution in Arab and English romanticisms.

Chapter I

Romance and Revolution in Arabic Literature: A Brief Sketching

Literary Reform

In Arabic literature, if we interpret modernity as innovation (*ihdāth*) vis-à-vis tradition, it is easily traceable since the Abbasid poet Abu Nuwās (756 – 814) and Al-Mutanabbi (915 - 965) etc. who refigured the pre-Islamic poetry by altering the depiction of personal loss and sentiment into the depiction of universal human condition.¹ Abu Nuwās was the first Arab poet who endeavored to incorporate contemporaneity in his poetry through the cagey avoidance of the depiction of vestiges or remnants of ruined houses, which was the characteristic of the pre-Islamic poetry. On the contrary, he talks about the wine taverns of his time. This modernity meant to coincide with the new modern urban experience ushered by new expansions in the seventh and eighth centuries. But, when we mean by modernity the ‘third Hellenistic wave’ of William Montgomery Watt, which starts with Vasco da Gama’s discovery of the commercial route to India in 1498 and in the Arab world with Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt in 1798,² which’s influence was widespread throughout the intellectual, cultural, commercial and political realms, and as a result, the course of literature was also gradually changed. Since the Arab encounters with colonial modernity were painful experiences, the study about the influence and role of European literature in the modernization of Arabic literature is a daunting task when we discuss the modernist and traditionalist discourses in the Arab world.

Neo-Classicism

The neo-Classicist movement in Arabic literature began to reinvigorate in the second half of the nineteenth century, which wants to bolster up the classical *Qasīda* form, whose themes and stylistic features had dominated Arabic poetry for centuries, with the emphasis on organic poetic unity, traditional values and themes such as panegyrics, declamations and eulogies and so forth.

¹ Adonis (Ali Ahmad Said Esber, born in 1930) rejects the treatment of modernity as a time period or a project originated from Europe, and he argued that modernity was a process of renewal which systematically supplants traditional forms of literary production starting in Arabic literature from Abu Nuwas. See his 1974 book *Al- Thābit wa-l-Mutahawwil: Baḥṡ fi al-Ibdā‘ wa-l-Itbā‘ ‘ind al-‘Arab*, 4 volumes, Dar al-Sāqi, Beirut, Lebanon, published in 2006.

² According to Watt, the first wave of Hellenism starts with the introduction of Greek philosophy in the first century of Abbasid period (750 – 850 AD) and its subsequent *Mu‘tazilite* and *Ash‘arite* intellectualism. The second wave was in the first half of the tenth century, when a number of Muslim intellectuals further developed philosophy amalgamated with both Islamic and Greek ideas, prominent among them were Al Kindi (801- 873), Al Farabi (872-950) and Avicenna (980 -1037) etc. *Islamic Philosophy and Theology; An Extended Survey*, William Montgomery Watt, The University Press, Edinburgh, Second edition 1985.

The ability to play with words and forms, and the use of high diction and polished rhetoric were accentuated, and the prototype of the good neo-Classical poems contingent on the conventions of the Abbasid period poetry. These efforts to revitalize the neo-Classical poetry was the natural response of the encroachment of the Western political powers and cultures, as an endeavor to defend their religious, cultural and political identities from those alien forces.³

The soldier poet Mahmūd Sāmi al-Bārūdi (1839 – 1904) was a towering figure and the trailblazer of modern Arabic poetry, who actively participated both in literature and politics.⁴ He is often; by no means always, expresses in his poetry his individual experience with a direct and powerful expression of an earnest mind and an inspiring personality.⁵ He tried to purify the

³ The neo-Classical Arabic poetry was fully at odds with the growing both political and cultural dominance of the West, while the political dominance started with the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, the cultural influence began to augment with the increased direct contact of the Arab world with the West and their curiosity to better understand what is called the Western. After the withdrawal of French and British forces, Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali (1769 – 1849) defeated Ottoman and Mamluk rivals in 1815 and took a more pro-Western stand and distributed land to Egyptian farmers, brought cottonseeds from America, built dams, set up an army of European model and established several modern schools, colleges and universities, especially the School of Language in 1836 to translate western literature into Arabic. He founded the first indigenous press in the Arab world which was called the ‘Bulaq Press’ and sent educational missions into France. Thus, through these European literary translations a new world of imagery and expression, and new humanistic and individualistic philosophies etc. exposed to the Arab writers, which they were not accustomed. In 1876, a well-known cultural review named ‘Al-Muqtatafāt’ was established in Beirut to introduce its readers the western intellectual life, and then transferred to Egypt, which continued publication there until 1952. These all elements created enormous impact on the development of Arabic poetry, which the neo-Classicist poet tried to resist.

⁴ Khedive Taufiq’s subservience to Britain as their protégé later led to their occupation of Egypt. In this period Colonel Urabi Pasha emerged as a nationalist leader, and got sympathy from both Egyptian populace and Turkish notables. In 1881, owing to the threat of military action, Khedive Taufiq did not have any other option but to appoint the soldier-poet al-Barūdi as the prime minister, and Colonel Urābi Pasha as the under-secretary for war. The successive events are too involved to report comprehensively. Finally, Barūdi resigned. About fifty Europeans were killed during the riots in Alexandria. To take revenge, British fleet bombarded the city. British forces landed and defeated Urābi’s troops at Tel-el-Kebīr. The British occupied Cairo, and Urābi Pasha and al-Barūdi were banished to Ceylon.

⁵ ‘While al-Barūdi borrowed some of his ideas, imaginations and tunes from his predecessors, he formulated some of it by his own experience and by the experience of his time for the powerful expression of his poetry’. See Mandūr, Muhammad, *Al-Shi’r al-Misrī ba’da Showqi*, published by Maktaba Nahḍa Misr wa Maṭba’ha, Al-Fajjāla, Cairo, without publication date, page 4. But, Dr. Mīshal Jaha talks about the romantic tendencies in his poems. He says that “al-Barūdi was the leader of modernists and the first romanticist. His experiences of life have the imprint on his poetry, and he availed himself of war to get bravery, accuracy of description, dynamism and solidity. From his exile he got romantic nostalgia, delicacy and genuine expression. By his endeavors the poetic language became clearer”. Jaha, Mīshal, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Bākūrat al-Tajdīd fī al-Shi’r al-‘Arabi al-Hadīth*, first edition, published by Dār al-Masīrah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1981, page 36.

diction and he deviated from the classism of the Abbasids like al-Mutanabbi and his ilk, and he put forward his own design in poetry which was totally free from artificiality, mere verbal jugglery and intellectual frivolity etc.⁶ Even though Barūdi was not at all a romantic poet, he managed to bring Arabic poetry to bear upon the renovation and rejuvenation from its centuries of decadence, and he emphasized on his own personal experience which is analogous to the romantic ‘individuality’ or romantic ‘self’ to some extent.

“Al-Barūdi’s work signals the beginning of the first stage which can roughly be called the neo-classical period: in it the modern Arabs asserted their own cultural identity in a world in some ways threatened by alien forces”.⁷ Several poets such as Isma‘īl Sabri and Waliyy al-Dīn Yakan deliberately turned to their past literature for their poetic ideals and sometimes for inspiration. Here, the task of the poet is only to imitate creatively the all time valid prototype or the absolute and immutable rules and standards of judgment, which is the poetry of glorious medieval period of the Arabs, primarily of the Abbasids. The ideal poetic form was the *Qasīda* or the old Arabic ode, and its vital elements were its verbal jugglery, monorhyme, monometer, rhetoric and its resounding phrases. Most of the best known Arab poets were belong to this grouping. The prominent figures of this grouping in Egypt were Ahmad Shawqī and Hāfīz Ibrāhīm, and in Iraq were Ma‘rūf al-Rusāfī, Jamīl Sidqī al-Zahāwī and Mahdi al-Jawāhīrī.

Unlike the European neo-classicism, its Arab variant neither has the significance of the aspects of reason and imagination nor has the principle of ‘generality’ to follow by the poets but it generally remained moralistic and sometimes even didactic.⁸ Poet is not in his solitary

⁶ John A. Haywood argues that ...“He found the means of expressing this patriotism within the classical *qasida* form and in *hamasa* poetry. His personal pride and ambition are themselves classical. He has been likened to Mutanabbi – but the resemblance with *hamasa* poetry is clearer. Though a political poet, he also excels in description, whether of nature, antiquities, or modern inventions. At the same time he often uses antique clichés about clouds, lightning, camels and horses – the whole verbal armoury of the pre-Islamic and Ommeyad poet”. See *Modern Arabic Literature, 1800 – 1970*, An introduction, with extracts in translation, John A. Haywood, Lund Humphries, London, 1971, Page 83 - 84.

⁷ *An Anthology of Modern Arabic Verse*, Selected with an introduction by M.M. Badawi, Oxford University Press, without publication place, 1970, *Introduction*, Page XI.

⁸ The neo-Classical period was a long and fruitful epoch in the European literary history, extending from 1660 to 1798, which comprises the Restoration period, the Augustan period and the Age of Johnson. European neo-Classicism worshipped antiquity, and on the basis of classical standards it tried to model its achievements. Because of the influence of the Enlightenment and the general thirst of knowledge, it focused more on the intellectual curiosity towards the details of the surrounding world. Instead of considering human being as an individual entity

confinement or in his ethereal flight of the imagination; rather, he is constantly conscious of an audience he is addressing, and therefore, theirs is usually a public type of poetry. The social and political themes were abundant in the neo-classicists poetry. The relative backwardness of the Arab east than the dynamic west, the reformist remedies for social ailments and backwardness, the emancipation of women, the eradication of poverty, illiteracy, prostitution etc. were some of their favorite topics. Politically, while Shawqi and Hafiz from Egypt defended the Ottoman Empire from the attacks of its enemies, the Iraqi neo-classicists al-Rusāfi and al-Zahāwi bitterly attacked the tyranny of Ottoman sultan Abdul Hamid II, because Egypt was under the colonial rule of Britain and Iraq was directly under the control of the Turks.

Early Romanticism

The modernizing tendencies in the field of literature has already started by the end of the nineteenth century with the tension between form and content, and the proclivity towards romantic sentiments marked by the revulsion against the blind imitation of classicism. Hitherto the Arabic *Qasīda* was the collection of individual lines, flamboyant in outward feature with its temptations of rhetoric as mentioned earlier.⁹ Khalīl Muṭrān (1872 – 1949) was a great admirer

with his own personal feelings and other characteristics, neo-Classicism considered them as a mass entity or creatures with general proclivities. Education, especially didactic and moral got more prominence. The thematic shift of emphasis from the abstract, philosophic, heavenly issues towards the concrete worldly things got more momentum. They believed that the greatness of man lies primarily in his being a rational entity. Therefore, while rationalism got more importance, imagination was controlled. This was the epoch of the fixing habits, preoccupied with manners and accepted standards, and imitation, rationalism and convention were the key notions of it.

⁹ The epicenters of these gradual modernizing tendencies were Egypt and the Lebanon. While in the Lebanon these literary changes occurred mostly as the direct result of migration of its inhabitants into American countries, the case of Egypt was a bit different. In addition to the colonial influences and the modernizing tendencies of its rulers, the educational delegations coming back to Egypt from Europe were also played vital roles. Muhammad Rashid Nadvi and Mirza Nehal Ahmad Baig say that ... "Meanwhile, the Egyptian educational delegations started returning to Egypt with a mission to introduce to the nation what they saw and read, and also the experience they had had in the western culture and civilization. These missions also made efforts to establish a link between the Classical and Modern cultures. Literature got beautified, and poetry appeared in the new form, which was free from pallor and rhymed prose form. Moreover, the subjects and themes now revolved no more around glorification, derision and occasion. The new generation Egyptians could not shut their eyes to the grim realities outside. They came out from their cocoons and started studying the modern Western legacy, at the same time not getting oblivious to their own rich classical Arab inheritance. The literature and poetry got directly engaged with life. Thus, the couplets and ghazals (encomium ode) which al-Jabarathi quoted in his book *Ajaib-al-Athar* are devoid of any life and thought and revolve around confused and disarranged thoughts and glorification, derision and occasional themes with an ailing style". See *Egyptian Society in Modern Poetry, From French Occupation to English Rule*, Muhammad Rashid

of European literature, who brought about numerous new concepts and attitudes such as the unity of the poem¹⁰ in its structure and the primacy of meaning, which were accepted almost unquestionably by the succeeding generations of Arab poets. His major poetic features were the transformation to lyricism into a large extent, and all of his poems were colorful with his personal experiences and views which can be seen even in his long narrative poems, combined with a great freedom to deal with the stanzaic form. Nature is the source of inspiration and creativity, and the romantic feeling for nature in which the solitary stature of the poet tries to get in communion with it, which is clearly depicted in his poem *al-Masā* '(The Evening). And the more poignant subjectivity and the intensity of feelings, and the nostalgic feeling for childhood and his homeland (*Hal Tadhkurīn*, Do you remember?) are also discernible. But, because of his obsessive desire to maintain the outward form of language, his perennial use of archaic and difficult vocabulary, and his lacking in spontaneity owing to his self-control and constant vigilance, several critics not consider him as a thoroughgoing romanticist. At the same time, several others consider him as the genuine and the first pioneer of romanticism in Arabic literature.¹¹

Nadvi and Mirza Nehal Ahmad Baig, in *Modern Egypt: Culture, Religion and Politics*, Editor. Zohurul Bari, Shipra Publications, New Delhi, 2004, pages 165 – 166.

¹⁰ The poetic unity (Wahdat al-Qasīd al -‘Arabiyya) in the pre-Islamic period poetry was just the unity in rhyme and meter. Since the classical Arabic poetry received its form and essence from that period, naturally this unity also remained as the same throughout these centuries. Dr. Muhammad Mandūr talks about the reason for the lack of unity and changing the topic repeatedly in a single ode; he argues that “in its emerging period the ancient Arabic ode was dealing with the common life of Bedouins and their day-to-day issues. Their poetry will be the portrayal of the remnants of the ruined houses, camels, journeys, the houses of their loved ones, the desert animals and plants etc. Later, even when several poets started panegyric poetry and getting their sustenance by it, those poets who express their actual innate feelings did not mean to deviate from it by instinct to write all their poetry panegyric. Therefore, they incorporated their old poetic propensities with the latest utilities of it”. See Mandūr, Muhammad, *Al-Shi‘r al-Misrī ba‘da Showqi*, published by Maktaba Nahḍa Misr wa Maṭba‘ha, Al-Fajjāla, Cairo, without publication date, page 18. Gibb argues that Ibn-al-Rumi’s (d. 283AH) poetry was analytical which put forward a single theme in an organic unity. (See *Arabic literature*, Gibb, Page 85) And the school led by Abu Tammam called *al-Tansi‘al Fanni*, which stand for the artistic ornamentation attracted several neo-Classicalists too like al-Barūdi, Shawqi, Sabri and so on. Furthermore, al-‘Aqqād and Abu Shādi were also putting forward the concept of the unity of a poem, which stresses the inseparability of form and content. For Abu Shadi, a poem must be appraised as a whole, not as separate elements. When we change the elements or wording, the meaning will automatically be changed. See *Qaṭrah man Yarā fi al-adab wa al-Ijtimā‘*, Vol. 2, pages 18 -29. To sum up, for neo-Classicalist the poetic unity means that each line must be grammatically and semantically complete i.e. enjambment never featured.

¹¹ According to Sa‘īd Hussain Mansur and Jamāl al-Dīn Al-Ramādi, Muṭrān is the first pioneer of the Arabic romantic current. See (1) Sa‘īd Hussain Mansur, *Al-Jadīd fi Shi‘ri Khalīl Muṭrān*, first edition, Published by Al-

The Dīwān group

The constant debate and verbal fighting between the neo-classicists and the modernists played vital roles in the development of romantic tendencies in Egypt. Muṭrān's younger contemporaries such as al-ʿAqqād, Al-Māzini and Shukri were known as Dīwan group; who were deeply influenced by English poetry and criticism especially by its romantic ideals, rejected the neo-classicist ideals of Shawqī and Hafiz in toto.¹² Al-ʿAqqād himself says when he talks about the emergence of this group that “the younger generation of poets after Shawqī was the product of a new school in which we cannot find out any similarity with earlier generations in the history of modern Arabic literature. While this school of poets has voraciously read English literature, they did not limit their readings of French literature on its detritus, but rather, as they read deeply the literary works of the literati of the East of the last century, they read the classical poetic and literary works of English, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Greek and Latin writers. Apart from the benefit of poetic and other literary art, they got the advantage of English literary criticism, and it will not be wrong to say that Hazlitt was the head of this school, who guide them

Hayā' Al-Misriyya Li ʿĀmma Li-taʿlīm wa Al-Nashr, Cairo, Egypt, 1977. (2) Jamāl al-Dīn Al-Ramādi, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Shāʿir Al-Aqār Al-ʿArabiyya*, published by Maktaba Al-Dirāsa Al-ʿAdabiyya, Cairo, Egypt, 1958. At the same time, for Badawi and Jayyusi, he is not at all a full-fledged romanticist and both the scholars give the reasons for their arguments. See (1) *An Anthology of Modern Arabic Verse*, Selected with an introduction by M.M. Badawi, Oxford University Press, without publication place, 1970. (2) Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, 1st volumes, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1977.

¹² The extent to which the western philosophy and literature influenced the modern Arabic literature is a matter of debate. Whereas Mustafa Badawi fully focuses on the western influence on the modern Arabic literature (*A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature*, Oxford University Press, London, 1993, and *An Anthology of Modern Arabic Verse*, Selected with an introduction by M.M. Badawi, Oxford University Press, without publication place, 1970) Magdi Youssef criticizes him for his marginalization of the role of the still living legacy (Al-turath) of the Arabs. (*Contemporary Arabic Literature and World Literature*, Magdi Youssef, A Methodological proposition, Available at: <https://sitebibliasp.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/22br.pdf>) Moreover, Dr. Muhammad Mandur argues that the modernists “did not mean to borrow the essence of poetry from the lives of the Greek or French, but they only tried to penetrate to the modern Arabic poetry the same methods and tendencies the westerners inserted to their own poetry. That was to bring out from their lives and their countries’ natural surroundings its obscure secrets and to help them to carry out the linguistic usages and principles which the westerners brought out in their writings”. Mandur, Muhammad, *Al-Shiʿr al-Misrī baʿda Shawqī*, published by Maktaba Nahdat Misr wa Maṭbaʿha, Al-Fajjāla, Cairo, without publication date, pages 29 -30.

to the new implications of poetry, art and other forms of writings. This Egyptian school is not the mere emulation of English literature, but rather, it was the beneficiary of it and guided by it”.¹³

Besides their call for renewing both the form and content of the classical poetry, and their firm belief in the structural organic unity of the poem, they focused on another very important thing that is the expression of a valuable attitude to existence i.e. an individual philosophy of life or giving more emphasis to ‘self’.¹⁴ But we cannot ignore the fact that, even though the Dīwan group was successful in their virulent criticism on the neo-Classical school and in putting forward their own new theories of poetry, they were unable to provide with good examples of their own poetry which they were staunchly advocating. Instead, they presented average poetry as the epitome of excellence and modernity which could not fully propitiate either the aesthetic standards of the Arab world or the common reading public. Even the application of the rigid norms of classical poetry in form, style, diction and even sometimes in subject matter, were the characteristics of their poetry. As a result, Shawqī endured as *Amīr ul Shu‘rā* (leader of the poets) who exerted more influence on the general public than any other of his contemporaries.¹⁵

Instead of writing imitative panegyric to rulers and influential personalities or jotting down verses on trivial social occasions, the Dīwan group gave more importance to the part played by personal experiences with its emotions and feelings in poetry and they believed that should be

¹³ Al- ‘Aqād, Abbās Mahmūd, *Shu‘arā’ Misr wa bī ‘ātuhum fi-al jiyal al-Maḍī*, Maṭba‘a Hijazi, Cairo, Egypt, 1937, page 202.

¹⁴ But these emphases were almost on the individual self. At the same time, the collective self was also given importance by the Dīwan group, the early romanticists as well as the neo-Classicalists. Dr. Izzuddin Ismail argues that “when we think about how the search for the self and its dimensions in Egypt emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century, it is discernible that this process appeared in the social arena through the religious reformation of Muhammad Abdu, and the social reformation of Qāsim Amīn, and the far-reaching incentive for these movements were liberating the self in religious and social grounds. The same thought reflected in the political realms in the propaganda of Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid; i.e. Egypt for the Egyptians. Here, the exposure of the self, and its empowerment and freedom include, the authority on the self must not have on foreigners”. See Ismāīl, ‘Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Shi‘r ‘Arabi al-Mu‘āsir: Qaḍāyāhu wa Ḍawāhiruhu al-Fanniyya wa al-Ma‘nawīyya*, third edition, Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabi, without publication date and place, pages 395-6.

¹⁵ Dr. Mishal Jaha argues that “Shawqī was also deeply influenced by European literature, and he studied law in France and exiled in Spain and travelled through several European countries. He says in the preface of his collection (al-Shawqiyyāt) about the influence of European literature on him, but when he opened his eyes toward poetry he saw that the general public do not know except for eulogy in the utmost form of poetry, and the poet of the Khedive is in the highest position, and therefore he intended to stay there”. Jaha, Mīshal, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Bākūrat al-Tajdīd fi al-Shi‘r al-‘Arabi al-Hadīth*, first edition, published by Dār al-Masīrah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1981, page 47.

the source of one's inspiration.¹⁶ And their insistence on writing Egyptian poetry further showcase the idea that poetry is basically the product of the poet's own direct experience, not at all the product of any cold, mechanical imitation. Almost similar to the European Romantic environment, i.e. the severe social and cultural changes caused by the Enlightenment and turbulent political situations, the pre-romantic Arab poetry of this period rallied around on expressing the poet's own personal responses to others or to his/her surroundings or to nature, and depicts his predicaments, introspections, confessions, sorrows and despondencies and so forth. Even though they went further ahead towards the simplifying the language of poetry in several realms, their language could not fully extricate the resemblance of the Abbasid period poetry, such as in their diction, rhythms and the spirit of their language etc.

Even though the Dīwan group of poets was not full-fledged romantics, they promoted several romantic ideals and 'Abd Al-Rahmān Shukri (1886 – 1958) was the most prominent member of this group. The passionate description and adoration of nature in a romantic manner is the main theme of Shukri's several poems. His first collection *Ḍaw' al-fajr* (the light of dawn) in 1909, and his second collection *Ṣawt al-layl* (the sound of night), in 1913 were completely focusing on nature. His feelings combine with nature in *al-Shi'r wa al-ṭabī'ah* (poetry and nature). Throughout his writings he is pessimistic and prefers death to life, but his belief in God deters him from taking his life away. And Shukri's another poem *Hilm al-ba'th* (the utopia of the resurrection) justifies worthlessness, enjoyment and even crimes which follow talking. Like the depiction of the unseen, supernatural, mysterious worlds by prodigious writers such as Milton, Dante, and Abu al-'Ala al Ma'arrī; Shukri's melancholy and doubtfulness in the resurrection - even though that is not explicit in his writings - is easily discernible in his likening it with sleeping and complete destruction, rather than the resurrection *per se*. He talks about moral decay in the metaphysical world analogous to that of our present time, and in the days of resurrection someone steal others' head, leg, etc. which are not suitable to them, then the angels

¹⁶ Dr. Gamal al-Din al-Ramady says that Al-Mazini published his collection which was the collection of poems of simmering emotions; his thought put it into words. Most of his personal feelings he presented to the readers without redecorating and retouching it. There was no eulogy, panegyric, felicitation, consolation etc. in that collection but rather, there was a heart which depicts its sorrows, bravery, happiness, and desires and so on. The most beautiful poems which portray his personal experience were: *Fi Sibāq al-Mouth* (In death race), *Hālāt Thowrāt al-Nafs Fi Sukūniha* (The status of the revolt of mind in tranquility), and *al-Milal Min al-Hayāt* (The tedium of life) and so on. See Al-Ramādi, Jamāl al-Dīn, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Sha'ir al-Aqtār al-Arabiyya*, second edition, Dār al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1119 (A.H), page 283.

are coming bearing their flesh which will help to search for their bones. In the same way, in Aqqād's poem *Tarjamat al-Shaiṭān* (The Biography of Satan), Satan is fed up with his degraded life and he repented to God and finally he went into Paradise. But he could not reside there perpetually in the attraction of paradise, because even though Paradise held him spellbound with its fascinations, he was barred from divine perfection. Finally he explicitly expressed his antagonism to God and He turned him into a rock.

Romanticism

Besides the aforesaid Dīwan group, numerous momentous literary changes were taking place in the Lebanon and in the Mahjar (Diaspora i.e. the immigrants to North America) those days, by famous literary icons such as Gibrān and Nu'ayma. These trends and changes came in reaction to the perceived inability of the prevailing literary genres to express the subjective experience of the inner self such as emotional, spiritual or supernatural of individual, by avoiding archaic words, even sometimes grammatical rules. These changes divulge an entire genuine change in poet's attitude to life; by no means superficial or artificial change in style, tout court. Thus, "In it the tension between form and content is resolved and a new norm of lyricism, of simplicity of language, together with subjective feelings prevails. The feelings were often Romantic sorrow and vague yearning, of nostalgia for lost innocence and unattainable ideals, of metaphysical awe and bewilderment, of mystery and the unknown both within the poet's self and in the darker aspects of nature without".¹⁷ Amazingly, without any cultural significance and territorial boundaries, this new current in poetry spread all over the Arab world with an astounding speed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi says that, "Even since the second decade of the century, Romanticism had slowly been gathering strength in the Arab East after having established fully in the work of Gibran and other Romantics of the Mahjar. By the end of the third decade several Romantic poets rose to fame in the Arab world, the greatest number of whom were from Egypt".¹⁸

The Romantic current in Arabic literature was not buttressed by any philosophical backing except for Gibran, and it could not develop its own indigenous thought and ideas to mark out its

¹⁷ *An Anthology of Modern Arabic Verse*, Selected with an introduction by M.M. Badawi, Oxford University Press, without publication place, 1970, Introduction, Page XV.

¹⁸ Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, Vol. 2, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1977, Page 361.

anxieties, desires, hopes, revulsions etc. and it did not succeed to formulate its own principles after its development. It was not connected to any mass political upheaval like the French Revolution, and it did not have any ideological backing like that of the European Romanticism such as the sentiment against the Enlightenment and its intellectual reasoning. Instead, in Arabic literature it simply happened. In Jayyusi's opinion "in fact, it is perhaps one of the simplest Romantic movements in the history of any poetry".¹⁹ Some scholars argue that the only forces behind the Arab Romanticism were social, psychological and in particular political causes.²⁰

But, analogous to the emergence of European Romanticism as the direct fight against neo-Classicism, the Arab Romanticism also directed from the beginning itself towards the replacement of it with the brand-new ideals of romantic currents, which were complicated to define in any systematic way. It focused in Egypt and Mahjar on two important issues, which were: poetry must be the expression of the inner self, with its own feelings, emotions, anxieties and so forth. And the second is complete dismissal of any further use of the neo-Classical ideals and its' methods. Its primary motif was more related to artistic; i.e. the poetical revolt – the discussion on its political motives is coming later in this chapter – to strive for the change in language, form, content, imagery, and attitude and so on.

The emergence of Arab Romanticism with the surfacing of Arab nationalism was not at all a happenstance.²¹ Much as the development of both Arab Romanticism and Arab nationalism did not follow the same course, both these emergences derived from the growing awareness about their disgruntled conditions of life and the discrepancies between obtained ideals and the realities around them. But, in the long run for more factual approach, the Arab nationalism tended to suppress some aspects of the Arab Romantic movement in poetry and this subtle reality will be disclosed through a thorough study of the efforts to bring poetry to terms with the realities of Arab life in 1940s. In the chaotic and turbulent political situations and disasters, the Arab poets

¹⁹ Ibid, Page 361.

²⁰ Mahmūd Amīn Al-‘Alam, *Al-Shi‘r Al-Misri Al-Hadīth*, Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, pages 7 -15.

²¹The initial nationalistic tendencies started even before the pre-romantic period. Dīwan group included in their manifesto besides their fight against shallow poetic themes, the nationalistic ideals and they reinforced the call for socialistic ideals too. Muhammad Mandūr, *Al-Shi‘r Al-Misri Ba‘da Shawqi*, published by Maktaba Nahḍa Misr, Al-Fajjala, Cairo, without publishing date, page 55.

in forties and fifties searched for a solution which was to give rise to the counter-movement of neo-Realism, and they expressed a kind of aversion towards the Romantic desires and poetic methods.

The Mahjar (Diaspora) Romanticism

After the insurrections of 1858 – 1860, in which more than three thousand Christians were massacred, several Arab origins from the Lebanon and Syria immigrated to America – most of them to the U.S.A and some of them to South American countries such as Brazil – and they founded their own newspapers and magazines, and they maintained their own culture and language. Nevertheless, they could not shun from the deep influences of the culture, language and literary writings of American writers such as Edgar Alan Poe, Walt Whitman and Longfellow and others. Unlike their homeland, they enjoyed a liberal atmosphere, and from that land of liberty a new sort of poetry emerged with a liberated spirit, which was the precursor of Romanticism in modern Arabic literature. These Arab-Americans suffered from a sense of exile, homesickness, lack of belongings and the awareness of being outsiders which made the ternary effects. Firstly, for preserving their lingual and cultural distinctiveness they united in the form of societies and associations, and launched their own literary magazines. Secondly, they idealized their homeland and its natural and simple rural life. And finally, they highlighted the discrepancies between the materialistic and spiritual views of life of the West and East respectively. This new kind of literature is known as ‘Diaspora literature’ or *Adab al-Mahjar*. And the important Mahjar poets were: Īliya Abu Māḍī (1889 - 1957), Mikha’l Nu’ima (1889 - 1988), Nadra Haddād (1881 – 1950), Nasīb ‘Arīḍa (1887 - 1946), Amīn Al-Rihāni (1876 – 1940), and Rāshid Ayyūb (1881 – 1941).

The North Mahjar Romantic poets were deeply influenced by the latter-day American Romanticism and transcendentalism, and almost all of these Arab emigrants were Christians, who received western-oriented modern education. Because of these two reasons they became more imbued with modernist and anti-traditionalist tendencies than those of their compatriots in their homeland and who chose to settle in Egypt and those who immigrated to South America. The western Romantic ideals such as the utilization of biblical themes and characters, and the preference for short meters and stanzaic forms, and the concentration on more subjective personal experience concerning nature and the mysterious supernatural world of medieval man

etc. were other elements which influenced them. At the same time, in South America, the emigrant poets were more interested in their national issues and did not discard their traditional Arab culture as strongly as their colleagues in the U.S.A.; rather, they were more proud of their Arabic poetic literary tradition, and they sustained the purity of style and the rigid norms of classical poetry. May be it was because the feeling of cultural isolation was comparatively less powerful there. As a result, they showed more concern for preserving traditional values, which is reflected in the names of their organization *Al- Uşba al Undulusiya* (The League of Andalusia) and literary review magazine *al-Andalūs al-Jadīda* (The New Andalusia) etc.

We can call the North Mahjar Romanticism a ‘movement’ because of its constructive attitudes and positive expression and their interference in general issues. Gibrān, Nu‘aima and Abu Mādi were deeply concerned with the human conditions, and were not escapists – but Nu‘aima in his later phase was a bit ivory tower – and they searched for political, social and literary freedoms, or for a better world. Both Gibrān and Al-Raihāni were the only important literary figures of North Mahjar Romanticism before the establishment of *Al-Funūn* by Nasīb ‘Arīḍa, in 1912, and its subsequent formation of *Al-Rābita al-Qalamiyya* (The Pen League) in 1920. Al-Raihāni’s soft and positive approaches of Romantic ideals and his early attacks on social disparity and rampant corruption were some of the most important characteristics of his Romantic concept. Gibran’s early dealings of social ills of Arab life in his native country Lebanon and elsewhere, and his attacks on the corrupt clergy is closely associated with the social framework of thought. While this trend of social orientation remained pervasive and even become more politically significant in the writings of the pan-Arab dimensions of Al-Raihāni, it later became more diluted in the writings of Gibran. Instead, Gibran and other North Mahjar poets took on more generalized approaches towards human life, and preferred the primitive life or the life in the Forest and spoke about general ideals of human life. But, throughout their writings, the national feelings were almost zero.

Khalil Gibran (1883 – 1931) was the most influential writer, painter and musician etc. of the Mahjar romanticism. Even though he lived most of his life in the U.S. and wrote his best-known works in English, he was the key figure of the Arab romanticism. He revived the tradition of symbolism and art nouveau; which were rejected by both American realists and European abstractionists, and by his sinuous drawings and paintings he idealized nudity. His early works

were short stories, sketches, poems, and prose poems, which were written in simple Arabic language in Arabic news papers in America. But, even though he was a towering figure, it is no wonder he has been dismissed as sentimental and mawkishly mystical in a period of the gritty realism of Ernest Hemingway and the cool intellectualism of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, because of his earnest didactic romanticism in his English writings, especially in his *The Prophet* (1923). When a collection of fifty-six of his news paper columns on the themes of love, beauty, nature, spirituality, alienation and homecoming, was published, which was titled *Dam'a wa Ibtisāma* (Tears and Laughter), which enjoyed more fame due to its difference from conventional Arabic literature, and even his Arabic writing style traces English syntaxes, because of the influence of the nineteenth century European Romanticists.

Even though the theme of his *Dam'a wa Ibtisāma* was love, beauty, nature, spirituality, alienation and homecoming, it advocates the importance of pain and suffering, which have a cleansing and purifying influence, and only through which great men were originated. In his '*Alā bāb al-hykal* (At the Gate of the Temple) a man continually asks the passersby about the nature of love. *Al-'Ubūdiya* (Slavery) categorizes the forms of human bondage throughout history. And in *Al-Shytān* (Satan) a cleric finds the devil on his last legs by the side of the road; Satan convinces the clergyman that he is essential for the well-being of the world; and finally the priest takes him to his home to look after him and to bring back to health. In 1919 he published *Al-Mawākib* (its English translation *The Procession* was published in 1947), which was a conversation between an old man and a youth. The old man is accustomed to civilized city life and the youth is an inhabitant of the forest and represents nature. While the old man expresses a depressing philosophy the carefree youth gives optimistic responses. His one-act play *Lazarus and His Beloved* is taking place in Bethany in the day after the Resurrection. The protagonist has become a kind of mystic wandering the hills. As he hears about the resurrection of Jesus, he leaves to unite with his beloved in martyrdom. A madman is the commentator on the proceedings. And in *The Blind*, David is a musician, who gains wisdom through his blindness. In this work also the madman again appears as a commentator.

In exile Gibran grew more politically active, and some of his writings were openly political in *Al-Funūn*, which was an Arabic news paper founded in New York in 1913. Even he supported the idea of revolution to attain Syrian independence from the Ottoman Turks. He met a number

of Syrian political exiles in America including the famous political and literary figure Amīn al-Raiḥānī, who later became his literary ally. During the World War I he was an active member in Syrian nationalist circles, and he did his best to bring relief to the famished people of his homeland.

Īliya Abu Mādi was one of the best known poets of the Mahjar, who left the Lebanon for Egypt in 1900, where he published his first Dīwan, *Tadhkar al-Mādi* (Keepsake of the Past) in 1911. In the same year he migrated to the U.S.A and in 1919 he published his second Diwan with an introduction by Gibran. But his two best-known Diwans were: *al-Jadāwil* (Brooks) in 1925 with the introduction of Mikha'il Nu'ima, and *al-Kamā'il* (Thickets) in 1940. Because of his education in Egypt it appears his themes and style became moderate. He was an agnostic, who typifies in his poetry his doubts about life, and he gives more importance to imagination than intellect. Even though he was a proponent of love and beauty, he was unable to grasp its meaning. The celebration of the human love in the backdrop of harmonious nature is the theme of his poem "Come".

Mikha'il Nu'ima was born into a Christian family in the Lebanon. After he completed his school education in Nazareth; Palestine, he continued his studies in a seminary in Ukraine from 1906 to 1911, from where he studied the Russian literature, and the next year he travelled to the U.S.A. After he completed his studies in law, he served in the American army, and in 1920 he helped other Arab writers to form the Arab Writers' Union which was called *al-Rabita al-Qalamiyya* (The Pen League). He was deeply influenced by the writings of Gibran, and he had mastery over all branches of literature such as drama, fiction, literary criticism, and poetry. *Hamas al-jufūn* (The faint sound of the eyelids) was his Dīwan, which was published in the Lebanon in 1946. His poetry has been described as influenced by mystic elements and Lebanese folk poetry, and his mystic belief was totally at odds with the orthodox religious belief, especially in the case of heaven and hell, and for him death was a place of relief and calm. Because of the lack of rhetoric device and the intimacy with the reader's mind, his poetry was called 'whispered poetry' (Al-Shi'r al-Mahmūs). Nostalgia for childhood and focus on inner self, were the two major themes in his poetry. In the time of agony, looking inwards so as to see everything in reality and calm is the subject of his poem *Close Your Eyes and See*.

Ameen Rihani (1876 – 1940) was an Arab American novelist, essayist, poet and political figure, and was a romanticist and a realist at the same time. As a literary rebel he attacked the neo-Classicism, linguistic scholasticism, and the woolly romantic sentimentality etc. But he was a lover of idyllic nature, and all things which are simple. At the same time, he talked not of escapist solutions, rather, aims and objectives, and he championed science, technology and progress. Because of his intellectual and practical stances he managed to keep in touch with the real needs of the people, and he was also one of the first who stands for the ‘committed poetry’ (Al-Shi‘r al-Multazim) in the Arab world.

Romanticism in different Arab countries

Egypt

Egyptian romanticism was almost individualistic, introverted, negative or to a large extent pleasure-seeking, and not concentrates more on national feelings or political connotations. The romantic nationalistic or political themes which have predominated in Arabic poetry those days were the glorification of past national greatness and heroes, the advocacy of being proud of their patrimony (*Turāth*) etc. But these factors were not specific only in romantic poetry but have always been present in all kinds of neo-classical and sometimes in traditionalist writings. But in Egypt, in the second decade of the twentieth century the romantic current got stronger with the effect of Mahjar romanticism and through the much read prose writings of Manfalūti²² and the call of the Dīwan group of poets to write about inner experience, the supernatural world etc.

It will be worthy to mention here that some endeavors were there to combine the similarities between the French and English romanticisms of the nineteenth century and the Egyptian romanticism, which was the strongest movement of its sort in the Arab East.²³ The Urabi revolution of 1879 – 1882²⁴, and its failure, and the ensuing disappointment in its outcome, were

²² But the romantic ideals of Manfalūti were a bit different. As a consequence of suppressed emotionalism he paid more attention on tragedies. The constant themes in his works were death, poverty, frustrated endeavors, fatal illness and separation of beloved etc.

²³ Isma‘īl Maẓhar, *Tarīkh Al-Fikr Al-Arabi*, published by Dār Al-Kutub wa Al-Nashr, Lebanon, 1980, pages 103 – 133.

²⁴ Colonel Ahmad Urabi Pasha led a nationalist uprising with the aim of justice and equality and he wants to depose the Khedive Tewfik Pasha and to end the French and English influence over Egypt. But Britain conducted a full scale invasion to Egypt which lasted until the Second World War.

the precursors of the beginning of a modern intellectual revival in Egypt. The failures of the ensuing perennial popular agitations, and the 1919 revolution,²⁵ and its subsequent failure and the usurpation of freedom by the tyrannical powers which all were the elements enthused and awakened the Arab poets to involve in a well-defined revolt against the authorities. But, it may be the fact that these revolutions and its consequences did not touch the inner life of the common people in the depths of their consciousness, but only the outer life with fast vanishing effects. At the same time, no one can discern any palpable political turbulence behind the emergence of romanticism in the Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon or behind the earlier romanticism of the Mahjar.

Instead, the failure of the Urabi revolution led to the corroboration and going back to the Classical currents in poetry. But, as a general change of mood, not as a consequence of any political failure, romanticism swept into Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world.²⁶ Besides the failure of the afore-mentioned Urabi revolution, several severe political catastrophes did not help to produce any romantic literature or romantic political solutions in the Arab world like those of German romanticism which the discussion on it is yet to come in the second chapter. In Egypt, the neo-Classical poets adroitly dealt with the national and pan-Arabic struggle, even Ali Mahmūd Taha who was a Romantic poet turned to more classical approaches in the forties in his nationalistic poetry.

Like the Mahjar romanticists, the realization of social disparities and hierarchies was prevalent in the Egyptian poetic circles. At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, these social

²⁵ A country wide revolt in 1919 in Egypt was against the British occupation of power not only in Egypt but also in the Sudan. When the British government ordered to send into exile the Wafd Party members including the revolutionary leader Sa'ad Zaghlūl, people from different walks of life came out to oppose the decree, as a result, Britain accepted the Egyptian independence in 1922, and they implemented a new constitution in 1923. But Britain was not ready to accept the Egyptian sovereignty over Sudan and to withdraw their military from the Suez Canal Zone, which paved the way to another revolution in 1952.

²⁶ For several literary critics romanticism emerged as a popular trend or as a mere imitation of the European literary trends. When talks about the emergence of romanticism, its incentives and motives in Egypt, Ahmad Amīn argues that it is not a mere imitation of European romanticism, rather, that combines both imitation and originality. See Amīn, Ahmad, *Al-Naqd al-Adabi*, fourth edition, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1967, page 81. But, Alwan Ali Abbas argues that, most of the Arab poets were attracted to romanticism just because they had seen it as a new movement, and then they strove to follow. And he further argues that the same Arab poets exchanged romanticism for realism, and then to symbolism and for surrealism etc. when these tendencies became fashionable in European literature. See 'Ali 'Abbas, 'Alwān, *Tatawwur al-Shi'r 'Al-'Arabi al-Hadīth fī al-'Irāq*, published by Dār al-Shu'ūnu al-Thaqafat al-'Ammah, Bagdad, 1995.

disparities began to haunt the educated young Egyptians which reached its zenith in the third and fourth decades of that century. But in Egypt, this aversion towards these social disparities expressed clearly by the neo-Classicist poets than romanticists, even though, their social protest was not revolutionary. Hafiz and Shawqi in Egypt and al-Rusāfi in Iraq were not leading a true poetic rebellion against the social status of the poor, but with the acceptance of the prevailing social order they were only calling the rich to help them, or they were only promoting charity. These neo-Classicist efforts to bridge the gap between social disparities among the social hierarchies did not make any conspicuous effect among the populace. As a result, even by the end of the first decade, the educated Egyptian youth lost their belief in the neo-Classicist alternative of the generosity of the rich and mighty people towards the poor. Contrary to the European condition of the last decades of the eighteenth century with its political turbulence and social disparities, the Arab youth especially Egyptians resorted to some kind of anarchic feelings, when they lost their belief in their traditional life without proffering any new frame of existence. An internal desire for emotional freedom had become perceptible in literature since the second decade. The constant contacts and connections of this generation with the western modernity further deteriorated their belief in the neo-Classicist alternative. Even though Shawqi's European sojourn did not make in him much internal unrest about social disparities, the conditions of Ahmad Zaki Abu Shādi and Abd al-Rahmān Shukri were totally different, and they came back to Egypt wanting to change the world. As a violent criticism against the conservative orthodoxy and sterility around him Shukri wrote his original confessions, *Al-I'tirāfāt*²⁷ in 1916 and *Mudhakkarāt Iblis* in 1917. As a consequence of severe opposition, while Abu Shadi withdrew into foreign sojourn once again, other Apollo poets turned into introvert romantics.

²⁷ He wrote this confession not as his own, but masquerading as his friend's without declaring the name, but alluding it with two Arabic letters which were م and ن . The protagonist was fed up with the 'civilized' life and he want to roam around the rest of his life through the mysterious, desolate deserts of the Sudan which seems to be eternal, and because of that he likes it rather than modern cities. Owing to their intimacy, he gave his confessional memoirs to Shukri, and after one year when he asked him it back for publishing something from it Shukri did not give it back. Several years wore on, but there was no information about him, when Shukri asked to that people about him the answer was that some African people killed and ate him, but another people argued that when he intrude into some tribal territory they kept him as captive. But his quietude astonished them and they embraced them as their god. Shukri connects in the preface of this book the characteristics of the protagonist with that of the Egyptian youth, because the Egyptian youth had strong desires and deep disappointment simultaneously, due to social and political conditions especially the elongated despotic rules.

Lebanon

Even in the second decade, in the Lebanon, there were no full-fledged romantics, but in the third decade the romanticism began to emerge with the direct influences of Al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr's (Abdalla al-Khuri) semi-romanticism, and the North Mahjar romanticism of Gibran and their ilk, and from the literary translations of European writers, which were published in book form and magazines in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. As the consequence of social awareness and the translations of European literature, the shift from neo-Classism to Romanticism took place in one Arab country after another, from the first decade, which started from the Mahjar romanticism to Egypt and to the rest of the Arab world. The true romantics of Lebanon were migrated into North America, and when those romantic waves rippled there, its outcomes reached not only home, but throughout the Arab world. And in the Lebanon, Al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr's mild romanticism reached its heights through the writings of Ilyās Abu Shabaka, besides, through his use of Biblical stories and traditions the Christian literary tradition is also strengthened in Arabic literature.

Ilyās Abu Shabaka's (1903 – 1947) personal tragedies and unfortunate experiences such as the assassination of his father, poverty, and failure in teaching and journalistic careers, created in him hypersensitivity and deep resentment against the world in which he lives, accordingly, his poetry depicts almost his emotional experiences in an accurate manner. His relations with four different women until his tragic death because of leukemia are the main themes of his several poems. The first is his wife Olga Sarofim, who is the poetic heroine *Ghalwa*, the second is a married woman, who is the snake-heroine of *Afā'i 'l-Firdaus* (The Snake-woman of paradise), the third is a singer, who played only a minor role, so he wrote only a single poem on her, the last was the perfect one; Laila, in whom the poet found out everything he was searching for, i.e. beauty, sincerity, romantic idealism, chastity and literary taste.

He was a strong critic of traditionalism in literature. In his introduction to *Afā'i 'l-Firdaus* and in some other places he put forward his concept of poetry and its inspiration without differentiating it from intuition. Nevertheless, he seems to give more importance to inspiration, because, even though several people with artistic temperament have intuitive nature, only the real poets feel the state of inspiration which prompts creativity. Neither can the poet write when he wants, nor even can choose the words, but the whole poem is inspired at once, which produced almost without

effort. As poetry is an articulation of life, and life has no definite definition or identity, obviously poetry also cannot be defined or measured by theories. And the search for absolute truth in a constantly changing face of life fills the heart with depression, which is the root cause of the deep pessimism of poets.

Much as *Al-Qaithāra* (The Guitar) in 1926 and *Al-Marīd al-Sāmit* (The silent patient) in 1928 were his first two Diwans, which were not superior in quality. *Al-Qaithāra* was a melancholic, glorifying pain as a way to spiritual greatness, and uses the word ‘death’ to idealize it. And *Al-Marīd al-Sāmit* was his first attempt at objective poetry, which depicts the true tragic story of a young Lebanese man, who loves an Egyptian girl, and later on she died of tuberculosis. But *Afa‘i ‘l-Firdaus* (1938) put him in the forefront of the Arab romanticists, and also underscored the living heritage of Christian tradition in modern Arabic literature. His love to a married woman turned out to its sexual carnal fulfillment, and he believes that she betrayed him and his values of chastity, and therefore, she is not different from a prostitute. Furthermore, she is the symbol of those forces that undermine the integrity and moral cohesion of society, which were established on virtues and noble ideals.²⁸ She is obsessively compared to the Biblical snake, because of that the whole Diwan is called the ‘Snake-woman of Paradise’. This Diwan portrays the spiritual conflicts and religious anguish, in which pain is the means of penitence and self-purification, and it deals with confession and self-rejection, aversion to illicit sexual relations, and the constant inner struggle between profane and religious, owing to the sin he committed against the teachings of the Catholic faith, and in this way, this literary work is the product of his true experience. When the protagonist disillusioned because of the breakdown of his youthful idealism, he gets maturity through his tragic outlook.

Another collection was *Al-Alhān* (The hymns) in 1941, which includes seventeen poems, and fourteen of them demonstrate directly pastoral predilections and romantic elements

²⁸ For example, see these lines from his Diwan, *Afa‘i ‘l-Firdaus*:

و كلما ذكر إسمي مر في فمـه ذكر التي صقلت للموت أغلابي
ذكر التي احتضرت عمري بشهوئها وخلدت عهـرها الدامي لأجيال
(الشهوة الحمراء)

(“When he speaks my name he speaks also of her who has burnished the chains of my death, He speaks of her who has made my life short with her lust and immortalized her squalid (literally: bloody) debaucheries for many generations”). Translations of these lines are taken from Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, Vol. 2, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1977, Page 436.

simultaneously. This collection advocates a life of rustic beauty and simplicity, innocence etc, and the material and immoral city life fill him with repugnance, because of his idealistic attitude towards human relations and his obsessive cult of purity. *Ghalwa*, is his another volume, which may not be very attractive, that published in full only in 1945, even though it was written earlier. *Ghalwa* is a beautiful young chaste girl, who visits her female cousin in another town. When she wakes up during the night she sees her cousin's sinful situation with a man, which made her feverish and could not recover from it for a long time. The story then illustrates the sorrow of her young lover Shafiq, but *Ghalwa* is partly recovered at the end. In this volume too, the sin - purity dichotomy is his major preoccupation, and through pain and remorse the protagonist attain the knowledge of God. His two other collections, *Nidā al-Qalb* (The call of the heart) in 1944 and *Ila 'l-Abad* (Forever) in 1945 deal with almost the same themes. Apart from the triumph of moral ideal these volumes celebrate the triumph of love as well. This Dīwan introduces the pantheistic form of love i.e. embrace the beloved and the whole universe simultaneously.

Iraq

The pre-romantic signs in Iraq appeared earlier in the writings of al-Zahāwī (1863-1936) and al-Rasāfī (1875-1945); especially in al-Zahāwī's collection *al-Kalām al-manzūm* in Beirut, in 1908, and al-Rasāfī's collection *Dīwān al-Rasāfī* in 1910. Despite their commitment to traditional poetry, they endorsed several romantic ideals such as the sentimental emphasis on nature, skepticism etc. But the full fledged romantic tendencies began to appear in Iraq comparatively late i.e. in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. According to some critics, it is because of the late emergence of the bourgeois class, and the deep entrenched 'classicism' in literature in the country. Earlier, Iraq was isolated in certain ways from the rest of the Arab world, but the romantic current deeply influenced by the Egyptian and Mahjar romanticisms, apart from the translated books from the west. But, Contrary to the Lebanese and Egyptian romantics, the Iraqi romantics prefer working separate individual entity rather than in groups.²⁹

²⁹ But there were two small literary groups. The first was, *Majmu'āt al-Ihya* (The renaissance group) under the leadership of al-Zahawi, al-Rasafi and al-Shabibi. The second was *Jamā'at al-waqt al-dā'i* (The group of the wasted time), and, al-Sayyab, al-Bayyati and Baland al Haidari were the leaders. And the latter group completely followed the poetic concepts of Diwan and Apollo groups of Egypt.

Husain Mardan (1927 – 1972) was the most radical romantic poet of Iraq, and he completely rejected all social norms and moral attitudes.³⁰ He was an ardent supporter of the free verse movement, and in terse verses he adroitly expressed the most extreme emotions, utilizing the impression of obscenity and an irrational rejection of everything. Both his first Dīwan, *Qasā'id 'Ariya* (Naked poems) in 1949 and the second, *Al-Lahn al-Aswad* (Black melody) in 1950 stirred up great public resentment and he was made to face rigorous law suits, and he was imprisoned for his third Diwan, *Rajul al-Dabab* (1952). Later on, he was engrossed in the political and social themes in accordance with the general trends of modern Arabic poetry.

Baland Haidari (1926 - 1996) was a Kurdish-Iraqi romantic poet, who was influenced by Lebanese poetry, Existentialism and Surrealism etc. and he spent most of his life in exile. He was a pioneer of free verse, and his writings often ran afoul of the Iraqi government. His earlier literary writings were published in Lebanese magazines such as *al-Adīb*. His poems were intensely replete with vague pictures of his imaginary world, not with facts, and which were evocative of time, not of place. *Khafaqāt al-tīn* (the throbbing of the dust) is one of his famous romantic collections.

At first, Nāzīk al-Malā'ika, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb and Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti were romantics, but later they changed their literary genre, while al-Sayyab and al-Bayyati quite drastically changed, Mala'ika gradually did so.³¹ Al-Sayyab's first Diwan *Azhār dhābila* (Withered flowers) was published in 1947 with classical structure but reflected the popular romantic theme. But his second Diwan titled *Asāfir* (Legends) in free verse style in 1950 was the

³⁰ For example see these lines: قد رصعت الفجور من ثدي أمي وترعرت في ظلام الرذيلة
فتعلمت كل شئٍ ولكن لم أزل جاهلا معاني الفضيلة

³¹ At first Nazik al-Mala'ika was an ardent supporter of romanticism, and her collection *Ashiqat al-Lail* is an explicit romantic expression. And even her famous book *Al-Tajzi'yyah fi 'l-Mujtama' al-Arabī* (division in the Arab world) explicitly called to continue the romantic genre in Arabic literature, despite its decline in English poetry. (She says that:

"ولذلك نخسر حين نتخلى عن الرومانسية ونعتنق اتجاهات ايليويت او باوند في الشعر. لان هؤلاء المعاصرين في الغرب يزدرون العاطفة والوضوح والموسيقى بشكل ملحوظ. ولعل لهم ان يزدروا ما يشاؤون ما دام ذلك لا يضر اوطانهم ولا قضاياهم القومية. اما نحن فان تقليدنا لهم في هذا الازراء يسيئ الينا ويعرقل تحررنا ونمونا الاجتماعي واننا لنكون جهلاء ضعفاء الرأي لو تخلينا عما نحتاج اليه لمجرد ان نقاد اوربا يستهجنونه").

(See, *Al-Tajzi'yyah fi 'l-Mujtama' al-Arabī*, Page 161). But later she gradually moved from romanticism into symbolism in *Shajarat al-qamar* (the moon tree), and further she moved into realism in her several poems such as *Ghaslan li-l-ār* etc. In the same way, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab moved from his romantic *Azhār dhābila* (Withered Flowers) into more symbolic in *Asāfir* (Legends), and in *Haffār al-qubūr* (the grave digger) and in *al-Asliyah wa al-atfāl* (the weapons and the children) etc. and further moved into realism in his *Shanāshīl bint al-Chalabī* (the balcony of the daughter of al-Chalabi). Al-Bayyati also travelled almost through the same ways.

thematic shift from romantic to more realistic social and political commentary. As the result of the influence of T.S Eliot and other modernist English poets, Al-Sayyāb introduced grafting myth onto the traditional structure in Arabic poetry, which gave his poem more narrative elements, such as dialogue, characterization and the use of masks. At the same time, al-Bayyati was a bit more revolutionary, even though at first he was the Iraq's cultural attaché to Spain, his leftist ideology and outspoken opposition to the Iraqi government compelled him to live in exile most of his lifetime. His *Abāriq Muhashshma* (Broken water jugs) 1955, and *Malā'ikah wa shayātīn* (angels and demons) 1967 were beautiful romantic collections.

Nazik al-Malā'ika's life and work reflect the history of her native country Iraq, i.e. idealism, exile, hope, disappointment, depression and so on. Al-Malā'ika in her 'Five songs of pain' expresses the romantic agony, and the *Ashiqat al-Lail* (The Lover of the Night, 1947) was tinged with pessimism and fear of disillusion, in which she had begun as an introvert Romantic putting emphasis on Nature and 'the night'. Hers is the poetry which expresses characteristic sorrows and despair, sensitive and sad, yet showing more individuality and the life of frustrating and disappointing than most of her Romantic contemporaries. Her poems bristle with pain and tomb and she considers death as a savior. One of her poems titled '*ala Haffat al-Huwa* (On the edge of the abyss) she expresses her desire to commit suicide, but she is afraid. In *Qabrun Yatafajjar* (A grave explodes) she imagines that she is dead and buried, and the grave imprisoned her body but it could not capture her heart. She was the proponent of free verse,³² and her basic introverted attitude was flagrant in her various poems in her second collection, *Shazaya wa Ramad*, (Sparks and Ashes, 1949), which was more revolutionary. Because its introduction put blame on the traditional Arab forms of verse which, in her opinion, thwarted the Arabic poetry from attaining the zenith of other world literature. Her third Diwan, *Qararat al-Mauja* (Depth of the Wave) in 1957, combined the traditional forms of poetry with the newer free verse. She was not ready to avoid fully the old Arabic meters, and she utilized conventional or traditional elements for new purposes, both in form and thematic content. One of her long poem *Aghniya li-l Insan* (A Song for Humanity) is the best example of her utilization of traditional tropes i.e. ancient topos of 'crying over the ruins' to lament the destruction of the Second World War.

³² Her poem *al-Kulira* (Cholera) was an attempt to write in free verse in Arabic poetry. She wrote this poem to depict the pathetic conditions of the Egyptian poor, when the cholera epidemic broke out in Egypt in 1947. She started writing in traditional verse form, but suddenly she realized that she could not express her feelings fully and effectively when she chooses the traditional *Qasida* format. This compelled her to try the free verse.

Tunisia

The Tunisian romanticism has been taken its form under the deep influence of French, Egyptian and Mahjar romanticisms. The prevalent genre of Tunisian romanticism was despondency and melancholy, because of the oppressive French colonial rule on the one hand, and the disparity between the progressive political and social conditions of the west, which is adjacent to them, and the just opposite circumstances of their homeland on the other.

Abu al-Qāsim al-Shābbi (1909 – 1934) was the most influential romantic poet of Tunisia. His romantic approach was almost unprecedented in the modern Arabic literature, in which his personal sorrows reached in communion with the torments of people,³³ and the national failure haunts his inner self, and thus, he laments for personal, social and political disasters simultaneously. He avidly read the Egyptian writers such as Taha Husain, al-Manfaluti, and al-‘Aqqād, and the Mahjar writers such as Ilya Abu Māḍi, Nu‘aima and Gibran, and the writings of Iraqi and Syrian poets. Because of his limited command in any foreign language, he mostly depended upon translations of European literature. Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi’s association with the Apollo group brought about severe radical change in poetic themes in Tunisia because of his avant-garde position in poetry. The social and political conditions in Tunisia, his enlightened outlook and his personal tragedy etc. played key roles in developing romanticism in Tunisia. The lecture he delivered at the *Khalduniyya* club in Tunisia in 1929, was titled *Al-Khayāl al-Shi‘ri ‘Ind al-‘Arab* (The poetic imagination of the Arabs) may be his most important literary achievement, and the following year that was published in a book form. In which he compares Lamartine and De Vigny to the great Arab poets Abu Tamman and al-Buhturi and he clearly proclaims his poetic allegiance to western poetic methods, instead of any Classical or contemporary poetic genre of Arabic literature. Critics may consider his virulent attacks on Arab psyche, sensibility, creative talent, and literary heritage, as immature. As a rebel, he fiercely attacked on the lack of sufficient art of mythology in Arabic. His rebellion against the culture and heritage of the whole Arab world and praising the Western literature was unacceptable to the colonized Arab people, and furthermore, which was totally against the romantic revolutionary

³³ But, there are some examples of these kinds of writings in the Mahjar romanticism like Nu‘aima’s famous poem ‘Akhi’ and the ilk.

ideals of promoting local culture, language and heritage, like those of the German romanticist's and others.

The idea of "Live with feeling and for feeling"³⁴ is the fundamental romantic concept, which he promotes throughout his poetry. Apart from this, his personal experience, reveries, childhood, motherhood, introspection, love, and political and social rebellion were the main themes of his poetry. Even though he advocated the will to live, social and political revolutions etc. in his several poems, he suffered simultaneously occasional phases of despair, which is evident in his search for the Forest as an earthly paradise, to escape from the world of conflict, social disparities and miseries. He is often, by no means always, combines death with life, youth, beauty, hope and spring, because, for him a complete life reaches its zenith of consciousness and realization through death. Happiness, beauty and love are not everlasting, and therefore, he wishes to attain death when he feels the pinnacle of happiness, because he reached the climax followed by a deterioration of experience, which persists by death. Twenty one years after his death, his only collection of poems, *Aghani al-Hayāt* (Songs of life) was published, even though he hoped to publish it in his lifetime through the Apollo group of Egypt.

Palestine

In Palestine, owing to the political turmoil and the displacement of its people, the romanticism neither flourished in its full swing nor produced many more romanticists, but the only romantic poet was Mutlaq 'Abd al-Khāliq (1910 – 1937). His collection, *Al-Rahil*, which was published posthumously in 1938, is the first example of a genuine Romantic verse in Palestine. Although he studied only inside Palestine, where the emphasis was only on Classical literature, he managed to read Mahjar Romantic literature by which he deeply influenced, especially those of Fausi al-Ma'lūf and Abu Māḍi. His poetry was riddled with sensitive, pessimistic and introverted temperaments, and a morbid love of death, and repugnance towards life, people and the world. His outlook may have partly shaped by his country's political disaster on the one hand,

³⁴ One of his famous poem entitled *Fikrat al-Fannan* (The artist's view) exhorts the artists to plunge himself into emotions and feelings, because, if they live in accordance with 'reason' and 'rationality' it will deprive intensity and vitality of their life. He says: عش بالشعور وللشعور فإنما دنياك كون عواطف وشعور (Live with feeling and for feeling, for your world is a universe of feelings and emotions.)

especially when we consider his active participation in his country's struggle against the British occupation and Zionism, and on the other his bad health from his younger age.

Syria

While the romantic current rippled in the neighborhood, Egypt and Lebanon; Syria remained almost unaffected by it, and the poets like Anwar al-‘Attar were not full-fledged romantics too. But later in the fifties, the poets such as Nadīm Muhammad and ‘Umar al-Nuss were genuine romantics, nevertheless, they did not get much acclaim. Nadīm Muhammad was regarded as the leading romantic poet of Syria, who was deeply influenced by the Mahjar romanticism and Ilyal Abu Shabaka's romantic ideals; even so he gave less importance to the romantic idealization of love, woman and poetic art. While his first collection *Alam* (Pain) in 1953, glorifies pain, the second *Farashat wa ‘Anākib* (1955) is pleasure seeking, neither embodying any spiritual conflict, nor haunting him the problem of sin, rather, his concept of love is sensual and mundane. At the same time, ‘Umar al-Nuss's poetry shows more romantic penchants than that of Nadim Muhammad, with the expression of a suppressed emotionalism. Nonetheless, his Dīwans such as *Kāna Lana Ayyām* (1950) and *Al-Lail fi ‘l-Durūb* (1958) resorted to traditional Classical characteristics in the case of meter, style and form. In his poems, the images of emotion, despair and sentimental sorrows are crowded together, sometimes indiscriminately, to give emphasis to its depth. To depict his gloomy, desperate, hopeless state of mind, he amasses many figures of speeches and metaphorical phrases, and the constant use of the fragmentation of concrete images for the sake of intensity making negative outcomes i.e. lacking in comprehension to the reader and the distraction of the poetic purpose. But his love poems are more substantial and real, which express the elevation of real emotion.

But, as a whole, Romanticism could not play any consummate role even as the free verse movement did in the Syrian poetic tradition, the predominance of Classical diction and style, even in the romantic writings may be its one reason. In addition to this, the conservative influence of the Kurd Ali School which had established itself around the Arab Academy of Language and its magazine, and moreover, Damascus was the stronghold of Arab Nationalism, which was proud of the literary and cultural heritage of the Arabs including their Classical language. And the prevalent suppressive political and social circumstances may also have played some sterling roles. For example, Nadim Muhammad, who was educated in France and

Switzerland, when he came back to Syria, disillusioned with political suppression and repressive mentalities which were prevalent in the Arab world, especially in the case of love and women, and finally he got asylum in drink and poetry.

Sudan

The literary circumstances of the Sudan were entirely different from those of other Arab countries, because of the prevalent heroic and mystic influences in both folk and formal poetry. From their ancient tribal myths and popular beliefs this folk poetry took form, and it was gyrating only on chivalry, hospitality and courage. But during the sixteenth century, mystic elements began to appear predominantly in it, thus, it mixed with Islamic beliefs and attitudes. While until the last decades of the nineteenth century heroic and Sufi elements were predominant in the Sudanese poetry, the earliest of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of neo-Classicism in accordance with the general trend of Arabic poetry. But, the endeavors of a famous poet-critic, Hamza al-Malik Tambal, at the end of the twenties, to reject the neo-Classicism and imitation and traditionalism, and his call for a local literature and to speak of the poet's own true experience, and moreover, his *Dīwan*, which he began writing in 1916, with romantic sensibility, theme, attitude and language, introduced the Sudanese literary public the romantic genre of their own. But his poetry was less successful than his criticism, because of several reasons.

However, Al-Tijani Yusuf Bashīr (1912 – 1937); a great romantic poet in the thirties of the same century, replaced the defective elements of Tambal's romanticism with his innovative ideals, nevertheless, he remained less well known. But his country's Classical tradition and its relative isolation from the Arab world had solidifying effects on his poetry, which reflected in his perennial use of archaic and obsolete words that prevented the romantic expression and diction of his poetry to a large extent. Sufi words and mystical languages are conspicuous in his writings, and the continuous use of both the words 'light' and 'dew' signal his thirst for enlightenment, and his love of beauty is generally connected with the great beauty of God, when he attains it he becomes pantheistic, even he was named 'al-Tijani' by his father with the name of the leader of the *Tijaniyya* Sufis. The portrayal of the constant conflict between faith and doubt, at times, faith and reason is the genuine portrayal of his metaphysical meditations.

The Romantic Ideals of the Apollo group

The Apollo group did not have any specific poetic or literary manifesto to follow, but in common they rallied around on the prosperity and awakening of the Arabic language and its literature and to improve the social, material and literary status of the litterateurs.³⁵ The group was started in 1932 and continued till 1935, and established a magazine with the same name,³⁶ which was the first one of its kind dedicated solely to poetry in the Arab world. From September 1932 to December 1934 under the editorship of Abu Shādi, the group published twenty-five issues, which were included even criticisms against the new poetry. From its starting Shawqi was in the vanguard, and following his sudden death in the same year Mutran filled the gap. Several leading poets were members such as Ahmad Muharram, Hasan Kamil al-Sairafi, Ali al-Ina‘I, Ibrahim Naji, Ahmad Shaib, Mahmud Abu al-Wafa, Ahmad Daif, Ali Mahmud Taha, Mahmud Sadiq, Kamil Kilani, Sayyid Ibrahim, and later joined the group Mustafa Abd al-Latif al-Sahrathi, Mukhtar al-Wakil, Swalih Jawdat, Abd al-Aziz Atiq etc. Poets from the Sudan, Tunisia, Iraq and Mhjar wrote numerous poems in Apollo magazine, out of them, Abu al Qasim al-Shabi from Tunisia, ‘Iliya Abu Madi, Shafiq al-Ma‘lūf and Riyadh al-Ma‘luf etc. of Mahjar were famous figures. Self-examination, sadness, the sense of helplessness, the relentless search for an ideal world, and the strong outpouring of emotions, were the main characteristics of their poetry.

But, in many articles, Abu Shadi clearly talks about his concepts of poetry especially in the second volume of his famous book *Qaṭra min Yara‘ fi ‘l-Adab wa ‘l-Ijtimā‘*, and he states that poetry is the expression of the spirit of the universe, accordingly, it should reveal the beauty and

³⁵ Even though Abu Shadi was a strong literary figure and started his critical career early in the twentieth century and established a literary organization called the Apollo group, he could not make as strong an impact as the Diwan group in the first three decades. Because in his criticism Abu Shadi was milder due to his gentle manner, and unlike the total rejection of neo-Classicists ideals and establishing the brand-new ideals of poetry by the Diwan group, Abu Shadi was ready to endorse several good aspects of neo-Classism. Even the neo-Classicist Shawqi was the president of the Apollo group. Because Abu Shadi did not believe that to introduce new concepts in poetry rooting out the existing concepts are important. At the same time, the group was not based on any monolithic poetic idea or school; rather, it propped up all kinds of experiments and innovations, even the radical innovations of form.

³⁶ In Greek mythology Apollo was a god of music, poetry, prophesy, truth, the sun and light etc., and as a direct fight against the Christian oppressive God the romanticists of Europe promoted in their writings ancient Greek gods. As a result, Greek mythology and mythic characters got more prominence in romantic writings. Keats’s ‘Ode to Apollo’ and Shelley’s ‘Hymn to Apollo’ were famous literary works. As the direct influence from European romanticists, the Arab romanticists were also widely utilized the Greek mythic themes and characters. The ‘Apollo’ group and the ‘Apollo’ magazine were the two palpable examples of these influences.

greatness of it, and through poetry one can discover the secrets of existence. That not mean the poetic themes must gyrate on universal beauty or greatness, rather, poet can focus on any petite element or thing to depict his bewilderment or adoration of it. Abu Shadi accentuates the need for sincerity, uniqueness of imagination and feeling, because cultured minds will be enthralled by the imagery of a poem not by the syntax. Instead of giving more importance to music in poetry, which benumbs the senses and easily penetrates into the emotions, he talks about the obligation of poetry, which is the expression of life and the supernatural interpretation of the universe; which are obviously analogous to the European romantic ideals. His poetry also gives more importance to intense feelings and emotions, and his collection *al-Shafaq al-Bāki* (The weeping dawn) says that poetry is nothing but the expression of feelings and emotions.³⁷ And, for poetic innovation, apart from pursuing the concept of ‘blank verse’ of al-Zahawi and Shukri, he also put forward his own concept of ‘free verse’, which is called *Al-Naḍm al-Hurr* or *Al-Shi‘r al-Hurr*.³⁸ ‘Tafīla poetry’ is a more descriptive term named for the metrical units or the feet that make up the lines.

Contrary to those of Classical or neo-Classical ideals, in his poetry Abu Shadi put forward new concepts on nature, which were deeply influenced by Mutran’s poem “Al-Masa”. He was also influenced by Gibran, ’s concepts of nature, and Abu Shadi refers to it ‘mother nature’, which gives him solace, refuge and inspiration. His poetry on nature illustrates the strongest romantic current, even though in his writings he is sometimes Realistic. Both his discussion on European romanticists and their concepts in his *Qaṭra min Yarā*, and his emphasis on the mystical pantheistic concept of nature, signals the influence of Rousseau, Goethe, and Wordsworth etc. on

³⁷ قلبي الخفوق مصاحبا أنفاسي شعري ، وما شعري سوى أحساسي

(My throbbing heart accompanies my breath; my poetry is nothing but my feelings.)

³⁸ Here, we must not be confused the concept of ‘free verse’ of Abu Shadi with that of in the fifties and after. While Abu Shadi intended to liberate poetry from the two hemistich form and the similar stanzaic patterns, the free verse movement of Nazik al-Mala’ika, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab and others gives the poet full freedom to decide his own poetic form, i.e. keeping the same meter throughout the poetry he can use as many feet as he can in each line of the poem. But Abu Shadi mixed in a single poem several meters. He ventured into this experiment in a period in which the poetic quality was measured on the basis of its Classical elements, but this experiment paved the way to poetic renovation in the case of meter and form throughout the Arab world and in the Mahjar, even though the experiment of Abu Shadi was unsuccessful per se. But with the publication of Nazik al-Mala’ika’s second Diwan, *Shazaya wa Ramad* in Baghdad, the free verse movement got much acclaim. Afterwards, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab’s second Diwan *Asatir* (1950) was also lent support to Nazik al-Mala’ika’s concepts of free verse. After these two poets ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Bayyati became a full-fledged modern poet when he wrote his Diwan in free verse, *Abāriq Muhashshama* in 1954.

him. He is the first Egyptian poet who utilized the Greek and ancient Egyptian myths, but not in pure romantic or symbolic ways.

The poet of “nature and peace”; Muhammad ‘Abd al-Mu‘ti al-Hamshari (1908 – 1938) was one of the great romantic poet of the Apollo group, and his writings may show discrepancies, because of his early melancholic genre, and his later optimistic ideals and his love for countryside. Interestingly, al-Hamshari sometimes combines the Quranic themes with natural scenery in an impressive romantic way, and his long poem “Shāṭi‘ al-A‘rāf” is the best example. In the Quranic concept, al-A‘rāf is a place which separates Paradise from Hell, but in his poem it separates life from death and he took inspiration to write this poem from watching the Nile. The poem segues into describing an imaginary trip of the poet; he takes after his death, in a magic boat of the Muse, which he sails with his beloved in the sea of Time to the shore of al-A‘raf. Even though al-Hamshari was an imaginative poetic genius, his premature death marred the possibility of the emergence of a talented poet of the modern Arabic poetry.

Another famous romantic poet of the Apollo group was Ibrahim Nāji (1898 – 1953); whose poetic imagery and language may not be as vital as Abu Shādi’s, but his influence on contemporary Egyptian romantic poetry was more profound nevertheless. He was an aficionado of woman and love, but he was not contented with his married life, and therefore, he seems to have had several affairs with women throughout his life. His writings represent the release of suppressed emotions of the younger generation of the time, mixed with pessimism. Because of the political conditions, personal misfortunes and the discrepancies between real and ideal worlds of that time several romantic poets turned to melancholic genre of romanticism. Ibrahim Naji was one of them, and he was always a pessimistic too,³⁹ and he says: “my story is always such an unpleasant one that a day equals a night” (Warā‘a al-ghamām). Using simple language, emotional veracity, depicting his true experience and change of tone are the major peculiarities of his poetry.

³⁹ Whatever the reasons, Ibrahim Naji was a pessimist throughout his writings, and sometimes he is pessimistic towards love, fate, social surroundings, and sometimes towards the entire world. He wrote three *diwans*. The first one came out in 1934, named وراء الغمام (behind the clouds), the second in 1943, named ليالي القاهرة (Cairo Nights) and the third is published posthumously in 1953, named الطائر الجريح (wounded bird). His poems had a constant pessimistic approach in melancholic genre, which deal the issues of the poor and their haphazard conditions, his personal sorrows, and transience of life etc.

Like Ibrahim Naji, another romantic poet of the Apollo group, Ali Mahmud Taha (1901 – 1949) was also an introvert melancholic poet, whose writings show sorrows, deprivation of the right to love, and the proclivity to escape from the desperate social conditions and so on. His first *diwan*, titled *Al-Mallāh al-Tā'ih* was published in 1934, which seeks asylum in solitude, distant heavenly stars, and portrays the thirst for love and beauty, and searching for the unknown. His second *diwan*, came out in 1940, after his European voyage, titled *Layali 'l-Mallāh al-Tā'ih*, in which he extols the European world of freedom and pleasure, and here we can see the breakup of his introvert melancholy and he moves on to joyful dreams of life and love. Amid the aversions and catastrophes caused by colonial powers in the Middle East, Taha idealized the individual freedom, liberal enjoyment of life, peace and beauty, exotic charms etc. of Europe, which was a new romantic element in modern Arabic literature which produced the second volume of *Layali*.

The romanticists of the Apollo group excluding Abu Shadi were the congeries of two different groups. The first were introverts who sought their own sad little world of solitude and communion with their own poetic sorrows and nature. The second were extroverts who idealized woman, wine and song.

The Shi‘r magazine

The Lebanese poetic quarterly magazine *Shi‘r* (Poetry) was established in 1956 by Adonis (‘Ali Ahmad Sa‘id) and Yusuf al-Khal, played vital roles in promoting modern and avant-garde concepts in a revolutionary manner, by the publication of ground-breaking Arabic poems in form, theme and content, and by the translated poems from French and English, and by articles on modern poetic concepts. In 1958, they published a series of translations from Western poetry, which was devoted to T.S. Eliot, in which his famous poems such as *The hollow men* and *The waste land* were included. In his poems in the *Shi‘r* magazine, one of the best-known poets; Shauqi Abu Shaqra highlights several modern, especially romantic concepts such as the glorification of the primitive world, or the world of children, as the ideal world of human being. Another poet Muhammad Maghut’s poetic theme - like those of several others’ - was doubt, disbelief, and depression. He seeks integration with another/unknown reality since he feels as a stranger in this world. His poem *Al-rajul al-Mayyit* (The Dead Man) is an accurate portrayal of the romantic melancholic reclusion. Adonis

Even though this magazine was not an ardent supporter of romanticism, the most revolutionary type of poetry emerges not from Marxian or pure Romantic writings, instead, from this Lebanese poetry quarterly. By rejecting the romantic ideals they were bordered on the idea that poetry should reflect the individual vision or expression, because poetry means self-exploration, paradoxically the same self-exploration and individualism is closely attached to romanticism in Europe. Even though the Shi'r group focused more on the total negation of the common language and highlighted the idea of unique personal poetic characteristic or individual imagery, the moderate among them such as Yusuf al-Khal, Khalil Hawi and Ali Ahmad Sa'id - who is well known as Adonis - proposed the idea that the individual world of the poet and the society in which he lives are inextricably connected to each other in which the salvation of the individual is closely connected with the salvation of the society.

The Romantic Revolutions

After the second half of the nineteenth century, when the development of the Arabic literature compelled to intertwine with the colonial negotiations in those new geopolitical circumstances, the Egyptian and Lebanese writers, especially those who come from the Christian background created a very rich gamut of thought in literature. The possibilities to utilize the intellectual and artistic European romantic revolutionary ideals amid the bloody regional histories to combat the oppression of their own people were articulated by the modernist, precisely the romantic writers. But the cultivation of Arab unity within diversity, the utilization of nationalism as a way of extricating the Arab world from the claws of the Ottoman Empire and other foreign interventions, and upholding the dignity of Arab culture and Arab past, were the common agendas of the Diwan, Apollo and Romantic groups of poets. Nevertheless, the Apollo and Romantic groups (especially the Pen League) further aspired to release writers from the fetters of obsolete traditional poetic canons. But, even though the romantic writings ventured into challenge the thematic limitations of Classical Arabic poetry, when they moved into more personal themes and diverse range of imagery, they maintained their loyalty to classical structure to a large extent. But the Mahjar poets such as Khalil Gibran, Mikha'il Nu'ima and Ameen Rihani, (the Pen League) and their counterparts in the Arab world, especially in Egypt, were blazing the trail of a Renaissance in more revolutionary manner by promoting the renovation of Arabic letters, discarding the literary teachings of the Quran, and the prosody and subject matter

of the traditional Arabic poetry. Through their writings - especially of Gibran, and Nu'ima - a romantic vein opened up simple and transparent literature endowed with new expressions and elements of the language, and by focusing on imagination and lyricism, through their transcendental paths, they travelled beyond the real world. While, Mikha'il Nu'ima's critical essay *Al-ghirbāl* (The Sieve), along with other works, opened the door to a new poetics, Rihani's interest was in pan-Arabism and Palestine issues.

Political revolution

After Rousseau had connected romance with politics, the European romantic revolutionary consciousness arose against the deplorable conditions created by modernity and its spiritual misery, and its socio-economic inequalities etc., and in Germany it had a more direct political nuance. At the same time, Arab romanticism was not closely connected with any political change or did not have any more national or political implications as it seem, rather, that was connected with the increasing awareness of social and cultural conditions and disparities.⁴⁰ For example, the Arab poets in North America identified the discrepancy between the real life they knew in the Arab world with its lack of individual freedom, freedom of expression, material backwardness etc. and the progress they saw in America, with its all kind of freedom which were deeply influenced the thought process of Mahjar poets, which had very wide dimensions. "In the first place, political restiveness had had only a very short history prior to the rise of the Romantic movement, and, further, there is an apparent lack of political consciousness in several of the leading Arab Romantics such as Ibrahim Naji, M.A. al-Hamshari and Ali Mahmud Taha (in his earlier, Romantic phase) in Egypt, Ilyas Abu Shabaka in Lebanon, and al-Tijani Yusuf Bashir in

⁴⁰ Having compared the European romanticism with its Arab variant Mounah A. Khouri goes on to argue that [the European] "romanticism was basically a comprehensive revolt against the established order in all fields of thought, taste, and expression. Its social and literary aspects were for the most part blended together in full harmony. Transplanted to Egyptian soil, the European equation of romanticism with comprehensive revolt was changed into a much narrower one of romanticism with literary revolt against the formalism of neoclassical poetry. Thus, the poetical productions of the Egyptian modernists are far more valuable and interesting as literary achievements than as social documents. The link between literary and social aspects of most of their compositions is indeed very tenuous". See, *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, Mounah A. Khouri, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 135.

the Sudan”.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the national feeling and political interference of several romantic poets including Gibran, Rihani, Mutran, and so on were often obvious in their writings.⁴²

In fact, no one can attach the loyalties of Arab romantics (and non romantic poets too) to a firm axis. One main reason may be that their poetical works and such fluctuating social and political tendencies could be casual rather than consistent. And these poets consider social and political principles and behaviors, self-evident ethical imperatives on the basis of simply good or bad, which may be another reason. And the approaches of different romantics of different issues and themes were different in different Arab countries. And when we measure the romantic tendencies even the categorization such as neo-Classicists, pre-romanticist and romanticist is also a bit problematic. Accordingly, M.M. Badawi argues that “The Romantic movement in modern Arabic Poetry had so many followers that it is difficult not to be arbitrary in one’s selection of people who can be regarded as truly representative of it”.⁴³

Non political revolution

Analogous to the European romantic revolt, the Arab romantic revolt was also prevalent against the untruly modernist emphasis on reason and intellectual thinking, and against the unfeeling, mechanical, arid and chaotic city life. Instead, they found out the healing power and warmth of heart in Nature. Both the artificial constructs of civilization and the hazardous living conditions of industrial civilization were fully rejected, and the serene, peaceful and bucolic sublimity of

⁴¹ Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, Vol. 2, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1977, Page 363.

⁴²When we take the example of Mutran; owing to the influence of European literature he was truly lyrical and he wrote nationalistic odes, elegies and eulogies of Arab leaders. He wrote in his poetry ‘the Arab awakening’ (Yaqdat al-‘Arab):“O noble company of Arabs, ye/My pride and boast, o’er every company, / Long have I chid your carelessness and sloth, / Yet not as one that might despair or loathe, / But candidly, as if to wake a friend / Unconscious of vast perils that impend”. (This piece of poetry is taken from the *Modern Arabic Poetry, An anthology with English verse translations*, by Arthur J. Arberry, Cambridge, at the university press, 1967, London, 1950) His advocacy of social justice, freedom, progress and other liberal ideas were expressed allegorically using foreign titles such as ‘Nero’, ‘Napoleon’, ‘Chosroes’ and the like. John A. Haywood argues that: “Matran’s weightier poems inspiring the Arabs, whether in the guise of a direct appeal or an elegy, made a great impression on his contemporaries. Future generations will probably be more appreciate of his shorter, lighter lyrical poems, just as Englishmen prefer Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads* to his *Prelude* or *The Excursion*. In this type of poem, he tried everything, even free verse (prosified poetry – Shi‘r manthur)”. A. Haywood, John, *Modern Arabic Literature: 1800 – 1970, An introduction with extracts in translation*, Lund Humphries, London, 1971, page 101.

⁴³ M. M. Badawi, *An Anthology of Modern Arabic Verse*, selected with an introduction by Badawi, Oxford University Press, without publication place, 1970, page XVI.

Nature got more significance. The reason behind the constant idealization of Nature and the perennial urge to return to Eden was the romantic realization of the shortcomings, divisions, hegemony etc. of modern societies against the perfect state of Nature.⁴⁴ Nature is uncorrupted and the civilized life is full of complexities, and therefore, the revolt against the institutions of modernity is vital as it is an agent of human sufferings. As a consequence, the celebration of the simplistic, idyllic, rustic natural life as often couched in Biblical language took place. Even though there is a mystical respect for life, the Mahjar romantics did not bewail the transience of worldly life or death, on the contrary, they often celebrated it, and the depiction of the death of leaves in Nu'aima's *Autumn Leaves* is a genuine example for it. In sum, "In the Romantic period, owing to their personal experiences and the lack of adaptability with the circumstances of the city life and its values, and to escape from the strangling political conditions, our poets looked forward into countryside. Thus, they began to depict in their poems the life in shanty with its simplicity. We know *Aghāni Al-Kūkh* (The songs of a shanty) by Mahmud Hasan Ismail and the odes of Himshari who talks about the life in the countryside".⁴⁵

On the other hand, the romantic poets sometimes use several powerful natural elements such as wind, storm, flood etc. by which they can manifest their anger and wipe out the social and political inequalities. In his poem *Irādat al-Hayāt* (The will to live) al-Shabbi depicts the soliloquy of a powerful wind, which says: "if I have an ambition, I will ride on my desire and neglect any caution. I will not exclude any uneven terrain of the vales, or the domes raging fire".⁴⁶ In his another poem *al-Nabi al-Majhūl* (The unknown prophet) he wishes if he had the power of a storm he will bring into existence the revolution, which obsesses his mind. In the

⁴⁴ For example Gibran considers the Forest as an idyllic ideal place without depression, and the refuge from the complexities of modern city life. He says in his *al-Mawakib*:

ليس في الغابات حزن لا ولا فيها الهموم
فإذا هب نسيــــــــم لم تجئ معه السموم

(There is no grief or sorrows in the forest, breeze blows there, but the simoom will not come with it). Al-Shabbi also wants to live in the Forest, and he says in his poem *Quyūd al-Ahlām* (Chains of dreams)

في الغاب , في الجبل البعيد عن الوري حيث الطبيعة والجمال السامي
واعيش عيشة زاهد متــــــــسك ما إن تدنسه الحياة بــــــــذام

(In the forest, on the mountain, far distant from people, where natural landscape and fine beauty exists. I shall live the life of a pious monk, unsullied by any blame).

⁴⁵ 'Izzu Al-Ddīn Isma'īl, *Al-Shi'ir Al-'Arabi Al-Mu'āsir: Qadāyāhu wa zawāhiruhu Al-Fanniyya wa Al-Ma'nawīyya*, third edition, Dār Al-Fikr Al-'Arabi, without publication date or place, pages 326 -7.

⁴⁶ إذا ما طمحت إلي غاية ركبت المنى ونسيت الحذر
ولم أتجنب وعور الشعاب ولا كبة الهب المستعر

same way, Shukri also wants the power of a wind to purify the world and to eliminate all evil doers, which manifests in his poem *Ila al-Rīh* (To the wind). Several other Arab romantic poets are also expressing almost the selfsame themes in their writings.

Even the North Mahjar Romantic poets spotlighted on the futility of materialism and highlighted the importance of the spirituality of the East. As the consequence of Euro-American romantic influence, cultural isolation, nostalgic feeling etc., the tendency of looking inward, deepening sorrows as a revulsion against material progress of modernity, and introvert melancholy etc. further strengthened.⁴⁷ Night and the darkness were the recurring images of sorrows in the writings of Iraqi romantics such as al-Bayyātī, al-Sayyāb, and Nāzik. For al-Bayyātī, night proffers romantic meditations, which are often imbued with deep sorrows and feelings of inner death. He believes in incessant night, and he wants to smash the lamp from fear of visions.⁴⁸ *Ughniya li-l Huzn* (Song to sadness), *al-Zahra al-Saudā'* (The black flower) and *Maqdam al-Huzn* (The arrival of sadness) are Nazik al-Mala'ika's poems, which depict the overflow of sorrows and pain by which he gets cleansing and purifying effect. Almost analogous to this, in Ilyas Abu Shabaka's poem *Afa'i 'l-Firdaus* (The Snake-woman of paradise) and in *Ghalwa*, the harrowing inner pain is the way of penitence and self-purification. But, the Mahjar romanticist Gibran wants the communion with night.⁴⁹ Salah Abd al-Sabbur is also the one who talked more about sorrows. (His odes such as *Ughniya ila Alla* (Song to God) *Al-Sshai' al-Hazin* (A sad thing) *Al-Huzn* (Sadness) and his Diwans such as *Al-Nas fi Biladi* (People in my country) *Aqul lakum* (I tell you) *Ahlam al-Faris al-Qadim* (The dreams of the old knight) *Ala Tawali*

⁴⁷ Dr. Izzudin Ismail argues that: "we can say, the melancholic genre in our contemporary poetry is of course the influence of modern European melancholic poets who witnessed the catastrophic effects of materialism on the European psyche, especially in the twentieth century. We cannot deny the explicit or implicit influence of George Eliot who mounts up to the emotional zenith of blaming the contemporary European civilization because of its inner desolateness, especially in her poems such as *The Waste Land* and *The Hollow Men*. See *Al-Shi'ir Al-'Arabi Al-Mu'āsir: Qadāyāhu wa zāwāhiruhu Al-Fanniyya wa Al-Ma'nawiyya*, third edition, Dār Al-Fikr Al-'Arabi, without publication date or place, pages 354.

⁴⁸ He says in his poem *Min ahzān al-layl* (some of the sorrows of night) that:

أمنت بالليل الذي لا ينتهي وحطمت من فرع الرؤى مصباحي
ونهرت في نهر الظلام مشاعري حتي تخضب ماؤه بجراحـي

(I believe in incessant night, I broke my lamp from angst of vision / I brushed off my feelings into the river of darkness, thus, its water was tinted with my wounds)

⁴⁹ His prose poem *Ayyuha l-layl* (O Night) says that: "لقد صحبتك ايها الليل حتى صرت شبيها بك, والفتك حتى تمازجت ميولي (O night, I accompanied you, until I became similar to you, I became familiar with you in a way that I mixed my tastes with those of yours, and I loved you very much that my passion has turned to be a miniature of your existence."

(Respectively). His poems conjure up vivacious scenes and humane positions in which the motive embodies sorrows.

Gibran utilized all literary elements of his time such as desires, knowledge, freedom, and revolution. In his writings, both in Arabic and English, he truly expressed his smoldering sorrows and grieves and tragedies of his own people. And we can see the markets and the mountain brooks of the northern Lebanon, and the pillars of the huge shrines of the Baalbek fort which evoke the memories of horrendous and ghastly bygone era with its beauty and grandeur. His writings, paintings and music reflected the national images such as the enchanting beauty of gigantic gorgeous mountains and ancient cedar groves of *Wadi Qadisha*, and the stormy skies and snowy valleys. He replied in his prose poem “You have your language and I have mine” to the traditional critics’ accusation of excessive sentimentality with weak style, “you have preserved its rigid cadaver / and I shall have its soul”.

“He wrote in “My family has died” (Māta Ahlī) ‘my family has died owing to hunger. But in this remote land I am wandering among joyful, fortunate people who take tasty food. What is the use of sorrow and weep of a poet? If I were an ear of wheat in my native land, a hungry child can take me and thus withstand the hands of death from him’. He lived till 49 years of age, and those years were the most horrible in Lebanese history. There were feudalism with its worst form and he has seen the irrational imitations of old customs and he fought against that vehemently”.⁵⁰ And he has seen the children (Aṭfalunā) feeding slavery with milk, and learning humility with alphabets, and girls put on clothes which hide their submissiveness, and women are silenced in the bed of obedience and subjugation. But Gibran did not watch all this malicious conditions in a hands-off mode, without regret and disappointment; rather, he gushed out his anger and awoke the slumbering oppressed masses. From all these harsh criticisms including against language, customs, traditional marriages, clergy, and the state etc. he moved forward in his later life to a more generalized attitude and a universal position towards man and life.

Nazik al-Mala‘ika’s revolutionary stand in the cause of the emancipation of women is fully evident in her article in 1953, entitled *al-Mar‘a Bayna al-Tarafain al-Salbiyya wa al-Aklaq*

⁵⁰ Sulaiman, Mūsa, *Khawāṭir fi al-Adab*, maktabat al-Madrasat wa Dāru al-Kitab al-Lubnāni, li al-Ṭiba‘ati wa al-Nashr, Beirut, 1969, page 63.

(Women between two extremes: Negativism and Morality), in which she likened the condition of Arab women to that of slaves, because of cultural, emotional and financial restrictions. She believed that even language is also male made, because, for expressing general concepts we should use masculine forms to refer to both masculine and feminine. Her poem *Ghaslan li-l-‘Ar* (To wash away the shame), depicts the victimization of women, by double standards and restricting codes of society. The victims in *al-Na’ima fi l-Shari* (The woman who sleeps in the street) and *Marthiyya li Imra’a la Qimaṭa laha* (An elegy to a worthless women) were also women. She also rejects the lazy lifeless people who are in their dead slumber, in *Fi wādi al-‘Abid* (In the valley of the slaves) she calls them slaves and do not want to live with them. Another poem *Unshūdat al-Salam* (The sonnet of peace) deplores war and warmongers.

Shukri’s famous poem *al-Malak al-Tha’ir* (The rebellious angel) is revolutionary and almost similar to Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound. Prometheus stole fire from the heavenly world and gave to human being, and that was the first thing led to the progress of human being, and therefore the Greek god Zeus punished him. As he was the symbol of someone who sacrifices his life for the progress, liberation and happiness of human being against the heavenly suppression, he was celebrated as a hero throughout the romantic writings. But Shukri replaces Prometheus with an angel and the Greek god Zeus with God. But Shukri’s angel suffers from a self-afflicted restlessness, because of the devilish conditions of this world and the miserable conditions of human being. Here, angel’s sufferings are also sacrifices, but unlike Shelly, Shukri is more pessimistic. In the case of love, he glorifies it, and that is the source of comfort in this evil world, but paradoxically sometimes he connects it with cruelty, and some of his poems like *al-Zawja al-Ghadira* (The deceitful wife) portray the inseparability of love and cruelty. When he was dismissed from the School of Law, he approached the revolutionary nationalist leader and poet Mustafa Kamil to employ in his news paper *al-liwa* to promote his ideals, but he dissuaded him and persuaded him to continue his higher studies.

Al-Shabbi was the most radical revolutionary romanticist, who believed in social and political change by means of force. His poems *Irādat al-Hayat* (The will of life), *Nashīd al-Jabbar aw Hakadha Ghanna Prometheus* (Sonnet of the tyrant or likewise sang Prometheus), *al-Nabi al-Majhūl* (The unknown prophet) etc. were the topmost romantic revolutionary poems, in which he uses philosophical symbols to express the inevitability of force and strength to bring about any

form of change. The 'snake' in his poem *Falsafat al-Thū'ban al-Muqaddas* (Philosophy of the holy snake) is colonial powers and the 'blackbird' is weaker nations. The timid blackbird has no option but to die, and when it faces death it desperately and fearfully asks: "what did I do to deserve this punishment". Another poem *Ila al-Sha'b* (To the nation) puts the blame on his people for their inertia and the lack of enthusiasm to fight back the colonial rulers. He fiercely criticizing the tyrants in his poem *Ila Thughat al-'Alam* (To the tyrants of the world), which starts: "Imperious despot, insolent in strife,/ Love of ruin, enemy of life!/ You mock the anguish of an impotent land/ Whose people's blood has stained your tyrant hand,/ And desecrate the magic of this earth,/ Sowing your thorns, to bring despair to birth".⁵¹

Abdalla al-Khuri, who writes under the pseudonym of Al-Akhtal al-Saghīr (the Lesser Akhtal), was a semi-romantic, and he wrote some stanza poetry, some rhymeless poetry and some free verse in very short lines. He was well known as a love-poet; nonetheless, he championed the cause of the suppressed and poor. Even one of his magnificent poems titled '*al-Fuqara*' (The poor), which sallies out on the rich.⁵² And several other romantic poets upheld their revolutionary attitudes in their writings, but the discussion on all those poets and aspects will be a lengthy tedious work.

The Decline of Arab Romanticism

After the Second World War, the turbulent political conditions and the strengthened European interference in the Middle East, including the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel and the displacing of the Palestinians, and other social predicaments such as corruption in the public life, rampant poverty and suppression of women etc. necessitated more realistic solutions for their impasse, especially, because of the lack of sufficient political nuances in it the Arab romanticism found out its waning and the Arab intellectuals became increasingly interested in political philosophies whether that is the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood or the secularist Marxian ideology

⁵¹ *Modern Arabic Poetry, An anthology with English verse translations*, by Arthur J. Arberry, Cambridge, at the university press, 1967, page 53.

⁵² With these lines the poem starts: "Oh rich men, the riches that you possess / Have been set up by the arms of the poor / The places in which you now reside / Who is it built them for you, but the poor? / The food which, with such relish, you consume, / Who made it for you, then, if not the poor?" See *Modern Arabic Literature, 1800 – 1970*, An introduction, with extracts in translation, John A. Haywood, Lund Humphries, London, 1971, Page 179.

and so forth. The politico-ideological criticisms against romanticism mainly rallied around escapism, ivory tower, adolescent, coping with dreams and reveries, not mature but childish or primitive etc. The Egyptian poets such as al-Sharqāwi and Kamāl Abd al-Halīm were Marxists and their Iraqi counterparts such as al-Bayyāti and al-Sayyāb also took somewhat the selfsame stands. Writings about roses, sunsets, nature and brooks became outmoded because of the appearance of social realism, which influenced not only the poets such as Abd al-Sabūr, al-Faytūri, Hijāzi, al-Sayyāb etc. but even romantic poets such as al-Qabbāni and Kāmil Nash'at and so on.

And, the influence of Arab romanticism on its society was not as extensive as the European romanticism had on the European society. Because, in addition to the lack of political and social nuances, the Arab romanticism failed to focus on any specific class or group of people, while its European counterparts championed the cause of the growing middle class. And the early death of several romantics including al-Shabbi, al-Hamshari, al-Tijani, Abu Shabaka etc. was also another factor which played some roles in the withering away of Arab romanticism. And, after a century of the decline of European romanticism its Arab variant emerged. Naturally, the asymmetric social and political climate did not help the romanticism to survive. When talks about the Iraqi romanticism M.M. Badawi argues that: “In Iraq romantic poetry was slower to appear and relatively short-lived. It began during the late forties in the works of poets like al-Malaika and al-Sayyab (in his early period), but already in the early fifties there were signs of dissatisfaction with its limitations”.⁵³

When the Arab romanticism lost its significance, several poets began to follow directly the structure and style of English poetry, especially those of T.S. Eliot, who is the most famed English poet after Shakespeare in the Arab world. Apart from Eliot,⁵⁴ the illustrious Iraqi poet al-Sayyab followed in his writings Edith Sitwell, and the famed Egyptian poet Abd al-Sabur is also

⁵³*An Anthology of Modern Arabic Verse*, Selected with an introduction by M.M. Badawi, Oxford University Press, without publication place, 1970, Introduction, Page XVI.

⁵⁴ For example, see the research article depicts Eliot's influence on al-Sayyab using the comparison between the two poems of both the poets by Hussein N. Kadhim, entitled *Rewriting the Waste Land: Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab's "Fi Al-Maghrib Al-Arabi"*, *Journal of Arabic Literature*, XXX, Koninklijke Brill N V, Leiden, 1999. Page 128 – 165.

influenced by modern English poets including Eliot. The widespread use and imitation of western style in poetry led to the simplification of form and meter.

Chapter II

Romance and Revolution in English Literature: A Brief Sketching

Romance as ‘Love’

The medieval *romance*⁵⁵ or *romaunt* came to mean a tale of chivalry written in one of the romance languages, such as Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Provençal and Catalan, usually in verse, and often taking the form of a *quest*.⁵⁶ As some medieval romances such as those of Lancelot and Guinevere, Floris and Blancheflour, and Tristan and Iseut were famous love stories, people assume that a love interest is a necessary component in the romance of the Middle Age⁵⁷, even though, the romances of Alexander, Richard the Lion-hearted and many lesser figures could get along well without love elements but chivalric, supernatural and adventures, fight with dragons and giants, slaughter of Saracens, rightful heirs getting their own again and innocent princesses championed against their cruel adversaries etc. If a love story enters into the few romantic narratives of this period at all, “is either subordinated to the adventure (*Erec, Yvain*), or is incidental, as when a Saracen princess conceives a desperate passion for the hero (Bevis of Hampton), or is used as a motivating force, an excuse for the adventures of the hero (Guy of Warwick)”.⁵⁸ The lengthy feature of verse romances, sometimes one to six thousand lines, - but those in prose were generally late -, with monotonous characters, which were types rather than individuals,⁵⁹ in loose succession of incidents on biographical

⁵⁵From the Latin adverb ‘*romance*’, meaning “in the Roman manner” come the word *romance* and its derivatives. In time, if some Latin literary works are translated into French, people began to call it *romantic*. Gradually, the word came to designate the most popular type of French poems, and later this usage expanded into other languages. From this medieval sense of the word “Romance” and “Romantic”, colloquial usages came to describe intense *emotional experiences*. Later, “The Romantic period”, came to mean a particular historical epoch and “Romanticism”, we can say, is an intellectual experience or set of cultural/ideological formations that came to eminence during the romantic period. But, neither ‘Romance’ nor ‘Romantic Period’ or ‘Romanticism’ was monolithic ones, however we define these things.

⁵⁶ Heath, Duncan and Boreham, Judy, *Introducing Romanticism*, ed. by Richard Appignanesi, Icon books U.K., and Totem books U.S.A., first published in the U.K. and Australia in 1999 and reprinted in 2002 and in 2006, page 3. Here, the quest stands for the early types of romance; the chivalric, and those romances contain quests in search of lost loved ones, earthly paradise, immortality and great richness etc.

⁵⁷ Until the middle of the thirteenth century French remained the normal language of the ruling class of England and therefore, those romances that circulated in England were French. Gradually, English began to displace French as the language of polite society and the English romance started near about 1250, that time the European romance, especially French had passed its prime. The most popular English romances before 1300 were concerned with English subjects and only in 1300 started stories of the Charlemagne and Arthurian and classical legends.

⁵⁸ *A literary History of England*, Second Edition, Etd. By Baugh, Albert C, Vol.1, *The Middle Ages: the Old English Period (to1100)*, Kemp Malone & *The Middle English Period (1100-1500)*, Albert C. Baugh, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1967, Page 173.

⁵⁹ “The characters of medieval romance are poorly differentiated. They are types rather than individuals. The hero conforms to a pattern that of the ideal knight and within this pattern there is little room for individual variation”.

threads, end happily as a rule, with the sameness of incident and the weakness in plot, it will be surprising to think how a literary revolt in which the claims of legend and fancy with the passion of love were advanced anew for recognition against religious monopoly was shriveled in common understanding into mere 'love'.

As a literary revolt against earlier religious traditions⁶⁰ and feudalism, the twelfth century romance was almost secular, even though the crusading zeal and occasional Christianizing tendencies were sometimes included in it, and that had given more importance to woman than ever in the community but not as a begetter of 'Love'. With higher ideals of conduct towards woman and more refined manners and heightened sensibility with a code of chivalry "revealed in the increased appreciation of beautiful – the beauty of womanhood, the beauty of nature, the beauty of noble conduct".⁶¹ Among all of the English romances the two earliest were *King Horn* and *Havelok the Dane* (approximately 1250) and the most popular were *Guy of Warwick* and *Bevis of Hampton* (about 1300). Alexander the Great, the siege of Thebes, the Trojan War and the adventures of Aeneas were the four subjects of mediaeval romances based on classical stories.

A Semantic Tracing of the Term 'Romance'

According to René Wellek one must conceive of period terms, not as arbitrary linguistic labels nor as metaphysical entities, but as names for systems of norms which dominate literature at a specific time of the historical process.⁶² The adoption of a specific term - whether it is "romance-like", "extravagant", "absurd", "picturesque" or whatever - definitely points to an awareness of

See, *A literary History of England*, Second Edition, Vol.1, *The Middle Ages: the Old English Period* (to 1100), Kemp Malone & *The Middle English Period (1100-1500)*, ed. by Albert C. Baugh, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1967, page 174.

⁶⁰ In England, by 1215, clear ideas had been formulated and attempts were made to cast off the fetters of papal authority corroborated by the national enthusiasm aroused by the crusaders, and the powerful churches in England especially with its strong personalities such as Lanfranc and Anselm, and the religious revival under Henry I, made awareness about the rights of the individual citizens. Fancy, in the shape of legend had advanced anew and further reinforced by the passion of love, to fight against the general male view of love and the same love had long been condemned by religion and despised by conventional erudition too – not denying the Arthurian legend offered satisfaction to some inmost cravings of the human heart before that – were the important and natural reflection of the aforementioned awareness. These two main elements, love and legend, give birth to the twelfth century literary revolt the "romance". See, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. by Sir A.W. Ward and A. R. Waller, Vol. 1, *from the BEGINNINGS to the CYCLES OF ROMANCE*, Cambridge, at the university press, 1967, page 223.

⁶¹ Ibid, page 301 – 2.

⁶² Wellek, René, *Periods and Movements in Literary History*, in *English Institute Annual* 1940, New York, 1941, Page 73 – 93, and *Theory of Literature*, with Austin Warren, New York, 1949.

specific changes. “But this awareness may have existed without these terms, or these terms may have been introduced before the actual changes took place, merely as a program, as the expression of a wish, an incitement to change”.⁶³ When we consider these changes as “a general and permanent characteristic of mind, art and personality, found in all periods and in all cultures”,⁶⁴ we can say, “Romanticism” is not a monolithic one, but it simply means all poetry written in a tradition of literature differing from that descended from classical antiquity and its connotation will fluctuate nation to nation in accordance with institutional and social differences.

In England, France and Germany the early stages - in Germany later stages too - of the semantic history of the term “Romantic” has been very fully studied.⁶⁵ Even though the term “romantic poetry” is first used in literary history and criticism by Ariosto and Tasso,⁶⁶ the contrast between the “romantic” literature - both mediaeval and Renaissance - and the classical antiquity in literary tradition was widely discussed by Thomas Warton - in his introductory essay “The origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe” to his “History of English Poetry”, 1774 - and his contemporaries. Even the eighteenth century literary dichotomies, whether it is ancients and moderns, artificial and popular, “natural” poetry of Shakespeare and French classical tragedy or “Gothic” and “Romantic”, were not the names of any contemporary literary movements or periods, but to that of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. But much attention has, comprehensibly, been paid to August Wilhelm Schlegel’s descriptions and pronouncements on the topic, both in Germany and abroad, especially his lectures in 1798 - 1809 period delivered in the university town of Jena in

⁶³Wellek, Rene, *The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History*. 1. The Term “Romantic and its Derivatives. Comparative Literature, Vol. 1. No.1. (Winter, 1949) page 1 -23, Duke University Press on behalf of the University of Oregon.

⁶⁴ In his article entitled *Toward a Theory of Romanticism*, Morse Peckham begins his discussion on “Romanticism” that it has two primary references: (1) a general and permanent characteristic of mind, art and personality, found in all periods and in all cultures ;(2) a specific historical movement in art and ideas which occurred in Europe and America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Then he proceeds his discussion towards the second one. Peckham, Morse, *Toward a Theory of Romanticism*, PMLA, Vol. 66, No.2 March 1951, Page 5 – 23.

⁶⁵ In French, the semantic history of the term “romantic” till 1810 have studied by Fernand Baldensperger , entitled “*Romantique*’ - *ses analogues et equivalents*” *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, XIV (1937), in German Richard Ullmann and Helene Gotthard’s study *Geschichte des Begriffs “Romantisch” in Deutschland* (Berlin 1927), dealing the history till 1830, And in English Logan P. Smith’s study *Four Words, Romantic, Originality, Creative, Genius* (Society for pure English tract no. 17, London 1924) are valuable studies in this area.

⁶⁶ The sixteenth century debate on what constitute modern literature, by two famous Italian writers, Ludovico Ariosto and Torquato Tasso were the first historically important ones in literary history. Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso* and Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberate* were the two famous books in this respect.

Saxony, Berlin and Vienna. He combined the aforesaid broad historical conception with the typological, which was based on an expansion of the contrast between “classical” and “Romantic”, as that between the poetry of antiquity and modern, first associating romantic with the progressive and Christian and later this dichotomy associated with the antithesis of organic - mechanical and plastic – picturesque.⁶⁷ He described Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio as the founders of modern romantic literature.

The term ‘romantique’ was used in France in a literary context with its new connotations only after the German influence. But, Simonde de Sismondi’s *De la littérature du midi de l’Europe* (Literature from the Central Europe), August Wilhelm Schlegel’s *Cours de littéradramatique* (Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art), and Madame de Stael’s *De l’Allemagne* (From Germany) were decisive in this discourse which were discussed and reviewed heatedly in France. These books differentiated between several varieties of poems and dramas. In all of these polemics the enemies were called a bit epithetical ‘*Les romantiques*’ in France, interestingly, at the same time, in Germany Dante and Shakespeare were praised and spoken of as sustaining ‘*La Romantique*’.⁶⁸

When the first English translation of Madame de Stael’s *De l’Allemagne* published in London in 1813, through their two reviews, Sir James Mackintosh and William Taylor of Norwich reproduced the distinction between classical and romantic, and Taylor says that Schlegel knows of Madame de Stael’s indebtedness to him.⁶⁹ Before this distinction occurs for the first time in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s lectures, given in 1811, - that was even clearly derived from Schlegel – there was no instance of a juxtaposition of “classical” and “romantic” in England, nor anyone was conscious of the new literature introduced by the Lyrical Ballads could be called romantic.

None of the English poets, even Samuel Coleridge and William Hazlitt, who used Schlegel’s *lectures*, made the claim they were romanticists. Lord Byron definitely rejected it, and his work had strong anti-romantic elements. “Byron deplored Romanticism particularly that of the English Lake School, and thought that the great tradition of English verse had ceased with the death of

⁶⁷ In this respect August Wilhelm Schlegel’s magnum opus should also be considered. That is *Cours de littéradramatique* (Course of Literature on Dramatic Art). In December 1813 this book was translated into English by Madam Necker de Saussure.

⁶⁸ For the reasons of this contradiction and the developments of romantic revolts, see the details in this chapter subtitled *The Romanticist revolt in Germany, England and France*.

⁶⁹ See Wellek, Rene, *The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History*. 1. *The Term “Romantic and its Derivatives*. *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 1. No.1. (Winter, 1949), Page 13.

the Neo-Classical poets Pope and Dryden”.⁷⁰ But Thomas Budd Shaw in his *Outline of English literature* (1849) speaks of Walter Scott as the “first stage in literature towards romanticism” and he calls Byron as “greatest of romanticist” and rejected Wordsworth for his “metaphysical quietism”. David Macbeth Moir in his *Sketches of the poetical Literature of the Past Half Century* (1852) mentions Matthew Gregory Lewis the leader of the “purely romantic school” and Scott, Coleridge, Southey and Hogg were disciples and he treated Wordsworth independently. But earlier in 1818 William Hazlitt described in his *Lectures on the English poets* a new age dominated by Wordsworth, its sources are in the French revolution, in German literature and its antithetical stand to the old French school of poetry and to the mechanical conventions of the followers of Pope.

Therefore, if we consider the use of the word “romantic” for any form of literature (remember Tasso and Ariosto) we should go back to the second half of the seventeenth century France, England and Germany. On the basis of the contrast between the terms “classical and romantic” go back to the beginning of eighteenth century, and for self-designation as the criterion, go back to Germany in 1808, France 1818⁷¹ and none at all in England. And on the basis of romantic ‘quality’, the dates in different countries are debatable.

The Romantic ‘Movement’

A name, a concept or characterization, and a list of writers included in the classification are necessary to call something a movement, or a tradition or a period or whatsoever. But here, from the interpretive tradition throughout the nineteenth century which connected the ‘revolution’ in poetry to that of in France and later the break in of this tradition and the periodization attempts in the beginning of the same century, for most readers this ‘romanticism’ felt like a movement.⁷²

⁷⁰ Heath, Duncan, and Boreham, Judy, *Introducing Romanticism*, ed. Richard Appignanesi, Icon books U.K., Totem books U.S.A., 2006, page 122.

⁷¹ The novelist Stendhal (Pseudonym of Henri Beyle, 1783 - 1842) was the first self-proclaimed French Romantic. Later, in his 1823 pamphlet *Racine and Shakespeare*, he defined Romanticism as a genuinely modern means of expression. Here, the ‘Modern’ is based on a disenchanted realism in contrast to Victor Hugo’s revolutionary idealism. The Romantic ego, for Stendhal, had no scope for realization in the post-Napoleonic era but to choose its advancement through the Church because it seems the future of power in France after the failure of the French revolution and the Restoration of the monarchy, as he depicted in his 1830 realist masterpiece *The Red and the Blake*; his romantic hero Julien Sorel was doing so.

⁷² In 1885, William John Courthope wrote a book entitled *The Liberal Movement in English Literature*. This work first appeared in the *National Review* as series of essays. He says that “I might, indeed, have called the series The

Many historians argue that romanticism was not a single movement at all, but rather, which was a congeries of liberals and conservatives, revolutionaries and reactionaries, deists and atheists, Catholic-turned-revolutionary-turned-conservatives, and therefore, “the notion of romanticism is broad enough and vague enough to apply equally to Hitler and John Keats, to Mussolini and Ralph Waldo Emerson”.⁷³ Although we are vociferous in labeling the attributes such as ‘imagination’, ‘organicism’, ‘symbol’ and ‘nature’ to Romanticism, by feature it is notoriously amorphous and multifarious, and continually inviting definition, and in semantic outline, which is fluid and resisting conclusive boundaries. But, there is no denying that “there must be a resemblance which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live”.⁷⁴ There emphatically were some “resemblances” and certain ideas and attitudes which rejected the vital concepts and poetic practices of earlier period – for lack of any other brief name, in Lovejoy’s opinion – may it still be called a Romantic “Period” or “Movement”. The standard date for this phenomenon is

Romantic Movement in English Literature”. That was the first time someone is talking about a romantic ‘movement’. See Courthope M. A., William John, *The Liberal Movement in English Literature*, by the author of the *Paradise of Birds* etc, John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, 1885. And later in 1910, his *History of English Poetry*’s sixth volume entitled *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry: Effects of the French Revolution*.

⁷³ Because any sincere defenders of culture and democracy can assail fascism as a neo-romantic revival, because the great figures of romanticism were spiritual sponsors of dictatorship – not in literal meaning, but rather, the romanticist gave more emphasis on individuality rather than collective – and violence, also fascism, in one sense, is like romanticism in being anti-rational and anti-Christian. See the wonderful article titled *To the Rescue of Romanticism*, by Jacques Barzun, the spring 1940 issue of *The American Scholar*, Available at: <https://theamericanscholar.org/to-the-rescue-of-romanticism/#.VsGua7R97IU>. According to Makdisi, since the staggering heterogeneity of romanticism was directly associated with the heterogeneity of the process of modernization, “romanticism must not be understood as a movement, a school, a style, or even a tendency”. Then he adduces a quote of Marilyn Butler as it was persuasively argued. See Makdisi, Saree, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1998, page 7. Furthermore, the noted British philosopher Bertrand Russell describes the complexities of the nineteenth century intellectualism and its reasons he calls it a revolt, and he classified it into two categories; one from romanticists and the other from rationalists. He says: “the romantic revolt passes from Byron to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to Mussolini and Hitler; the rationalistic revolt begins with the French philosophers of the Revolution, passes on, somewhat softened, to the philosophical radicals in England, then acquires a deeper form in Marx and issues in Soviet Russia”. Chapter XXI, *Currents of Thoughts in the Nineteenth Century*, in *A History of Western Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell, A Touchstone Books, Published by Simon & Schuster, New York, without publication year, Page 719.

⁷⁴ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, Preface to *The Revolt of Islam*, in *Selected Poems, Essays, and Letters*, ed. Ellsworth Barnard, Odyssey Press, New York, 1944, Page 524.

from 1798 to 1824; 1798 stands for the coming of the *Lyrical Ballads* and 1824 for the death of Lord Byron.⁷⁵

Supremely interesting and totally opposing arguments to one another, Arthur O. Lovejoy and René Wellek must be mentioned here. Giving more emphasis on all-inclusiveness of the term ‘romantic’, Lovejoy talks about the importance of discriminating romanticisms and its various manifestations, to differentiate between “possibly quite distinct thought-complexes”,⁷⁶ because ‘to call these new ideas of the 1780s and 1790s “Romanticism” is confusion-breeding and producing historical error, because it suggests that there was only one such idea, or, if many, that they were all implicates of one fundamental “Romantic” idea, or, at the least, that they were harmonious *inter se* and formed a sort of systematic unity’.⁷⁷ But, Wellek saw “complete agreement” among French, German and English romanticists on “all essential points”, and he went on to devise a theory of Romanticism on the basis of those points i.e. “imagination for the view of poetry, nature for the view of the world, and symbol and myth for poetic style”.⁷⁸ The unity of romanticism exists in taking its place in a sequence of periods and the total process of literature, not in “the usual odd mixture of biography, bibliography, anthology, and disconnected emotive criticism”.⁷⁹ And he concludes, “we can then go on speaking of romanticism as one European movement” with a prevailing “system of ideas” and with “their anticipations and their survivals”, and he cancelling out the argument of the nonexistence of romanticism in the eighteenth century, because that is based on a mere ‘prejudice’ that “only the totality of a

⁷⁵ In another categorization the date ends in 1832 which stands for the deaths of both Sir Walter Scott and Goethe. Several scholars are also aware that the date could be started from 1789, or 1792 or 1800 and it ends in 1830, or 1832, or even 1837. For every periodization everyone has their own reasons and justifications.

⁷⁶ Lovejoy starts his distinction between romanticisms with the criticism on romanticism that “the word ‘romantic’ has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing. It has ceased to perform the function of a verbal sign” and he divides it basically into three segments, (1) a romantic naturalism that conceived the “natural” as “a thing you reached by going back and by leaving out” and as one that “was associated with primitivism of some mode or degree”, (2) a romantic aestheticism that saw itself as “in its very essence a denial of the older naturalist presuppositions”, and (3) a romanticism that specifically identified an aesthetic perception of infinitude with Christianity. See Arthur O. Lovejoy, “*On the Discrimination of Romanticism*” in *Romanticism: Points of View*. Ed. Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970)

⁷⁷ Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Meaning of Romanticism for the Historian of Ideas*, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol.2, No.3, June 1941. Page 257 – 278, Published by, University of Pennsylvania Press.

⁷⁸ Wellek, Rene, *The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History*. 1. *The Term Romantic and its Derivatives*, *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 1. No.1. (Winter, 1949), See also “Periods and Movements in Literary History” in *English Institute Annual 1940*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1941, Page 73 – 93.

⁷⁹ Ibid

writer's works is the criterion of judgment"⁸⁰ and even the individual romantic design can be traced to the seventeenth century or beyond. But, Jerome McGann discarded it on grounds that, instead of poetic imagination Wellek paid more attention to the outlook of culture and society, and furthermore, his theory of Romanticism is insufficiently classified and the synthesis is "too abstract and conceptual". He further claims that "Imagination" is explicitly not Byron's view of the sources of poetry, "nature" is hardly his "view of the world" (Byron is distinctly a cosmopolitan writer), and his style is predominantly rhetorical and conversational rather than symbolic or mythic".⁸¹ For McGann, due to other several reasons "Wellek's position fails to map the phenomena comprehensively because it is a specialized theoretical view derived from a Kantian/Coleridgean line of thought".⁸² By reconciling the opposite theoretical positions of Lovejoy and Wellek, Morse Peckham later synthesized both the ideas through introducing the concepts of organicism, dynamism, and diversification.⁸³

Victorian critics canonized the disparate early nineteenth-century writers as a "movement" - a platform of political as well as literary types - based on their relation to the French Revolution, which unites the romantic writers together by dividing them as conflicting political types. There is no denying that, some severe changes took place that time and some preparations, anticipations and undercurrents such as the German influence, the French Revolution,⁸⁴ the revivals of the ballads and Elizabethans, were the tangible factors which brought about that

⁸⁰Wellek, Rene, *The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History*. 1. The Term Romantic and its Derivatives. *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 1. No.1. (Winter, 1949) page 22, Duke University Press on behalf of the University of Oregon.

⁸¹ McGann, Jerome, *Rethinking Romanticism*, *ELH*, Vol.59, No. 3, (Autumn, 1992), Page 735 – 754, Johns Hopkins University Press.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³ Peckham, Morse, *Toward a Theory of Romanticism*, *PMLA*, vol. 66, No.2, (Mar 1951) Page 5 – 23, published by Modern Language Association.

⁸⁴ Out of these factors the role of French Revolution deserves some more detailed description. On the one hand, the Revolution made vivid the contrast between natural man and artificial society, on the other hand by its preoccupied thought and emotion the revolution made a break in historical continuity. In general notion the romantic period starts after the French revolution. M. H. Abrams says: "Romantic Period" is usually taken to extend approximately from the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 – alternatively, from the publication of [Wordsworth and Coleridge's] *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 – through the first three decades of the nineteenth century'. See, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 1993, Page 125. At the same time, for Theodore Watts-Dunton "Romantic Revival" was not the effect of French Revolution but the cause of it. He is trying to relate the 'English Romantic Movement' with the political events by discussing on the craftsmanship of the poets and on medievalism as their primary poetic impulse. See, Theodore Watts-Dunton, *"Poetry" and "The Renaissance of Wonder"*, E. P. Dutton and Co., New York, Page 237.

change. Many of the age's leading writers thought that something new was occurring in the world's affairs, so that for Blake "a new heaven is begun", in Shelley's opinion "The world's great age begins anew" and for Keats "These, these will give the world another heart, / and other pulses".⁸⁵ Numerous publications and pamphlets in England in the last decades of the first half of the nineteenth century set Thomson, Burns, Gray, Cowper, Collins and Chatterton the precursors of this change. Percy and the Warton as beginners, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey were recognized as founders, and in time, Byron, Shelley and Keats were added, even though these poets discarded the former for political reasons. In a thoroughly researched study Josephine Miles finds out technical justification for thinking of the five poets Byron, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth and Coleridge together, and she argues that the general features of romantic mode is discernible most particularly in the writings of these poets.⁸⁶

In another way, what allied almost all these romantic poets were their strong mutual belief that they are reviving the original English tradition of poetry, which had vanished after the death of Milton, and came back, in their opinion, to some extent after the death of Pope, and Chatterton, Cowper, Collins etc., who were the victims of circumstance and of the bogus dawn of Sensibility.⁸⁷ The groupings such as 'Lake School' which comprising mainly Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge, first made by Francis Jeffrey in 1802, and outrageously abusive naming such as 'The Cockney School' given by John Gibson Lockhart, and 'The Satanic School' named by Southey, and the 'Spirit of the Age', are some of the classifications inside the afore mentioned poetical groupings, known as the "Romantic Movement".⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *The Romantic Period, The Nature of Romanticism*, English Literature, Britannica Online Encyclopedia, available at <http://www.britannica.com>.

⁸⁶ Josephine Miles, *Eras & Modes in English Poetry*, published by the University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964, pages 121 – 22.

⁸⁷ Bloom argues that in this highly individual sense English Romanticism legitimately can be called a revival of romance. More than a revival, he says that "it is an internalization of romance, particularly of the quest variety, an internalization made for more than therapeutic purpose, because made in the name of a humanizing hope that approaches apocalyptic intensity. The poet takes the pattern of quest-romance and transposes them into his own imaginative life, so that the entire rhythm of the quest is heard again in the movement of the poet himself from poem to poem". Bloom, Harold, *The Internalization of Quest-romance, Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*, ed. by Harold Bloom, published by W. W. Norton & Company, London, 1970, page 5.

⁸⁸ Most of these classifications are made by politically conservative critics except for the last one. Even Wordsworth protested violently against the naming the 'Lake School' but by 1814 that was generally accepted and became no longer hostile. "Lakers" was also a term used by Byron to express his aversion for Wordsworth and that milieu. William Hazlitt also criticized *The Lake School* poets for their Rousseau-like "fundamentalism of the self".

The Sublime

Experience of the sublime (the “exalted”, the “awe-inspiring”) means experience of a power that exceeds the quantifiable and usable beyond normal human standards of measurement, that something too vast, obscure, irregular or powerful to be understood or grasped. Anything earthly that is grand and huge, that could produce the feeling of infinity: in the overwhelming mass of mountainous landscapes or in dark, deep caves, in soaring buildings, particularly ruins, or in the new structures of industrialization, or even in poetry (such as that in the Old Testament or in Homer), or in Gothic architecture, or in “romantic” literature which celebrate the superhuman or the divine. For Edmund Burke, the mode of thought, belief and interpretation of the relation between the supersensible and sensible is characterized by pain and terrifying thrill rather than by pleasure and love.⁸⁹ But Wordsworth was puzzled by the two fold character – mild and wild – of nature’s inspiring effect.⁹⁰ Both types of inspiration had contributed to his grooving up as a poet: he was “fostered alike by beauty and by fear” (1805 Prelude 1.306). And here, the viewing subject’s (the self) identity and limitation⁹¹, the power of human reason, the sublime feeling and

And Southey’s work was neither romantic nor innovative, but he was best known for his prose writings, and he just moved to the Lakes due to his friendship with Coleridge, who shared his early Republican passions. John Keats, William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt were called “The Cockney School” poets, because they were low-born and not “well-bred”. ‘The Cockney School’ and ‘The Satanic School’ enjoyed less currency. At the same time, ‘The Spirit of the Age’ is a categorization by the famous British poet William Hazlitt, who collected the character sketches of 25 thinkers, reformers, poets, essayists, politicians and novelists most of whom were British, whom Hazlitt believed to represent significant trends in the thought, politics and literature of his time. Most of whom appearing in English periodicals especially in *The New Monthly Magazine* in 1824, and these essays were collected with several other’s with their character sketches, and were published in book form in 1825, and it is Hazlitt’s the most successful book and his magnum opus. This ‘Spirit’ always existed as impatient of authority and limits and proffered to the laity new ways of literature.

⁸⁹ Burke, Edmund, *A Philosophical Enquiry in to the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, (1757) edited by Adam Philips, world’s classics, Oxford and New York, Oxford University press, 1990.

⁹⁰ Hartman, Geoffrey, “Was it for this ...?”, *Wordsworth and the birth of the Gods*, in *Romantic revolutions: criticism and theory*, edited by Kenneth R. Johnson, Gilbert Chaitin, Karen Hanson, and Herbert Marks, Indiana University press, 1990, Page 8.

⁹¹ Emanuel Kant distinguishes between the “mathematical sublime” and the “dynamic sublime”, the first is present in the extent of immense structures and the later is in the overwhelming force of natural powers. For him, the sublime feeling is coming from internal comprehension of human limitation not from external object but Edmund Burke emphasize the psychological transformation in the subject’s mind when he beholds the sublimity. Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762 – 1814) made the dualism of subject (me) and object (everything not-me). When Burke’s positive sublime confirms the presence of the Divine, Kant’s negative sublime focusing on the limitation of human

spiritual elevation originating from his internal world, that emerging from his confrontation with the object are the core of the matter. The rise of the Gothic literature and the extensive adoption of symbols and images in the romantic period were the responses to the mind's terror.⁹²

Through a gradual shift of focus, in the Romantic period, from the object to the subject, most of the Romantic poets' common penchants were: focusing on the subject and respect to individuality, celebrating the self and capturing the self-exaltation from their picking out and representation of the unbound, unattainable natural landscape. The Romantic poets were "unacknowledged legislators of the world"⁹³, because they decipher the silent sublimity in natural forces and translate it into readable and sensible words. The five sources and two connotations⁹⁴ of the sublime in Longinus's *On the Sublime*, which was a Greek treaty of aesthetics in seventeenth century, Burke's and Kant's elaborations - whether we call it Burke's physical or positive sublime and Kant's spiritual or negative sublime - on sublimity in eighteenth century, mixing the orthodox sublime with the Freudian psychological and semiotic criticism in Thomas Weiskel's *The Romantic Sublime* (1976) are the key figures in the discussion on the sublime. Aidan Day says that "The grand and commanding conceptions produced by the sublime are not, of course, subject to rational disquisition. The ultimate sublime object is, of course, God".⁹⁵ But Thomas Weiskel trying to demystify and de-sublimate the sublime and to the end,

imagination entwining the sublime with *beautiful*. Burke also contrasted the *beautiful* with the sublime, but for Kant the sense of the sublime is a creative act within the subject, not in the outer world, because to contemplate the sublime forces the subject must sacrifice imagination to reason, that imagination is inadequate to comprehend the infinite. See (1) *Critique of Judgment*, by Immanuel Kant, (2) *The menace of the sublime to the individual self: Kant, Schiller, Coleridge and the disintegration of the romantic identity*. Brooks. L. M, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995 (3) *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and the beautiful*, Edmund Burke, (1st ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

⁹² (a) For Burke, poetry assumes a higher position than does painting because poetry is more obscure and uncertain. Uncertainty possesses a higher quality than clearness. He argues that "it is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passion". This form of fear and terror may be one reason behind the emergence of Gothic literature. (b) The romantic poets do not believe that a language is wholly sufficient to translate invisible feelings and reveal the invisible. This disbelief and doubt led them to choose suggestive symbols to broaden the meaning and therefore their works became open to various interpretations it will not be exhausted by criticism at all.

⁹³ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *A Defense of Poetry*.

⁹⁴ These five sources are: great thoughts, strong passion, graceful expression, skillful figures of speech, and careful organization of sentences. The soul's and literary sublimity are the two connotations.

⁹⁵ Day, Aidan, *Romanticism, the New Critical Idiom*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, Page 184.

he argues, that man can be free from astonishment and fear and hence he live in a finite world where everything is understandable.⁹⁶

Romanticism and Revolution: The Evolution of Romance

Romance which developed from a medieval and early Renaissance tradition of chivalric, and occasionally fantastic storytelling, became an established literary style from the fifteenth century, and at least in England this was considered chiefly to be a prose genre. As a genre of adventure or experience, depicting events and actions often fanciful or exaggerated, with Arthurian and classical heroes, romance was frequently being utilized as a medium for personal or social exploration. With the publication of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605–1615) in the early seventeenth century, the Renaissance genre of romance entered into introspection; Cervantes mocks not only the style of romance but also its aspirations toward an idealized and meaningful life. Significantly, romance had its pretensions of the fantastic and memories of a recent, magnificent past, but the same romance became unfashionable when neoclassical thought gained more aesthetic dominance. Later romance returned to an enhanced position and lost many of its negative connotations mostly due to the endeavors of the German cultural theorists and with the ascendance of Gothicism in the second half of the eighteenth century. Thus, instead of ‘false’ sensibility and ‘improbable’ notions, Romance came to stand for integrity, authenticity and spontaneity. Industrial Revolution and American and French revolutions erode the agrarian lives and proffered them new ways of living, and which were reflected also in new ways of thinking. In this context the Romanticists could not keep mum or withdraw into the carapace of their imaginary fantastic world. Therefore, Romanticists are no more over-sensitive dreamer now, but heroic genius figures facing the painful realities of time, and this was a total change against the vulnerabilities of modernity.

The Development of Romanticism and its Some Key Features

Romantic ideas arose both implicitly and explicitly against the 18th century Enlightenment thought and its sponsors, the *philosophes*, because they saw man in common, and as creatures endowed with reason, and by giving more emphasis to reason they turned man into a soulless

⁹⁶ Weiskel, Thomas, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence*, 1st ed., 1986, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, U. S. A.

humanoid, or a thinking machine, without diversity or uniqueness. Christianity had created a matrix into which medieval man positioned himself. The Enlightenment replaced the Christian matrix with the emotionless matrix of Newtonian natural philosophy. The result was, for the romantics, nothing less than downgrading the individual. The *Philosophes* defined themselves in quarrel with their enemy – the Church – that helped to generate the mythical ungodly Enlightenment which was explicitly opposed by many Romantics. By liberating himself, for Romanics, from rationality, reasons and from all the intellectual chains, man must replace habits, values, rules and standards with imagination, sensitivity, feelings, spontaneity and freedom. So instead of the motto “*Dare to know*” the Romantics adopted the battle cry “*Dare to be*”.

Somewhat a political disaster in France when the Revolution entered its radical phase in August 1792, with its King killing, Robespierre, the Reign of Terror,⁹⁷ and the military expeditions of the Napoleonic armies, and in 1820s the widespread entirely new social concerns of the Industrial Revolution, especially in England with its full swing since 1760, when the old order – politics and economy – seemed to be splitting up and the Romantics’ threat of moral disaster i.e. irrationality and unreason, all signaled chaos. Furthermore, Enlightenment rationalism proceeded to express the language of political and economic liberalism, the allegiance of political left – so many socialists, communists and anarchists – to the heritage of the Enlightenment, and Jeremy Bentham’s radical critique of traditional politics turned out to be an active political movement known as utilitarianism, and revolutionary Jacobinism engulfed the working class movement - the English Chartism - of the 1830s and 40s, and because of several other reasons this era can be considered as indicative of an age of crisis. But with regard to romanticists, they failed both to be aware of just how much they shared with the Enlightenment *Philosophes* – in fact, what has often been celebrated as the Enlightenment thought was and is not an easily and clearly identifiable thing and it bore very little resemblance to reality – and they failed to recognize the meaning and significance of the cultural period which had preceded their own.

⁹⁷ The storming of Bastille by the “rabble” (the French equivalent of Voltaire’s famous term *la canaille*) in 1789 signaled an unpredictable undercurrent of violence which haunted the romantic imagination. *The Reign of Terror* is the incident which took place in 1793 – 4, when a group of radicals named with Robespierre (Maximilien Robespierre 1758 – 94) carried out mass executions including the king Louis XVI, the romantics profoundly disillusioned.

Even before 1789, the Romantics opposed the showiness of the conventions of the artificial urban and aristocratic society. They blurred the distinctions between the debauched, fashionable Christianity or impassive Deism and the irreligion or anti-clericalism of the *philosophes*. The Romantics concentrated their assault on the callousness of bourgeois liberalism as well as the characteristics of urban industrial society, those were: soulless individualism, utilitarianism, economic egoism, materialism and the cash nexus. Artists and intellectuals criticized the egoism, unreceptive philistinism and the crass materialism of the bourgeois class for their lack of taste and the lack of higher morality, ironically the same bourgeois class and the same mentality had produced the generation of Romantics and which had supported them.

Because none of the Romantics followed any strict rules or regulations, it is difficult to delineate the characteristics of this movement, even though, we can agree on something in common. As Romanticists see the larger social organisms as essentially corrupting, they glorified as wiser and holier the uncorrupted peasants, hermits, mariners, children and pastoral life etc. They celebrated not only the hermit, the outcast, the rebel etc., but also the atypical, even the bizarre too. Romanticists saw man basically in the solitary state, self-communing, they exalted the individual special qualities of each mind. They spotlighted man in solitude, not man in society, because only in solitude man is truly himself and can come adequately to know himself.⁹⁸ He may appear as Wandering Jew, Ahasuerus, Cain, Ancient Mariner, and even Faust. These solitaires are doomed to live separate from life in the midst of life, which is neither life nor death, but a middle or purgatorial existence, in accordance with the increase of knowledge their solitude also increases.

From solitude, denial of life and despondency, Romanticist moves further to harrowing melancholy, in a sense, he is analogous to Satan who is affected by bitter disappointment, because the doors of paradise were closed in front of him, and he undergoes deep pangs of sorrows emanating from his memories and the sorrows of realizing the depth of his downfall from paradise. Because of his endless quest for turning up in perfection and his realization that

⁹⁸ Coleridge says in his *The Rime of his Ancient Mariner*: “Alone, alone, all, all alone, / Alone on a wide wide sea! / And never a saint took pity on / My soul in agony”. Wordsworth says in his *The Solitary Reaper* that “Behold her, single in the field, / Yon solitary Highland Lass! / Reaping and singing by herself”, and even the highly sociable Byron says in his *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* that “There is a rapture on the lonely shore / There is society, where none intrudes”.

the perfection he seeks is unattainable and his futile desire for making the moments of his experience of intense feelings eternal, the assumption which haunts his mind that he is excluded from paradise etc. are some of the main reasons behind this melancholy. Much as melancholic sorrower appears throughout the literature from ancient Greece to modern age, he attained central position only in romantic literature. Byron who believed that fate singled him out for abject perpetual misery owing to his birth in a cursed aristocratic family, Chatterton who committed suicide at the age of 17 due to sheer poverty, and Werther of Goethe, Hamlet of Shakespeare etc. were some of the living embodiments of romantic melancholy. Among copious melancholic romantic poems, Keats' *Ode to Melancholy*, is a unique one, in which he defines melancholy as "the wakeful anguish of the soul".⁹⁹

Since intelligence is fallible, through the faculty of imagination Romanticists hoped to contact with eternal forces, and utilizing the limitless possibilities of human mind they passed through the activities of the unconscious mind, dreams, madness, hypnosis and reveries etc. This age revived the unseen, supernatural, mysterious world, the world of medieval man, in which the childlike or primitive outlook of the world was highlighted. In a developing world, a world in the process of becoming, a world of continuous process, they embraced relativism, which made them admiring of diversity in man and in nature, and they did not seek universal abstract laws, instead, they saw history as a process of unfolding, a becoming. Fascination for the mysterious and the unreal led the emergence of Gothic romance, as a branch of Romanticism, especially after Horace Walpole's novel 'Castle of Otranto' of 1764.¹⁰⁰

Romanticists celebrated the European middle ages which extend from circa A. D. 9th century to 14th century, and even some critics believed Romanticism is an endeavor to go back to these middle ages. Basically the illusory and enchanting vagueness stems from remoteness, which inspired their imagination. The architectural beauty of the churches, splendor of the royal residences of dukes, mysteries and chivalric stories related to these mansions were also

⁹⁹ *Ode to Melancholy*, Keats, line 10.

¹⁰⁰ Neo-Classicism was opposed not only by Gothic literature but also by Gothic architecture. Besides his novel, Horace Walpole built the first major monument to the revival, Strawberry Hill, in 1748, in the form of his Gothic house. Gothic architecture was understood as an "organic", naturalistic Christian idiom more harmonized with the cultural traditions of northern Europeans than the pagan classics. But, it is a contradiction in Britain that, British Gothicism directly imitated a pre-reformation Catholic past, especially, Romanticism itself sprang basically from Protestant principals of self-determination and individual faith.

incentives to them. They also celebrated fictitious chivalric stories of medieval kings such as King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, which was first compiled in prose by Thomas Malory (D. 1471), and later Edmund Spenser (1552 – 1599), who wrote an epic *The Faerie Queene*. Milton once aspired to write an epic on the same king, but later he changed his decision and chose another topic, but Alfred Tennyson (1809 – 1892) wrote long romantic narrative poems on him titled *The Idylls of the King*. Several romantic poems such as *Christabel* of Coleridge, *Isabella* and *The Eve of St. Agnes* of Keats, and some novels of Walter Scott (1771 – 1832) etc. recreated the medieval atmosphere to a large extent.

Feeling/emotion i.e. the unbridled or “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling”¹⁰¹ was celebrated irrespective of its consequences, and therefore a new importance was attached to the lyric. Caspar David Friedrich remarked that “the artist’s feeling is his law”. Against praising the general and considering the poets as a spokesman of society, individual thought, personal feeling and unique/particular experience came to the fore. That was the first time in literary history the poems written in the first person were being accepted and the poetic persona became the voice of the poet. “To generalize is to be an idiot. To particularize is the alone distinction of merit”¹⁰² that is what William Blake said.

Imagination, for Romantics, is the dynamic, active and creative power of man, which analogous to the power of nature or even to deity, and the ultimate “shaping” and the primary faculty for creating all art. That is the only power distinct and superior to reason, and that helps humans to constitute reality. For Coleridge, imagination is the supreme poetic quality that is a quasi-divine creative force which made the poet a godlike being. Blake wrote: “One power alone makes the poet: imagination, the divine vision”. Romantics, for Wordsworth, not only perceive the world around them, but also in part create it.¹⁰³ As the ultimate synthesizing faculty, imagination unites

¹⁰¹ In Wordsworth’s opinion, poetry is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling”. *The 1880- 1802 Preface to The Lyrical Ballads*.

¹⁰² Blake, William, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. by David V. Erdman, revised edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles, U.S.A., 1982, page 641.

¹⁰³ Jerome McGann tried to illustrate the important distinctions between the diverse romantic ideas of imagination. To sum up his argument, Imagination is a conscious action for Coleridge, subject to all will, whereas for Shelley it is a faculty specifically distinguished by its full freedom from willful control. Keats evolved from Wordsworth a lurid theory of imagination that fairly stands inconsistent with Shelley’s more idealistic views. Because of that, Wordsworth’s work is so deeply obliged to associationist theories of imagination that Coleridge himself talked about the crucial differences of his own aesthetic ideas from those of his early friend Wordsworth. See *The*

both reason and feeling, - for Coleridge this is “intellectual intuition” – and enabling humans to reconcile differences and opposites – which is the central ideal for Romantics - in the world of appearance.

The Romantics replaced God with Nature and they persisted on “a search for the self and for the God within”.¹⁰⁴ Against the cold, mechanical, logical and unfeeling Enlightenment thought the Romantics found out the warmth of heart by communion with Nature. Their handling of nature is almost always philosophical or moral. As a healing power, a source of subject and image, as a refuge from the artificial constructs of civilization, with its visual beauty and its capacity to help the urban man to come across his true identity, the Romantics paid greater attention both to depicting natural phenomena precisely and to capturing “sensuous nuance”. Nature is a mirror in which the romantics saw the everlasting powers which had created both man and the physical universe. D. C. Parker beautifully describes: “The magic of wood and stream was re-discovered; eyes grown young gazed upon some forests. Every hill had its Venus, every meadow its sprite, every rock its Lorelei. Ancient castles were reopened with knights and dames; flowers held secret messages of hope and love; the hour of twilight, beloved of poets, loosed the springs of sentiment”.¹⁰⁵ For Wordsworth, Nature was a teacher, a source of spiritual understanding and mental cleanliness, the stepping stone between Man and God.¹⁰⁶ For Byron, Nature is the

Biographia Literaria and the contentions of English Romanticism in Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria: Text and Meaning*, ed. by Frederick Burwick, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989, Page 233 – 54.

¹⁰⁴ Butler, Marilyn, *Plotting the Revolution: The Narratives of Romantic Poetry and Criticism*, in *Romantic revolutions: criticism and theory*, edited by Kenneth R. Johnson, Gilbert Chaitin, Karen Hanson, and Herbert Marks, Indiana University press, 1990, Page 139

¹⁰⁵ Parker, D. C., *Reflections on Romanticism*, *The Musical Quarterly*, Oxford Journals, Vol. 4, No. 2, April 1918, Page 307 – 322, Oxford University Press. Nevertheless, in a philosophical discussion on Romanticism, one of the foremost scholar and critic Paul de Man finds out “fundamental ambiguity” while imagery coinciding with natural objects, which is the characteristic of Romanticism. He says: “An abundant imagery coinciding with an equally abundant quantity of natural objects, the theme of imagination linked closely to the theme of nature, such is the fundamental ambiguity that characterizes the poetics of romanticism”. But, he continues: “The tension between the two polarities never ceases to be problematic”. *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, Paul de Man, Columbia University Press, New York, 1984, page 2.

¹⁰⁶ Out of all the Romantic writers, Wordsworth was the topmost poet who adroitly depicted the Nature, and he personifies it in a very flamboyant manner. For instance, have a look at these lines: (a) he says that every flower enjoys its breathing: “And ’tis is my faith that every flower / Enjoys the air it breaths”, *Lines Written in Early Spring*, lines 11 – 12, (b) in his childhood he heard the sounds of breathing and footsteps in solitary hills coming after him: “I heard among the solitary hills / Low breathings coming after me, and sounds / Of undistinguishable motion, steps / Almost as silent as the turf they trode”, *The Prelude*, Book 1, lines 329 – 32, (c) the breeze breathes against his cheek is at least half conscious of his joy: “Oh there is blessing in the gentle breeze, / A visitant that

indivisible part of his soul and he is the inseparable part of Nature as well.¹⁰⁷ Contrary to the chaotic cities of industrial civilization, the peaceful, serene natural countryside and its apprehensions, horror and feelings of awe felt by man on approaching the sublimity of nature turned the Romantic natural poetry into poetry of meditation.¹⁰⁸

The literary works of the eighteenth century was highly lyrical and that put its frown on the spoken language of common people, because that was belong to the high-class educated people, and the lower classes were considered not suitable to enjoy it. The deliberate attempts of the neoclassicists to avoid rustic language inured poetry to ‘poetic diction’ which looked down on the language of the common people, but romanticists pleaded for the retention of the same language of the general public and rejected elevated vocabularies in toto. Wordsworth even believed that the language of poetry is not divergent from the language of prose and the metrical composition is a futile attempt to procure it additional charm. As the immediate effects of the worship of imagination and the attacks on Christianity (Christianity extirpated ancient cultures and its fables and legends etc.) and on the high-class egoism the Romantics restored folk-literature, legends and ballads and also their language was so simple and easy to understand even for the laity. Through the down-to-earth characters, and “unsophisticated” art forms the use of “local color” came to prominence. Wordsworth’s rustics, everyday language or northern dialects of Emily Bronte and colloquialism of Whitman were also magnificent.

while it fans my cheek / Doth seem half – conscious of the joy it brings / From the green fields, and from yon azure sky”, *The Prelude*, Book I, lines 1 – 4.

¹⁰⁷ Through the character Childe Harold, Byron talks about himself: “Are not the mountains, waves and skies, a part / Of me and of my soul, as I of them”?, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto III, stanza 75. He also says in the same poem “There is a pleasure in the pathless woods / There is a rapture on the lonely shore / There is a society where none intrudes / By the deep sea, and Music in its roar / I love not man the less, but Nature more”. Canto IV, stanza 178.

¹⁰⁸ At the same time, while discusses Peacock’s criticism of Romanticism A. Clutton-Brock also endorses the romanticists’ use of associations which has its dangers and delights, especially their “turn from the stubborn present to a past whose associations were more tractable because less familiar”. From that past they chose something for their specific purpose and sometimes they made it very beautiful. ‘But’, Clutton-Brock continues, “they were inclined to insist too much upon its furniture, upon mediaeval or oriental properties, and too little upon the great actions and passions that are the proper subject-matter of poetry”. Then he quotes Peacock’s argument because ‘there was some truth’ in it. Here is the quote: “A modern antique compound of frippery and barbarism, in which the puling sentimentality of the present time is grafted upon the misrepresented ruggedness of the past”. See A. Clutton-Brock, *Shelley the man and the poet*, Methuen & Co. London, 1910, Page 232.

Romanticist Revolt in Germany, England and France

German romantic endeavors are inextricably linked with the search for national identity, because, politically there was no united Germany – only a group of small German speaking states - and literally they do not have any contemporary artistic tradition or cultural centre to which they could anticipate for inspiration. Their only unifying factor was the German language. German writers and thinkers tended to resent French forms of Neo-Classism and Enlightenment, as well as their subservience to France, which further strengthened later by Napoleon's invasion of Germany in 1806. Then, the German nationalists looked back for inspiration to the Renaissance and to the Middle Ages, in which they found out the culturally rich Roman Empire. The Enlightenment claims for a “universal” language of reason unrelated to the implications of nationality were met with hostility and skepticism in Germany, as those claims overshadow the campaign for German nationalism. Thus, the romantic ideals of *irrationalism*, concern with the *particular* and *local* were developed in these unique German conditions.

In this context, the famous German philosopher, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744 – 1803), a pupil of Kant, but against his ideas of “universalizing” aspects, emphasized the importance of language, which is inseparable from thought, and central to the experience of individual cultures, and he argued, the culture could only be understood in terms of their language. He presumed that in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and other Enlightenment philosophers, language had been underestimated. He completely casted off the possibility of any notional higher purpose by which other cultures could be judged, and therefore, the Germanic past must be evaluated for its tribal, folkloric, Gothic qualities. He actively collected native folksong and he fully supported the folk tradition in Homer, Shakespeare, Ossian and the Bible and he encouraged the young Goethe to revitalize the German literature. Herder's concept of the “storm of history” (Historical development is not part of some incessant linear development, but it is contingent on the natural courses of birth, growth and decay) was a radical departure in western thought and the notion of the plurality of artistic forms was the basic romantic aesthetics. This concept turned into the *Sturm und Drang* movement, a nationalist-romantic, (the name derives from Friedrich Klinger's play of 1775 titled *Wirrwarr, oder Sturm und Drang*, which means *Confusion, or Storm and Stress*) which reached its climax before the French Revolution. In this period Goethe's romantic hero Werther (*The sorrows of Young Werther*, 1774) stirred up Europe, who suffers from unease

with this world and unease with himself, and doomed to extinguish himself through his passionate, obsessive nature.¹⁰⁹

Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762 – 1814) turned Herder's idea of culture's "organic life" into a bit racial unchanging belief in the uniqueness of German culture and he accentuated the disparity between races and cultures. Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759 – 1805) developed another idea of romanticism, the 'Joy' (*die Freude*), which is the munificence of spirit that can express the *emotional solidarity* with others, and unite men and women. The action of modern man in developing his own imaginative and moral universe is similar to *Spiel* or the play of children, in which scientific and rational reality is suspended. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795) was his influential series of letters, in which he reckoned that the aesthetic is a model of human freedom, and he opined that the creative imagination of individuals is the faculty which combines sense, perception and understanding. Later, Friedrich Wilhelm von Schelling (1775 – 1854) developed the romantic idea of *creative intuition* and Schlegel brothers (August Wilhelm von Schlegel 1767 – 1845, and Friedrich von Schlegel 1772 -1829 who were also the publishers of the literary periodical *Das Athenäum*) further developed and defined the *romantisch* in literature. Based on a radical individualism, Friedrich von Schlegel set out a Romantic poetics and ethics in his early writings, which laid the philosophical foundation for the Romantic celebration of originality and imagination, going totally against the classicists' emphasis on reason. The lyric poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770 – 1843) was an ardent admirer of ancient Greek culture and adopted in his poetry the classical forms of elegy and ode etc. and his works, in general, were individualistic Romantic search for innovative ways of thinking and being. It was through the immense intellectual and epistemological outbreaks ignited by the above mentioned philosophers, Romantic Revolution in Germany was perceived. Unlike the other parts of Europe, German Romantic Revolution had theoretical, philosophical and political aspects.

In addition to literature, art also played pivotal roles in the realm of Romanticism from the outset. Since nature is the language of God and is able to be interpreted and read for its meaning,

¹⁰⁹ Goethe's early writings influenced some of the so-called real Romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, although Goethe later became a vocal critic of the pathological elements in Romanticism and an apologist for Weimar Classicism. Goethe is central to Romanticism for some famous Anglo-American critics such as M. H. Abrams and Rene Wellek, but they did not discuss his anti-Romantic polemics. But later, Heine quite clearly depicted the cultural and personal politics behind Goethe's antagonism towards his younger Romantic contemporaries. See Angus Nicholls, *Goethe's Concept of the Daemonic: After the Ancients*, Camden House, U.K., and U.S.A., 2006, page 115 – 16.

this language attested to the presence of the divine Creator. Philip Otto Runge (1777 – 1810) was a German Romantic painter and theorist, nature was re-encoded as symbol in his work, and when he fused together the imageless notions of his Christian belief with a piercing solidity of expression that turned out to be an explicit denial of Hegelian catastrophic prediction about Romanticism as an “end of art”. Similarly, Synaesthesia or the fusion of separate art forms was a concept, directly related to Romanticism’s ‘organic’ aesthetics, took shape to achieve a mystical union of the arts and to attain a ‘super-sense’ capable of perceiving the innate, and this form of art would border on the childlike ability to absorb divergent sensations into a holistic, visionary perception. He collaborated with the poet Ludwig Tieck and composer Ludwig Berger for the same.

Moreover, Caspar David Friedrich’s (1774 – 1840) innovations allowed Romantic philosophy to thrive within art. He painted himself in his pastoral or mountainous scenes, which are desolate symbolic landscapes, and he converted the experience of nature into a personal exploration which examines not only nature but the artist’s own preoccupations and his ideas about nature. His well-known picture *The Wanderer above the Mists* (1818) was an icon of Romanticism which portrays the predicament of Romantic man. The painting depicts Romantic irony on a large scale that, even though the dominant figure in the foreground achieved the elevated awareness of the Romantic visionary, there is an unbridgeable fissure between him and the sublime world. *Monk by the Sea* (1808 – 10) was his most uncompromising painting, depicts the position of man, and paradoxically, his own self-conscious humanity estranged him from the physical world. The gap between man and nature menacingly widens and he is analogous to an outgrowth on the blank face of nature. But critics identify his intentional altering of perspective to a suffocating mass of impenetrable forms such as the oppressive wall of the sky and sea etc. destabilize even the Romantic idea of sublime per se.



The Wanderer above the Mists (1818)



Monk by the Sea (1808 -10)

In England, unlike Germany and France the power of the monarchy was curbed during the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Near about a century later, even though the reign of King George III (1760 – 1820) witnessed several social, political, cultural and industrial changes, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution generated radicalism. The pamphlet war and heated

debates between Richard Price (1723 – 1794) and Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) – liberal and conservative respectively – supplied the public and intellectuals alike with new vocabulary such as Liberal, conservative, anarchist, socialist, liberty, equality, fraternity and so forth. Burke, an outspoken liberal orator in the pre-French revolution period, turned out to be an ardent supporter of the ancient constitution of England, rejected the revolutionary ideas because of violence and terror in the French Revolution. In front of Burke's famous book, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), which was the manifesto of conservative political opinion, Price's lecture series *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* could not attract many more people. But, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 – 1797), who was a radical intellectual, feminist, novelist and wife of William Godwin attacked Burke through her pamphlet *A Vindication of the Rights of Man*, and Joseph Priestley (1733 – 1804), and James Mackintosh (1765 – 1832) also took the selfsame stand which made deep influence among the British society.

More significantly, Thomas Paine (1737 – 1809), who was a working class member, became the voice of English radicalism in the 1790s and his book *Common Sense* (1776) had enormous influence on the common people in colonies. There was an emphasis on the liberty of the individual throughout his writings. His book *The Rights of Man*, which depicts monarchs as parasites and their do-nothing aristocrats as useless and put emphasis on the necessity of a representative system of government which later known as republicanism, taken up by English workers, radicals and American thinkers alike. In this context, William Godwin (1756 – 1836), who was a radical, Dissenter and intellectual almost without passion, entered the historical stage. In his 1793 treatise, the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* he argued that to change man we must change his environment because the disposition of the individual is shaped by the environment. He was not only against monarchy and aristocracy but marriage, radical society and even against revolution in general; he was an anarchist, the father of philosophical anarchism. But his ideas influenced the intellectuals and romanticists alike, among them were Mary Wollstonecraft, Tom Paine, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and so on. Besides, it was a turbulent period of conflicts, stress and tumult in modern history at which's centre lies the longest (twenty two years) experience of warfare with its revolutionary, counter revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and its ensuing bankruptcy of Europe except for England. Deeply

influenced by these aforesaid thinkers, as a direct reaction against these historical happenings¹¹⁰ and a variety of ideas, based on the interdependence of Man and Nature, emphasized on the importance of feeling, emotion and imagination, Romanticism; whether we label it philosophic, theologic, or aesthetic, stretched its grounds also to England after Germany, as a revolution against thinking in terms of static mechanism, Enlightenment modernity and its over emphasis on reason and thought. Its values were change, growth, imperfection, diversity, the unconscious, the creative imagination. But the only idiosyncrasy of English romantics was their over-concern to change the intellectual climate of the age than of the common people.

Similar to the German art, English Romantic paintings were also the striking depiction of landscapes, but the quest for Romantic landscape was turned domestic, such as to Wales, Scotland and English Lakes etc. when the Napoleonic wars and fear of invasions made the Romantic landscape of the Alps inaccessible to them. Even though the honchos of 17th century topographical paintings had long been admired in Britain, the Romantic landscape painting emerged as a serious genre only in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. John Constable (1776 – 1837) saw in his local countryside an unchanging open universe, in which he aimed the study of the individual and actual effects of light. When he found out a peopled, pulsating, worked landscape, where every commonplace objects has its own significance, he was radically subverting the conventions of idealized landscape art. Constable worked simultaneously on the sketch and the final canvas in his painting *The Leaping Horse* (1825), because he was unsure which should be the exhibited work.

At the same time, his contemporary J. M. W. Turner (1775 – 1851) explored the sublime dramas of nature, and he pictured his universe replete with numerous points of light as a storm of light whereby he fused together fire, air, water and earth etc. without highlighting any single element of it. His simultaneous pursuit of Romantic individualism and Claude Lorrain's landscapes is the indicative of the tension between self-expression and conformity. His early masterpiece was a both ironic and uplifting history painting entitled *Snowstorm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps* (1812), in which Hannibal and his armies are dwarfed when a storm looms over them; a portrait of the ambitions of conquering man setting against the forces of nature.

¹¹⁰ In other words, it is possible to say that, in England, Romanticism rose out of English responses to the French Revolution and its “failure”, and in a sense, that emerged out of the English failure to chase the French in Revolution.



The Leaping Horse (1825)



Snowstorm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps (1812)

Devising a unique symbolic cosmology, William Blake (1757 – 1827) was an anomalous figure in both Romantic poetry and paintings, and his great literary influences were the Bible and Milton, apart from Gothic religious art and architecture. He was creating his own system without giving any importance to reason or comparison and he found out humanity's redemption in imagination. When he devised the synthesis of all these elements in his paintings, that formed a kind of dialectic based on his own private mythology, which materialized the co-existence of polarities such as love and hate, heaven and hell, reason and imagination, immediacy and strangeness, beauty and power etc., and this psychic Romanticism was the polar opposite of Wordsworth's.



A famous painting of William Blake

But the case of France was entirely different. Romanticism came late to France i.e. in the second decade of the nineteenth century. When some new kind of literature - different from those of classical - being jotted down in France, the defenders of literary tradition especially the liberal

press and *le Constitutionnel* suddenly labeled it “romantique”, a defamatory remark to qualify inferior German, English, and Spanish dramas, all kind of bad poetry, melodramas and Gothic novels. Against the attacks of the defenders of the classical tradition, the romantics were unable to define their genre, because, neither they had the sense of community among them, nor they had distinct principles of literary criterion, but only they know what they opposed rather than what they advocated. After their resounding victory over the liberals in 1823-24, the royalists fiercely attacked the romantics on account of their potential revolutionary ideology, which was implicit in their literary doctrines of innovation; the same royalists were a little bit sympathetic to them earlier. Accusing the lack of guiding principles, new genre, the life of its own, the traditionalists sometimes negated even the existence of romanticism and Léon Thiessé, Jean Viennet, Auger and Charles Nodier were in the forefront of this attack.¹¹¹

The year 1813, was decisive in French romantic history owing to the publication of Sismondi’s *De la littérature du midi de l’Europe* (The Literature of Southern Europe) and Madame de Staël’s *De l’Allemagne* (Of Germany) and the French translation of August Wilhelm Schlegel’s *Cours de littérature dramatique* (Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art), and its ensuing heated debates and arguments. In this debate “[T]he reaction was fairly mild to the scholarly Sismondi, violent to the foreign Schlegel, and mixed and frequently baffled to Madame de Staël”.¹¹² In 1816, when Benjamin Constant published the novel *Adolphe*; he was also attacked as strengthening “le genre romantique”. Until 1818 no Francophone dare to call himself/herself “romantique”, but the novelist Stendhal (Henry Beyle, 1783 – 1842), and his pioneering pamphlet *Racine and Shakespeare* (1823) clearly defined Romanticism as a genuinely modern means of expression.

A more politically inclined version of French romanticism was traced back in two ways. First; as an actual social experiment, i.e. initially with the Republic, later the revolutionary wars which extended to Napoleon’s imperialist adventures. Then, we would say, until 1820, Romanticism in this sense expressed itself in the form of Neo-Classicism, which was standing for a primitive ideal of virtue and expressing noble simplicity against the corrupt French kings, and these Neo-

¹¹¹ Lanyl, Gabriel, *Debates on the definition of Romanticism in Literary France (1820 – 30)*, Journal of the History of Ideas, vol.41, No.1 (Jan –Mar, 1980) Page 141 – 150, University of Pennsylvania Press.

¹¹² Wellek, Rene, *The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History*. 1. The Term “Romantic and its Derivatives”, Comparative Literature, Vol. 1. No.1. (Winter, 1949), Page 9.

Classic concepts were copied from ancient Rome. At first, the American rebels adopted the same Neo Classic style of art and architecture for the expression of revolutionary ideals, the French revolutionaries turned to it in the following decades. Second, after the fall of Napoleon, French Romanticism reemerged from the crushing conformism of the Restoration following the Congress of Vienna (1814-15). A tumultuous new variety of Romantics resurrected against the suppression and contemptuous opportunism of the 1820s, and they went on to re-ignite the revolutionary fervor. Victor Hugo (1802 – 85) was in the vanguard, reiterating the past goals of the Enlightenment but in a romantic present. Against the ideological prestige of Neo-Classicism, Hugo adopted Shakespeare as an anti-classical model, which was provoked serious protests all over France, sometimes sparked off riots.

In the case of French art, although it was against Romantic ideals, the neo-classical art began to move inexorably towards Romantic forms in the Revolutionary France. The painting of A. L. Girodet (1767- 1824) which entitled “Ossian receiving the generals of the Republic” (1802), showcased the move away from neo-classicism, and that was a mixture of classical Empire Republican propaganda with newly Romantic subject matter and execution. Like French Romanticism, the Romantic art was also delayed, but the paintings of Théodore Géricault (1791 – 1824) and Eugène Delacroix (1798 – 1863) raised French painting into an advanced position and that was remained throughout the 19th century. But Géricault’s most important painting *The Raft of the ‘Medusa’* (1819) was a frightful portrayal of a real event, a shipwreck tragedy, in which the castaways were compelled to eat the bodies of the dead to survive. Some historians argued that this was a political allegory and the people embarked on this raft were the entire French society. Delacroix’s painting *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) also depicted the same raft, but with the victims of the 1830 Revolution. This painting was the negation of the possibility of attaining freedom without human sufferings. In memory of Byron’s death in the Greek war of independence, he did a painting, which was entitled *Greece Expiring on the Ruins of Missolonghi* (1827).



The Raft of the 'Medusa' (1819)



Liberty Leading the People (1830)

Freedom

Rousseau's individual subjective approach to morality which later deeply influenced Emmanuel Kant to develop his ambitious reform of philosophy and finally that turned into an influential

romantic idea about the self and society. Rousseau brought to the fore the self as something pure and capable of sovereign moral choices. He reassured that *reason* as an “inner voice” will instruct the individual to act and it will ensure the freedom of choice. But the *shared condition* of existence which generates the *feelings* would dictate the instructions to reason. Thus, *reason* and *feeling* were combined in our actions towards each other. But man’s freedom to implement his rational choice had misguide him out of his innocent “state of nature”, which he modeled for a less repressive and unequal form of civilization. Through natural surroundings which allow close links with man’s originally “innocent” state, *individual* should develop themselves without the oppression of authority. This is almost equal to the eighteenth century imaginary figure the “noble savage” whose simple grandeur was supposed to purge the errors and horrors of the European society.¹¹³ Later, Goethe in his novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, made the romantic hero Werther – a semi-autobiographical figure - conflicting with his world and destroyed himself through his passionate obsessive nature. Werther seeks solace in feverish night-time excursions through hills and forests (nature) from his harrowing isolation and lost love with a young woman, Charlotte, who is engaged to another man.

For Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759 – 1805), in creating his own moral and imaginative universe, the action of modern man is equivalent to the play of children (*Spiel*), in which *reality* is suspended by *reason*. Art is a serious kind of play which defines human being in terms of freedom. Friedrich Wilhelm von Schelling (1775 – 1854) argued that, man could recognize his place in the universe through an imaginative involvement with nature and he is capable of doing the parallel actions of God and nature. Man is connected to nature by his willed act of imaginative creativity. Coleridge profoundly influence by this idea; the *creative intuition*. Wordsworth, the “Nature’s Priest”, also finds solace, like Goethe’s Werther, in the transcendental forms of landscape. German romantics generally focused on children as the archetypal state, which can overcome our debased cultural adulthood, as that of the *Noble Savage*. Even though Hegel criticized romanticism as it “is an end of art”, he talked about

¹¹³ The integrity of self, and the protection of one’s primitive instincts and passion from the so-called corrupt civilization is easily possible with the contact of Nature. This belief is central to the idea of the Noble Savage, which is frequently encountered in romantic writings in many forms. For example: a monster that is a creature educated by his instincts but later perverted by the misunderstanding and cruelty of civilized man, which we can see in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Through the reflection of pre-modern sensibilities, these Romantic and Gothic narrations on monsters bank on medieval narrative structures and imagery, to represent the chaos in the present world.

freedom, but it must be achieved through an “organic” process, it signals, we would say, the Romantic side of his philosophy.

In another way, the Romanticists’ search for expanded power of consciousness and freedom; in itself an over-reaching ambition, which led them to inevitable but heroic damnation. The Greek mythic Titan Prometheus, who pilfered fire from the gods for the advantage of human being, became the romantic character of the “titanic” champion fighting against subjugation for human’s sake. And later, Goethe’s Faust; a typically promethean figure looks for secret knowledge, freedom and power through his concord with the devil. Akin to Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* (1667), in *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley is also put forward a Prometheus, who is also a political figure challenges an oppressive Christian God. In general, the institutionalized superstitious religions and the political framework based on inequality and injustice were the arch enemies of the Romanticists, and humanity has to fight against these evil forces that impede liberty, development and perfection to the freeborn man.¹¹⁴

The early romantics paid more attention to the implications of individual experience and freedom. But this central idea of romantic freedom gradually developed in the later on generations to contain more collective forms. When the liberation of the individual through political way had been a bloody failure after the French Revolution, the romantic freedom shrank to the realization of personal imaginative freedom as the only alternative.

Revolution

In the late 18th century, the word “revolution” had not fully got hold of its modern sense of wiping out established order. It was used largely to portray the movement of the heavens. Nevertheless, in a related sense, it also pointed out a turning back – a rotary motion towards an earlier state. But, with regard to the American rebellion,¹¹⁵ the English radical thinker Thomas

¹¹⁴ Rousseau says in his *The Social Contract* that “Man is born free, but everywhere he is in fetters”.

¹¹⁵ The worldwide zest of revolution which spurred the romantic age, was the offshoot of the American Rebellion (1775 -76). That was not as radical as the French revolution, nevertheless, that was almost fully compatible with the rationalist principles of the European Enlightenment. Like French revolutionists, American revolutionaries were also not the dispossessed poor, but bourgeois and land loads seeking parity with the English cousins. Therefore, Wordsworth and his *Lyrical Ballads* were criticized for its intellectual concerns of the early romantic bourgeois and that was not written against the haphazard conditions of common poor of the late eighteenth century.

Paine (1737- 1809) made the word “revolution” popular, which was earlier not universally associated with the forces of radical changes especially in politics.

The unhappy revolutionary Romantic consciousness arose in response to the conditions of modernity and its spiritual misery which corroborated the socio-economic inequality in the social fabric in almost every class, and its ensuant isolation of the individual as an egotistical monad. The nostalgia for either real or mythic pre-capitalist past; - the ‘lost paradise’ or the ‘sacred past’, - but if it were real it was highly idealized -, indeed often led to win it back, either through imagination or in reality, by retreating to localities and by a struggle to recreate its ideal values. When we consider the French Revolution as the political manifestation of Romanticism, it includes the idea of going back to the past bliss (Arcadia, Greco-Roman Antiquity, etc) and it immensely charged with the idealism of the brotherhood of men for the future millennium, even though it contains the bourgeois aspirations.

But, “For early nineteenth century writers “the revolution” expanded to include not only the national revolution movements and English class conflicts of the years 1815 to 1848, but also the literary writers’ own responses and reactions to 1789”.¹¹⁶ Rousseau had connected romance to politics earlier, even though he expressed almost the existing tendencies. The political agenda of the English romantic criticism was tangible in their language of “hopes” and “terror”, which trespassed the political lines and historical boundaries and it almost bordered on the Victorian critic Edward Dowden’s since the nineteenth century. For Victorians, English romantic movement’s cultural intervention was also the annexation of the revolution. In time, romantic meanings became ever more implicated in the pressures of British imperialism,¹¹⁷ the crisis of the Liberal party, and the new socialist movements. Ultimately, both the romantic conservative liberalism (Wordsworth and teams’) and the skeptical progressive liberalism (Shelley and teams’) were ‘interrupted only by the storm of the true conservative who picks his political

¹¹⁶ Klancher, Jon, *Romantic Criticism and the Meanings of the French Revolution*, in *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol.28, No.3, English Romanticism and the French Revolution (Fall, 1989) Page 463 - 491, Boston University.

¹¹⁷ Marlon B. Ross has written an article which connected romanticism with imperialism. He argues: “In a very real sense the Romantics, some of them unwittingly, help prepare England for its imperial destiny. They help teach the English to universalize the experience of ‘I’, a self conscious task for Wordsworth, whose massive philosophical poem *The Recluse* sets out to organize the universe by celebrating the universal validity of parochial English values”. See, B. Ross, Marlon, *Romantic Quest and Conquest: Troping Masculine Power in the Crisis of Poetic Identity*, in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. by Anne K. Mellor, Indiana University Press, page 31.

ground outside (and before) the French Revolution, and the Marxist who understands the import of the French Revolution according to a theory of historical change that makes no appeal to the modulated politics of English romanticism'.¹¹⁸

Similarly, we cannot ignore the fact that during the French Revolution some endeavours were made to misconstrue some romantic ideals of the French thinker Rousseau to vindicate the Reign of Terror as a Romantic revolution. It happened when the Jacobin leaders, who were members of a democratic republican group, such as Maximilien Robespierre (1758 – 94) and Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just (1767 – 94) gave the “Terror” a romantic justification by citing the ideas of Rousseau, because in *The Social Contract* (1762) Rousseau put forward the concept that there is a kind of “contract” between those in power and the “general will” of the general public, and the radicals justified the killing as “general will” of the general public. And the radicals formulated a “cult of the Supreme Being” instead of traditional Christian morality, that cult was also based on the same Rousseau’s mystical communion with the natural world. Nonetheless, most of the great romantic writings were made not at the height of revolutionary hope, but rather, out of the experience of disenchantment with the promise of the revolution, whether it is partial or total.¹¹⁹ In the same way, some Romantics held in high regard Napoleon’s ascension to power as it is a part of somewhat a romantic revolution, but they were disillusioned when it turned into the peril of tyranny and full-scale invasions, for instance, unlike in the first preface of Walter Savage Landor’s Arabian Romance *Gabir* (1798), in his second preface of 1803 he added the following remark: “In the moral are exhibited the folly, the injustice, and the punishment of Invasion, with the calamities which must ever attend the superfluous colonisation of a peopled country”.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Klancher, Jon, *Romantic Criticism and the Meanings of the French Revolution*, Studies in Romanticism, Vol.28, No.3, English Romanticism and the French Revolution (Fall, 1989) Page 463 - 491, Boston University.

¹¹⁹ M. H. Abrams says that “The striking fact is that a number of these works nonetheless retain, but translate into a different dimension of experience, the design, the ideas, and the imagery of the callower works their authors had composed in a mood of millennial excitement”. *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*, M. H. Abrams, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London, First South Asian Edition in 2002, Reprinted in 2010, page 335.

¹²⁰ These lines are taken from the preface of the second edition of *Gabir* and quoted here from *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient*, Mohammed Sharafuddin, I. B. Turis, London & New York, 1994, page 15. Besides, there is also a footnote which has received wide attention condemning the “great changes” which Napoleon imposed on societies and “institutions” using “violence”. See *Ibid*, pages 40 – 41.

Some Key British Romanticists and their Revolutionary Ideals

We should keep in mind both the criticism, the first, against categorizing only six male poets and a few more inside their sphere of influence who disagree to a great extent to be a movement or a category,¹²¹ and the second, against “over-systematizing and simplifying” a retrospective construct i.e. Romanticism, which includes inharmonious totality of incompatible voices, genres, styles, classes and ideologies during the time between American and French revolutions.¹²² But to concentrate more on the revolutionary ideals of the writers of this period we should consider them at least as a ‘cacophonous unity’ for the time being.

Blake’s writings, Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads* and Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* (1799) were the first romantic works in Britain. After the failure of the French Revolution by its Terror in 1794, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey had become reactionaries, and the ascension of Napoleon to the throne of France put a temporary break on romanticism. But Shelley, Byron and Keats; the second generation romantics, soon revived it.

- William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850), the trailblazer of English Romanticism, put forward a brand-new approach in his writings i.e. ‘objections to an over-styled diction, using the language of ordinary people, attitude to nature, importance to individual feelings’ etc. In October 1798, the young William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge published anonymously in Bristol the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* - which includes Wordsworth’s poem *Tintern Abbey* – “the only literary publication (as opposed to political event or turn of a century) that has been used to mark the beginning of a period in either English or American literature”.¹²³ The second edition of this seminal, inspirational work in English Romanticism appeared in 1800, which augmented by another 227 pages of newly composed verses now only by Wordsworth with a strident polemical preface. This preface was the manifesto for the new poetry. To write in the “language really used by men”, discarding the ornate diction of conventional poetry, was the enlightened and democratic purpose of the collection. His writings did not reduce into a received form; on the contrary, he abruptly turned to the writer’s requirement to proceed in a more private direction.

¹²¹*Beyond Romanticism: New Approaches to Texts and Contexts, 1780 – 1832*, eds. Stephen Copley and John Whale, Routledge, London, 1992, Page 1 – 3.

¹²² Day, Aidan, *Romanticism, the New Critical Idiom*, (1996), Routledge, London and New York, Page 5.

¹²³ Stillinger, Jack, *Wordsworth, Coleridge and the Shaggy Dog: the Novelty of Lyrical Ballads* (1798), *The Wordsworth Circle*, Vol.31, No. 2. (Spring 2000), page 70.

“Wordsworth came out of the eighteenth-century tradition of Thompson, Gray, and Cowper. The high road of English poetry during the French revolutionary wars was, we know, of quite another kind: it had to do not with retirement in pursuit of what –the self? God?- but with nationhood and power and with the impossibility, so traumatizing for alienated middle-class poets, of standing aside in wartime from a communal, national engagement”.¹²⁴

Wordsworth was “Nature’s Priest”, finds solace in the transcendental forms of his native landscape. Like Rousseau, Wordsworth also recognized that modern man was alienated from his “natural” self and shunned from his fellow men by industrialized urban life. Poetry in the language of rustic simplicity would cure this gap: “in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature” (The Preface). Nature is the object of religious and moral adoration, because it symbolizes the internal motions of our own consciousness. Wordsworth was certain that “what we are” is the basis for our liberation – nature is our home – “The external world is fitted to the mind”.

After the graduation from Cambridge he spent one year in France (1791- 92) in his early twenties and fathered an illegitimate child there. Excited by the French Revolution of 1789, and influenced by the principles of Rousseau and Republicanism, he came back to England and associated with radicals. In the autumn of 1793, when Robespierre’s Reign of Terror turned the utopian ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity down in the sea of blood, like many of his contemporaries, Wordsworth also deeply disillusioned, but kept the revolutionary fervor alive. Before Napoleon’s ascension to the throne of France Wordsworth was politically conservative, but after he proclaimed “Bliss was it that dawn to be alive”. After his arrival in Britain, she declared war on France which divided his allegiance. Based on these two events, *The Ruined Cottage* and *The Pedlar* illustrate the pathos of individual human fates on the one hand, and on the other, the *Lyrical Ballads* which represents the unrealized potentialities of humanity as a whole. During 1791 – 1797 periods, he wrote *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, two anti-government and anti-war polemics in Spenserian stanzas. His autobiographical poem, *The Prelude* includes many genres such as chronicle, epic, rhapsody, hymn, and prayer and more. And, “ever since Wordsworth began *The Prelude* by confessing to a swerve from conventional

¹²⁴ Butler, Marilyn, *Plotting the Revolution: The Narratives of Romantic Poetry and Criticism*, in *Romantic revolutions: criticism and theory*, edited by Kenneth R. Johnson, Gilbert Chaitin, Karen Hanson, and Herbert Marks, Indiana University press, 1990, Page 134

epic expectations in to extended self-revelation, what I call the ‘Lyric turn’ has played a central role in creative and critical narrative”¹²⁵. By 1811, in *View from the Top of the Black Comb*, he likened Napoleon to Milton’s Satan. *The Female Vagrant* and *The Last of the Flock* which criticize the effects of enclosure, penurious conditions of rural people, the oppressive policies of the Tory government after the British wars against the American colonies and France. The grief of desperate women, homeless wanderers, war exiles, the poor, prostitutes, prisoners, hapless children are abundant in his writings; for example see: *The Thorn*, *The idiot boy*, *Mad Mother*, *The Lass of Fair Wone*, *Complaint of the Forsaken Indian Woman*, *The Convict*, *The Last of the Flock*, *Simon Lee*, *Goody Blake*, *Harry Gill* etc.

In *Lyrical Ballads*, there is palpable analogy with *political* revolutions, because early Romanticism is very strongly associated with the principles of the French Revolution, which Wordsworth and Coleridge had passionately embraced as younger men, and *The Preface* of 1800 was a manifesto heralding the depose of the *ancien régime* and the declaration of a republic of letters along egalitarian lines and enlightened principles. In Wordsworth’s own words: *Lyrical Ballads*, “retracing the revolutions not of literature alone but likewise of society itself” (*Preface* II. 52-3). The compilation of his political essays published in London in 1809, titled *Concerning the Relations of Great Britain, Spain and Portugal, to each other, and to the Common Enemy at this Crisis; and Specifically as Affected by the Convention of Cintra, the whole Brought to the Test of those principles, by which alone the Independence and Freedom of Nations can be Preserved or Recovered*.

- Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 – 1834), had been busy with writing both poetry and topical prose, but his friendship and collaboration of Wordsworth made him central to the English romanticism. His contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads*; the pioneer and manifesto of English Romanticism was a long poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Besides, *Kubla Khan* (1797 or 1798), an exotic writing with supernaturalism as that of *Ancient Mariner*, and the unfinished *Christabel*, were the three of his best known poems. Even so he incorporates the images of nature and the mind in *The Eolian Harp* in 1796; he focused more on the relations between the delicate forces in nature and human psyche after his visit to Germany in 1798-99. Poems such as *The Nightingale*, *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison* and *Frost at Midnight* combine sensitive

¹²⁵ Siskin, Clifford, *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1988, page 15.

descriptions of nature with intricacy of psychological comment. In 1802, he published *Dejection: An Ode* which showcased the same Wordsworth's ideals i.e. meditation upon self and nature and the connection among sense, emotion, experience and understanding. His *Biographia Literaria* (1817) includes accounts of his literary life, critical essays on philosophical and literary subjects, and his theories of creative imagination made an important contribution to literary theory. He introduced the philosophic method in English criticism which was earlier neither methodical nor systematic, but rather, mechanical, arbitrary and impressionistic.

His political ideals were a bit paradoxical. He was politically moderate, strong critic of the Terror of the French Revolution, more radical in his social outlook than the Jacobins, at the same time. His poem, *Destruction of the Bastille*, supports the French Revolution from the outset. His political utopianism – *Happiness* (1791), *A Wish* (1792) and several other early poems – “does not pragmatically aim to better the existing reality, but to create an ideal one that has never fully existed before”.¹²⁶ In the wake of the Terror, when the revolution flawed in the realization of its goals, Coleridge focused ever more enthusiastically on the performance of his creative powers and he set up a utopian community in 1794, called “pantisocracy”, which he developed with the poet Robert Southey, Joseph Priestley and with other intellectuals. They founded a farming community on the basis of the revolutionary principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, on the banks of the Susquehanna River in New England. They believed that these principles to be attempted first in small communities, and finally to spread to the whole human being. But the project failed to materialize.

His *Religious Musings* and *The Destiny of Nations* were bristling with politico-social concerns and prophesy. *Religious Musings* enunciates the providential instrument of God's plan – he was a strong believer - in the French Revolution, in spite of its initial error, and its good end is yet to come. In 1798, his poem *France: An Ode* called the French Revolution an enemy of freedom, because now that is an impossible and undesirable goal. In *Fears in Solitude* he further withdrew into individuality and solitariness. His Utopian ideals for the ideal world are now only the state of poetic excitement in the individual soul. Here, the collective socio-political ideas shrank into the lone individual, and now the socio-politico-economic problems are originating from mere

¹²⁶ Sayre, Robert, *The Young Coleridge: Romantic Utopianism and the French Revolution*, in *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol.28, No.3, English Romanticism and the French Revolution, (Fall, 1989), Page 397 – 415, Boston University.

avarice and selfishness. Therefore, we would say, Coleridge was mercurial and unstable, never attaining the philosophical firmness of Wordsworth, but writing tormented and extremely personal visionary poems of the “daemonic” sublime, regularly aided by the use of drugs. For Albert Hancock, he was a spiritual nationalist and Wordsworth the human individualist.¹²⁷

- William Blake (1757 – 1827), a radical, anomalous figure in the English Romanticism, never denied his revolutionary Jacobin ideals, but in superficial reading his work can seem contrary to the spirit of his times. Indicted against him seditious charges for his participation in a riot in 1780, in which the notorious Newgate Gaol was scorched to the ground and its prisoners were freed. His religious belief was similar to those of Antinomian radical belief, and he proclaimed “no virtue can exist without breaking these Ten Commandments”. He valued faith and devotion and its polar opposite the reason, to some extent. His great literary influences were the Bible and Milton. The plethora of Biblical figures, trees, serpents, and mythical gods, Gothic religious art and architecture are perceptible in his works. Blake also advocates a vigorous, rebellious Jesus, rebuffing the conventional “Creeping Jesus” seeing that too humble and chaste.¹²⁸ In his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-93), he declared that Milton had unconsciously, but justly stands by the side of Devil, the rebellious energy, and against Jehovah, who represents oppressive limitation. Blake believed that Satan is the God of reason. At the same time, in the *Songs of Experience* (1794) he attacked the hypocrisies and the impersonal cruelties of the age resulting from the over-importance of reason. Influenced by several radical sects, Blake, adroitly symmetries confusion breeding polar opposites and conveyed it in bizarre ways. The figures in his etchings combine stiff Gothic attitude with the manifestation of flayed corpses in an anatomy class, and their musculature awkwardly evident. His apocalyptic “New Jerusalem”, a notion influenced by the mysticism of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 – 1772), and strengthened by his contact with the nonconformist religious sects and millennialist radicals in London during the late 18th century. The New Jerusalem stands not only for just rational government but sexual,

¹²⁷Hancock, Albert Elmer, *The French Revolution and the English poets, A Study in Historical Criticism*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1899.

¹²⁸ According to E. P. Thomson, who was a Marxist historian, for hundreds of suppressed people and writers, religion was the way of confronting and criticizing the society in which they lived. At the first sight the expressions in Blake’s works seem to be simply religious, but in reality those are subversive and rebellious. The Biblical figures which he utilized can seem ambiguous for us, but by those means he attacked against corruption and hypocrisy. See, E. P. Thompson, *In Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law*, E. P. Thompson, Cambridge, 1993.

artistic, and creative liberation which is not possible through the political or social changes but only through some kinds of religious revelation or spiritual leap, which was totally against the Enlightenment or revolutionary ideals.

He constructed a new mythology based not on the God of the Bible, but on Urizon,¹²⁹ an oppressive figure of law and reason, whom he ridiculed his contemporaries' actual God. His *first Book of Urizon* defies (by parodying) the biblical first book of Moses. In his famous poem *London*, he just not talks about the city, but the conditions of humanity, and he waged war on the churches and its exploitations of the children and institutionalization of marriage and state power. He criticized the commodification of life, beauty, love and sexuality. His criticism against the royal charter by the king to trading monopolies aroused the debate between the radical Tom Paine and the conservative Edmund Burke.

Imagination is the basis of mankind's redemption, and he reemphasized the liberty of both body and mind to perform the Divine arts of the imagination, which was the only Christianity and Gospel he can accept, and through that only regain the New Jerusalem, or paradise on earth. Blake's psychic Romanticism was the polar opposite of Wordsworth's. In 1790s when the revolutionary optimism faded away, he went back to more obscure and mystical way of keeping his divine vision alive in those turbulent times.

- George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788 – 1824), the master of colloquial tone and the inventor of discursive narration in poetry, published in 1807, *Poems on Various Occasions* and *Hours of Idleness*, which provoked severe criticism but Byron retorted with *English Bards and Scotch Reviews* (1809), in which he proclaimed allegiance to Milton, Dryden and Pope, and he criticized the poets of sensibility, and that book brought to him immediate fame. But, his incestuous love affair with his half-sister; Augusta Leigh, and the subsequent ostracism from society made him the first notoriety. After a grand tour through Portugal, Spain, Italy and the Balkans he came back to England in 1811 with *Cantos I* and *II* of his philosophical poem in Spenserian stanza, the

¹²⁹ The concept of Urizen has two connotations. First, 'your reason', it means 'accepted wisdom', which was widely accepted but not by Blake. The second one comes from the Greek verb 'horizein' which means 'to limit'. Blake focuses on the second meaning. Urizen; a bearded old man, sometimes bears books of divine law, some other times measuring instruments, whereby to create but limits the universe. He is the God of the Old Testament, by his alliance with kings and priests he keeps the people down. He is in constant fighting with Orc, the revolutionary figure of freedom, and with Luvah, the prince of love. He suppresses them from freedom, justice and sexual desires.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (1812), the story of a melancholic outcast and his wanderings, which brought him notoriety once again. From the initiation, the personal myth of Byron was indissoluble from the adventures of his misanthropic and insolent heroes. He was, like Childe Harold; the man "In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life, / So that no wonder awaits him". To his friend Shelley Byron was "the pilgrim of eternity".

His works contain strong anti-romantic elements. Even he deplored Romanticism especially that of the English Lake School, and he thought that the great tradition of English poetry had died down with the demise of the Neo-Classical poets Pope and Dryden. But the paradox is that, even though his work is resolutely mock-heroic, the "Byronic hero" – a figure he uses for both the self-revelation and the self-concealment - has become the archetype of true heroic romanticism, because, the same hero was the protagonist of several Gothic novels of the later eighteenth century. In his *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, Byron finds out Milton's satanic hero in the historic figure of Napoleon, with his first awe-inspiring power and grandeur and later his subsequent tragic downfall in Waterloo as captive. His works highlight exile and guilt feature incessantly, which characterize by the doomed hero of his verse-drama, *Manfred* (1817), whose sin was also an incestuous love for his sister, like Byron's. "Byron in *Cain* mocks Genesis once more, and he writes a sequel, *Heaven and Earth*, which exploits a noncanonical sacred text, the long- lost Ethiopic Book of Enoch brought back from Abyssinia by James Bruce".¹³⁰ He was a rebel, skeptic and a materialist, did not held the Neo-Platonic notions of a supersensuous reality, like Shelley. He did not see any higher reality behind the material world and his free-thinking materialism is similar to that of the Enlightenment, but taken to extremes.

He upheld earnestly the cause of liberty in his writings and his person from all tyrannical powers. As a social revolutionary he attacked the philistinism of English upper class and monarchs in his unfinished comic masterpiece *Don Juan*. He led a distressed childhood in a crumbling Gothic abbey. He fought against almost all social conventions and institutions and even he challenged the morality of Divine retribution and he described that God is himself the major and original victim of creation. To champion the cause of suppressed people he took arms and fought vehemently. He provided the Italian revolutionaries with guns and he died while leading Greek

¹³⁰ Butler, Marilyn, *Plotting the Revolution: The Narratives of Romantic Poetry and Criticism*, in *Romantic revolutions: criticism and theory*, edited by Kenneth R. Johnson, Gilbert Chaitin, Karen Hanson, and Herbert Marks, Indiana University press, 1990, Page 135.

revolutionaries in their battle for independence against the Turks, embodying the liberal “philhellenist” spirit of the early 1820s.

Conrad, the hero of *The Corsair* (1814), is a more isolated, darker, and more intricate in his inner conflicts, and therefore more compelling and more frightening to readers. His famous verse tales are *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *Lara* (1814), *The Corsair* (1814), *Beppo* (1818), *Mazeppa* (1819) and *The Siege of Corinth* (1816) *Parisina* (1816), *Cain* (1821), *The vision of Judgment* (1822). His *Don Juan* (1814-24) is determinedly picturesque and combines his lyricism, cynicism, personal confessions, political satire, bawdy sexual farce and his ingenuity as a storyteller and therefore several critics opined that it is almost postmodern. The un-heroic and passive protagonist *Don Juan* is conscious of the futility of rebellion as the means to combat the inevitable fate but he has only comic features unlike the revolutionary features of *Manfred*, may showcase his desire of attaining the ideal world of his own through another way.

- John Keats (1795 – 1821) died at the age of twenty-five and published only fifty-four poems which include copious poetic forms from the sonnet to the Miltonic epic and Spenserian romance. The conservative reviewers of that period attacked him as “vulgar Cockney poetaster” (John Lockhart), and his writings containing “the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language” (John Wilson Croker) and so forth. He lost his parents in his childhood; and as a response, he withdrew into academic field to overcome his loneliness. His friendship with his teacher Cowden Clarke shaped his poetic vision and in April 1814, when Napoleon was defeated by European kings, Keats urged the victors to support political reform. In February 1815, when the radical publisher of *The Examiner* Leigh Hunt was released, who had been arrested earlier for libeling the Prince Regent and breaking the draconian censorship law, he wrote a political poem *Written on the Day That Mr. Leigh Hunt Left prison*, and consequently the conservative reviewer labeled him radical. His poem *To Hope* is a sonnet praising Byron’s “sweetly sad” melody with its political color, and that considers “Hope” as a code of social liberation. After a long discussion with Cowden Clarke about George Chapman’s translation of *Homer*, he wrote a sonnet *On the First Looking into Chapman’s Homer* which was considered the most beautiful verse he had yet written. His first long poems were *I stood tip-toe* and *Sleep and Poetry* (1816). The rhymed couplet of *I stood tip-toe* is often adolescent and clumsy and with enduring concerns and turgid syntaxes. *Sleep and Poetry* is more serious about the project and manifesto of poetry,

because poetry is neither mere sleep nor dream, but engaging with “the strife of human hearts” and the sorrow of life.

Unlike the naturalistic philosophy of Wordsworth – visible world is the measure of the sublime – for Keats, the imagination, which always stays beyond its own mortal capacity, is the only thing can reach out to the sublime. The ideal will always be surrendered to the real. His poem *Endymion* (1817) depicts the tension between the ideal and the real. It combines the tedious natural descriptions with mythic figures and the marriage of the earthly Endymion with the moon Cynthia, which represents the meeting of the godly with mortal. Endymion’s explore for his Romantic ideal- Cynthia, the moon – finished when he falls in love with a real woman, Phoebe (Cynthia in disguise). The poet pursues his search for the ideal beauty but always distracted by reality. Whether real or ideal, Beauty is the only symbol of the absolute permitted to mortal man.

The artist loses his selfhood which demands only a single meaning or perspective identifies with the experience of his/her object, and allows that experience to speak itself through him/her. Thus, poetic imagination did not stop him from being exposed to the presence of other existence. This theory of “negative capability” stands for the capability of being receptive to all facets of existence. “This is the state in which “man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason”¹³¹ and this “negative capability” is almost similar to the concept of Romantic Irony especially its characteristic of pluralistic outlook.

His unfinished epic *Hyperion* depicts a mythical world of revolution, in a way which implies that violence and upheaval is inevitable for bringing great change. His poems like *The Eve of St Agnes* and *Isabella*, was the direct confrontation against all political and moral orthodoxy of that time since they celebrate unrestrained sexuality.

- Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822), the most influential and radical poet of the second generation of British romantic poets, with his atheism, quest for freedom, antiwar - antimonarchical sentiments, women empowerments etc. was the biggest proponent of romantic revolutions in those days. But, since the detailed discussion on his radical romantic ideas is the

¹³¹*Introducing Romanticism*, Duncan Heath and Judy Boreham, ed. Richard Appignanesi, Icon books U.K., Totem books U.S.A., First published in U.K. and Australia in 1999 and reprinted in 2002 and in 2006s. Page 88.

core of this research work, it is apt to postpone the discussions to the suitable forthcoming chapters.

Some other important romantic writers and their works as follows: Sir Walter Scott (*The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion*), Charlotte Smith (*Elegiac Sonnets*), Robert Southey (*Thalaba the Destroyer* and *The Curse of Kahama*), William Lisle Bowles (*Fourteen Sonnets*), Thomas Campbell (*Ye Mariners of England*, *The Battle of Hohenlinden* and *Specimens of the British Poets* and its critical preface), Samuel Rogers (*Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Roger*), Thomas Moore (*LallaRookh: An Oriental Romance* and *Irish Melodies*), Mary Robinson (*Sappho and phaon*), George Crabbe (*The Village*, *The Parish Register*, *The Borough*, *Tales in Verse*, *Tales of the Hall*), Mathew Lewis (*The Monk*) Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*) James Hogg (*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*), Mary Wollstonecraft (*Mary, 1788; Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman*), Thomas Love Peacock (*Headlong Hall*, *Melincourt*, *Nightmare Abbey*, *Crotchet Castle* and *Gryll Grange*) etc.

Chapter III

Romance and Revolution in the Writings of Khalīl Muṭrān

Khalīl Mutrān

Khalil Mutran was born into a Christian family in 1872, in Baalbek, Lebanon. He got his primary education from the Elementary Oriental School in Zahla, and then he entered the Roman Catholic Patriarchal College in Beirut, from where he became conversant with the French language and literature. The famous poet and scholar Ibrahim al-Yaziji and his brother Khalīl al-Yaziji were his teachers, and when the latter was resigned because of illness, which ended up in his death, Mutran was chosen to replace him in that teaching post. His early writings were devoted to criticizing Turkish rule in the Lebanon, accordingly, he was accused of being connected with some secrete groups, which were planning to overthrow the Turkish rule in the region. The resultant short detention by the authority and an attempt on his life compelled him to abscond into Paris in 1890, where he joined with a liberal Ottoman group to seek freedom from the oppressive Ottoman rule.

After he left Paris for Egypt in 1892, he spent the rest of his life there, engaging in different professions such as journalism, involving in commercial and industrial enterprises, and government jobs etc.¹³² At first, he was the editor of *Al-Ahrām* news paper for a short period of time, and in 1900 he established his own bimonthly review magazine called *Al-Majalla al-Misriyya*, but when it was closed down after three years he founded a daily called *Al-Jawā'ib al-Misriyya*,¹³³ which existed only one year (closed down in 1904). When his commercial and industrial endeavours became a total collapse he was appointed by Abbas II as the Secretary of the Khedivial Agricultural Society. His career as the Director of the Popular Troupe for the Arab

¹³² Out of almost all Arab countries, comparatively Egypt had more liberal atmosphere in terms of political, religious and literary freedoms. Even though Egypt was under the British colonial rule, the inhabitants of that country could enjoy at least religious and literary freedoms - and to some extent political freedom too – in contrast to the rest of the Arab world. Therefore, when several writers and intellectuals migrated to Europe and America, several others migrated to Egypt as well. Among these immigrants who searched asylum in Egypt were: Jūrji Zaydan, Fāris Nimr, Najīb al-Haddād, Yā'qub Sarrūf, Najīb Azūri, Taniyūs 'Abduh, Shibli Shumayyil, Farah Antun etc. These intellectuals were educated from those modern Lebanese institutions, which were run by native Europeans, and these elements are also have direct influences on the modernization of Arabic literature in Egypt.

¹³³ The newspaper *Al-Jawā'ib al-Misriyya* (The Egyptian Mail) receives its name from the Arabic newspaper of Ahmad Faris al-Shidyāq which was established in the period of the French occupation and was closed-down after a short while. The main purpose of that newspaper was to disseminate in Egypt the tidings of the French such as their organizations, social issues, contemporary incidents etc. Mutrān's selection of the same title may showcase his disposition towards his position in the traditionalist-modernist tussles of Egypt those days.

Theatre continued from 1935 to 1942. During this period he translated several literary works of European writers into Arabic such as Victor Hugo, Shakespeare, Racine, and Corneille and so on. But his four volumes of *Dīwan*, which were written over a period of more than five decades, brought him the widest acclaim and the sobriquet *Shā'ir al-Quṭrain* (The poet of the two regions – Syria and Egypt), and he became reputed as one of the most prominent modernist in Arabic literature.

Muṭrān translated from French some literary works of some French writers and French translations of English writers, which include: Pierre Corneille's (1606 – 1684) best-known plays *Le Cid*, *Cinna*, and *Polyeucte*, and Jean Racine's (1639 – 1699) play *Bérénice* and Victor Hugo's (1802 – 1885) *Hernani*, and William Shakespeare's (1564 – 1616) plays such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice* etc.

Apart from literary writings and translations, he authored and co-authored various books on other topics, and translated and co-translated several books as well. *Mir'āt al-Ayyām Fi Tarīkhi al- 'Ām* (Mirror of the days: A book on general history) is a historical work by Muṭrān. He translated from French *The Education of the Will: the Theory and Practice of Self-Culture* of Jules Payot, and he co-translated in to Arabic with Hāfīz Ibrāhīm one of the famous books of a French economist Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, which was titled in Arabic *al-Mūjizu Fi 'Ilmi al- 'Iqthiṣād* (A Summery in Economics), and he translated a book of Victor Dury in natural history, and co-translated with Prof. Yūsuf Nuhās a book written by P.S. Gerard which was titled in Arabic *al-Ahwāl al-Zirā'iyya Fi al-Qaṭari al-Misri Asnā'i Hamalat al- Nabliyūn Bunabārt* (Agricultural Conditions in the Egyptian Region during the Campaign of Napoleon Bonaparte) and so on.

The literary background in Egypt

As the consequence of the establishment of the *Bulaq* press, printing technologies, translation schools etc. a new type of learning and awareness about the Western literature, philosophies, political thoughts etc. were disseminated in the Egyptian minds and the gradual implementation of the secular education and law expedited the radical break with the traditions of the past. In this context, the dilemma of the poets was to encounter with the occupation of the Western forces and to face the modern social changes in which they found themselves involved and to deal with

the obsolete past poetic conventions simultaneously. The increasing number of newspapers and journals, the emergence of a middle class, expanded educational opportunities, the changing role of women in society etc. were contributed to emerge a new audience of poetry. Thus, the very notion of ‘individual’ was founded on and bolster up, and the citizen of a nation as an individual with rights, and the consequent quest for a personal voice etc. were the reasons of the turning away of some poets from the directions of the Arab poetic ideals of the early stages of the revival movement, and find their inspiration in the poetry of European Romanticism.¹³⁴

The emergence of this new poetic movement was an important milestone in the modernization of the Arabic poetry during the first decade of the twentieth century, side by side with the neo-Classic trend in Egypt, which was first led by Khalil Mutran and then by Abd al-Rahman Shukri of the Diwan group.¹³⁵ Even though they were not united on all issues, ideals, forms and essence of poetry, they jointly attacked the conventions of neo-Classicism and put forward the Western poetic ideals as the prototype of their poetic writings and tried to emulate the Western techniques. But, the active interference of the neo-Classicist writers such as Shawqi and Hafiz and their ilk in the social and political realms, especially against the British and their cohorts in the tumultuous political situations of Egypt, and the neo-Classicist emphasis on the Islamic values and its revival as an antidote against the colonial aggression, were the two important stumbling blocks in front of the modernist writers, especially the romanticists, to focus sharply

¹³⁴Roger, Allen, *The Arabic Literary Heritage, The development of its genres and criticism*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Page 203-204.

¹³⁵ The historical context of the emergence of this new trend goes back to Muhammad Ali’s period (1805-1849), who governed Egypt under a merely nominal Turkish suzerainty and enjoyed great power and independence. He believed that the superiority of the West is primarily because of modern science, technology, intellectualism etc. and he tried to emulate and implement these tools and his modernization processes brought about drastic changes in all walks of Egyptian life. His successors especially Ismail (1863-1879) went a step forward and even declared “Egypt is part of Europe”, but declined any kind of Western political domination, which was palpable in the Urabi revolt of 1881, which caused a full scale British invasion of Egypt. As an Endeavour to thwart the Western political domination while accepting their values and models two main currents of thoughts were emerged; the first was to revitalize and reform Islamic principles (Abdu and team) and the second was connected with the liberal nationalism concerned with political emancipation. The nationalist emancipatory awakening stemmed mainly from Egypt and Syria, which was deeply connected with the literary awakening and an outstanding soldier poet Mahmud Sami al-Barudi, who was one of the mainstays of the Urabi revolt, was its forefront. The last three decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of neo-Classicist tendency to install the Islamico-nationalist ideals and to forestall the European domination, under the auspices of Shawqi and Hafiz. In this context, as a direct opposition against the neo-Classicist trends firstly Khalil Mutran came forward and later ‘Abd al-Rahman Shukri and the Diwan group. For more detail see, P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, U.K., 1969, 512 pages.

on highly individual or subjective themes. At the same time, the modernist Mutran was a Christian Lebanese immigrant who cannot share the same ideological problem like those committed Muslims such as ‘Aqqad, Shawqi, Hafiz etc.¹³⁶ and another important modernist poet Shukri was a government employee in the Ministry of Education more than thirty-five years, and therefore, both the poets managed to concentrate more on personal feelings and subjective themes than any other poets.

Depending upon the freedom of Western poetry and by imitating its techniques, the Diwan group also developed new precepts and practices. These modernists too were not full-fledged romantics, and therefore, while sometimes they focused more on the expression of personal experiences which was known as the *wijdān* (emotion) kind of poetic art, the socio-political viewpoint was also got adequate gravity. But, amid these poetic currents and tendencies, making a clear line between one poet from another, or to attach one fully into a firm axis from another was almost difficult, because of the tenuousness of poetic stratification and the fluctuating social and intellectual tendencies of that period. Nevertheless, several Egyptian critics vouchsafed the crucial influence of Mutran’s poetic ideals in the emergence of both Diwan and Apollo groups in one way or another.

Salma Khadra jayyusi argues that the time Mutran started his experience poetry was not fully prepared to spread the romantic trends in poetry in the Arab world, especially in Egypt. Although, it was true that the Arab poets everywhere paid more attention on European poetry, and they focused on European romanticists from English and French, the readings of Arab poets of European poetry were yet not comprehensive, and they did not represent all the things they read from that literature as the part of spontaneous poetic orientation. Secondly, even though there was an aspiration for renovation and adventure, the characteristic of that period was not at all revolutionary and rejecting the social internal conditions and was not preoccupied with the tragic incidents or social changes. Therefore, there was no need of the supremacy of romantic currents, which usually accompanying the perturbed conditions. And thirdly, when we approach this issue from the mere artistic point of view, Arabic poetry, especially in Egypt and Damascus

¹³⁶ Mounah A.Khouri argues that “However, as an adherent of the Christian Lebanese school of thought in Egypt, he found himself restricted to the margins of Egyptian society, leaving on the literary sensibility of his age rather than on its social consciousness the greater and more enduring influence of his dedicated art”. See, *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, Mounah A. Khouri E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 172.

was strongly stuck to the neo-Classicist tendencies, so, it was capable of withstanding any sort of new movement in its modern history, and if a best poet tries his best to resuscitate a new trend through his distinctive personal writing, other poets will not join with him. This time the neo-Classicist poetry was in its zenith of glory with its fortification and deep-rootedness, and any kind of radical deviation from its soul and structure in that time will terminate in utter failure. It is necessary to the tools of changes and destructions to wait for suitable time to wage the biggest war against it. But that time, namely, the last of nineteenth and the first of twentieth centuries, it was necessary for the poets who feel the need of changes, like that of Mutran, to use those tools with extreme caution and apply it gradually.¹³⁷

Furthermore, this Arab version of Romanticism rejected the socio-political approaches of neo-Classicism and it established a *wijdan* (emotional) kind of poetry in its place which was based mainly on the expression of personal experiences and subjective themes, but that failed to contain the socio-political revolutionary ideals and the revolt against all established orders in the fields of thought, taste and expression, which was the basic feature of European romanticism.¹³⁸ While these highly individual or subjective themes led gradually this modern poetic genre into their own private worlds, the meagre revolutionary ideals of Arab romanticism turned out to be more implicit which is explicit even in the writings of Mutran when he advocates the issues of social justice, freedom, progress and other liberal ideals, and he expresses it allegorically under the guise of foreign titles such as *Nero*, *Chosroes*, *Napolean* and so on.

¹³⁷Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Al-Ithjahātu wa al-harkātu fi al-Sh‘ir al-‘Arabi al-Hadīth*, translated into Arabic by Abd al Wahid Lu‘lu‘a, published by Markaz al-dirasat al-wahdat al-‘Arabiya, Beirut, Lebanon, second edition, 2007, pages 96 -97.

¹³⁸ Apart from the aforementioned reasons given by Al-Jayyusi for the scarcity of socio-political revolutionary aspects in Arab romanticism, especially in its Egyptian version, Mounah A. Khouri further talks about the socio-religious reasons behind it. Some of the socio-religious reasons he talks about seem to be more noteworthy than his literary reasons, and those reasons are: (a) Abdu’s Egyptian Islamic reformist movement “largely aimed at internal reforms, it failed to produce a basic social philosophy or a coherent ideology generally accepted by the community and pursued both in public life and in private associations. Such an ideology might have counter balanced the general obsession with politics, clarified the prevalent vague identification of political and social aims, deepened the sense of community that was lacking between the different classes of Egyptian society, and consequently reinforced the poet’s commitment to the social issues of their time”. (b) “the prevalent tendency to view not only social but also political principles as self-evident ethical imperatives, and political behavior simply as good or bad conduct. With this concept inherited from the formal idealism and ethical approach of the traditional Islamic view of politics, the political education of the public became (in the eyes of those poets who cared to devote some attention to it) a question of preaching certain ideals or promoting certain ethical values rather than dealing with concrete situations”. See, *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, Mounah A. Khouri, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, pages 136- 137.

Mutran's poetic ideals

The endeavours to revive the classical Arabic literary art started even in the first decades of the nineteenth century in the Lebanon under the patronage of Nāsif al-Yāziji (1800-1871), and that was further developed by his two younger contemporaries Ahmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1801-1887) and Buṭrus al-Bustāni (1819-1883). The dispersal of Western ideas and literature through the Western educational institutions in the Levant, and through their constant visit to Europe, compelled the poets especially al-Shidyāq and al-Bustāni to shatter the rigid traditionalism of al-Yaziji. The modernizing attempts of Ibrahim al-Hurāni (1844-1916), Khalīl al-Khūri (1836-1907), Sulaymān al-Bustāni (1856-1925) and Ibrahim al-Yāziji (1847-1906) etc. and the massive migration of the Lebanese intelligentsia to Egypt including Jūrji Zaydān, Fāris Nimr, Taniyūs Abduh (1869-1926), Najīb al-Haddād (1867-1899), Ya'qūb Sarrūf, Najīb Azūri, Farah Antūn (1874-1922), Shibli Shumayyil (1860-1917) etc. make things easier for Mutran and his followers to pace forward in the modernization of the Arabic poetry.

The attempts to emulate European romantic writings and to be influenced by it in one way or another were visible in almost all schools of literature in Egypt. In 1904, Hafiz Ibrahim translated Hugo's *Les Misérables* into Arabic with his rudimentary knowledge of French, and even though Al-Manfalūti was not conversant with any foreign language, he translated several French literary works with the help of his friends. While Shawqī's poems such as *Kabīr al-Hawādith Fi Wādi al-Nīl* (The great events in the Nile valley) and *'Alā Qabr Nabuliyūn* (On the tomb of Napoleon) portray the French romantic influence of Hugo on him, his several poetic dramas are the emulation of Corneille, Racine and others. But in the case of Mutran, the French romantic ideals came to him by his several Christian Syro – Lebanese predecessors, and by his French education in the Lebanon etc. before his migration to France, and in some of his poems he enthusiastically extols Musset, Hugo and so on.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ When he talks about Musset he says in one of his poems that:

شاعر كان عمره بيت تشبيب وكان الأئين فيه الرويا
إن في نظمه لحسا لطيفا باقيا منه في السطور خفيا

(He was a poet whose life was a lyrical poem rhymed with a sigh. His writings conceal a persisting subtle sensibility.) And he says about Hugo that:

لقد جئت بالبدع الذي أب سنة لك الفضل فيها خالدا ولك الذكر
وجارك في الفتح الحديث فارس توازع في عقباه بينكم النصر

(You have created something new which later became tradition and for which you shall have everlasting achievement and renown. You were accompanied in this modern conquest by others who shared your victory.)

The amalgamation of classical and modern tendencies was one of the sterling characteristics in Mutran's poetic writings, by which he utilizes the spirit of classical ode to evoke new meanings and thoughts, not getting bogged down completely with its traditional classical way like what the neo-Classicists were doing.¹⁴⁰ Mutran announces that he releases his mind and poetry from the rigid templates and goes back to organic genre and intuition, and he feels contented, because he depicts the essence of Arabic language, and he is not ready to reject its roots as well.¹⁴¹ Taha Husayn says about Mutran's literary achievement "He taught the Classicists to avoid the suppression of their own individuality in their emulation and imitation; and the Modernists to refrain from exaggeration which would render their modernism futile and vain. He protected Hafiz from excessive conservatism and Shawqi from excessive modernism which would ruin their poetry. He pointed out to contemporary poets the middle path which will preserve the true identity of Arabic literature and enable it to attain refinement and perfection".¹⁴² Furthermore, the consideration of the medieval period poetic techniques as the prototype of Arabic poetic art was the actual reason for the aforementioned amalgamation in his poems. While several neo-Classicists and some romanticists gave more importance to the Abbasid period poetry, Mutran's poetic model was the pre-Islamic period one, and therefore, he utilized at times several uncommon bold words, phraseologies, metaphors and expressions, which were common in that period. He approbates his allegiance to the pre-Islamic period poetry in his preface of his collection, which says: "... So I pursued the models of the pre-Islamic Arabs in adapting and absorbing their thoughts and emotional elements; in accordance with the need of utilizing those

¹⁴⁰ Mutran himself wrote in the July issue of *Al-Majalla al-Misriyya* in 1900 about liberating Arabic poetry from the bondage of the blind imitation of the classical poetry, he says that "it is not necessary that the poetic ideals of the Arabs must be the ideals of ours. But rather, Arabs had their own epochs and we have our own, and they had their own literature, ethics, needs and cognitions and we have our own literature, ethics, needs and cognitions etc. Therefore, our poetry must depict our conceptions and emotions not their conceptions and emotions, even in a way in which it lacks their models and follows their lingual views". Jasim, Talib Khalif, *Al-Mafhūm al-Naqdi baina al-Taḥdīd wa al-Ishtighāal fi Shighri Khalīl Muṭrān*, Majallat Kulliyat al-Tarbiyat al-Asāsiyya li al- 'Ulūmi al-Tarbawiyat wa al-Insaniya, Babil University, Baghdad, Iraq, Issue 20, April 2015, page 176. Moreover, Taha Husayn says that "he (Mutran) entered the way of ancestors, but he did not impress at all with it and left it aside, but later he compelled to come back to it once again. Now he tried to return to it as a reformer not as a mere follower. A bit of his old fashioned poems will let you know the extent of modernity he acquired. He is humble enough not to argue that he got the modernity he intended, but rather, he left it for those who come later". Hussain, Taha, *Hafiz wa Shawqi*, second edition, published by Maktaba al-Khafāji, Cairo, Egypt, 1953, page 21.

¹⁴¹ Daif, Shawqi, *Al-Adab al-'Arabi al-Mu'aşir fi Misr*, fourth edition, published by Dār al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1119 A.H., page 124.

¹⁴² This citation Mounah A Khouri cites from Anwar al-Jundi's book *Naz'at al-Tajdid fi al-Adab al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir*, in his *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 172.

words and phraseologies in this age. I am not afraid of occasionally utilizing the unconventional metaphors and phraseologies at all”¹⁴³.

Dar al-Ma‘arif, a Cairo based publishing company, published the first edition of his collection in 1908, which included 164 poems in different themes and forms in 300 pages, with a wonderful preface, which put forward his concepts of poetic art.¹⁴⁴ His total poetic writings include 434 poems in 4 volumes, in near about 22000 lines, and in more than 35% of his poem he used the meter *Kāmil*. His poetic themes deal with old topics related to new political and non-political circumstances and incidents, by means of his creative imagination to illustrate the accurate idea which he ponders. Chiefly, he followed three main European romantic poetic ideals, which were: (a), the emotional (*wijdani*) element, by which the poet illustrates the beauty of the spontaneous overflow of human emotion, (b), the depiction of Nature, to portray the experiences, pains and desires of the poet, and (c) the narrative poetry, in which the epic or historical events, or sometimes the incidents of real life formulate the theme.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ When talks about his poetic ideals Mutran enunciates his concepts in the preface of his Diwan, which says that: "عدت إليه وقد نضج الفكر. واستقلت لي طريقة كيف ينبغي أن يكون الشعر. فشرعت انظمة لترضية نفسي حيث أتخطي. أو لتربية قومي عند وقوع الحوادث الجلي. متابعاً عرب الجاهلية في مجارة الضمير على هواه. ومراعاة الوجدان على مشتهاه. موافقاً زماني فيما يقتضيه من الجرأة على الألفاظ والتراكيب لا أخشى استخدامها أحياناً على غير المؤلف من الاستعارات والمطروق من الأساليب. ذلك مع الاحتفاظ جهدي بأصول اللغة وعدم التقريب في شيء منها إلا ما فاتني علمه". أنظر ديوان الخليل لخليل مطران، الجزء الأول، الناشر دار مارون عبود، بيروت، وتوزيع دار الجيل، بيروت، بدون تاريخ النشر، صفحة 9، بعنوان بيان موجز.

Moreover, the important factor we should keep in mind that, not only Khalil Mutran, but several other Lebanese poets and writers such as Butrus al-Bustani, Sulayman al-Bustani, Khalil al-Yaziji, Jurji Zaidan and several others were passionate to the pre-Islamic period poetry. The discussion on the reasons of this tendency will be a bit discursive.

¹⁴⁴ But, owing to several reasons he failed to a large extent to fulfill his promise of this new genre in his later writings. Paul Starkey says that "For whatever reason, his subsequent poetry failed to develop the promise of the first volume of his Diwan to any significant degree and it was left to others to build on the principles outlined in his early 'manifesto' and develop more fully the Romantic trends that he had hinted at in his early poems". See Starkey, *Paul, Modern Arabic Literature*, Edinburgh University Press, U.K., 2006, Page 65.

¹⁴⁵ The romantic genre of literature left in him great imprints during his brief sojourn in Paris from 1890 to 92, even though the predominant literary genres of that time in Paris, especially between 1860 and 1885, were Parnassianism, Decadentism, and Symbolism, and the romanticism was in its declining stage. The very important characteristics of the Parnassian school were, (a) objectivity, (b) devotion to plastic beauty i.e. music and color to be depicted by the sound of the word, rather than by its denotation, (c) copiousness of rich and exotic sensuous impression. The Decadente School focused on (a) the cult of sophistication and of the exotic, (b) the insistence upon the meaning of the fields of the various special senses, and (c) the Satanisme of Charles Baudelaire. The Symbolist Movement, definitely an outgrowth of the Parnassianism of Catulle Mendez and of Jose M. Heredia, is not easy to define; but these are some of its chief characteristics: (a) it is subjective; (b) there is an emphasis on the imagery derived from color, sound and smell, (c) the idea that when sounding the depths of human personality, believed themselves justified in employing whatever possibilities of suggestion they found available, and (d) the arts of

One of the main features of his poetic writings which he himself refers to in the preface of his published volumes was the equal emphasis on personal emotions and social issues. Instead of mere verbal jugglery, real spontaneous emotions and powerful feelings constitute the romantic disposition on the one hand, and on the other, his constant contacts with the populace and interfering in their day-to-day issues, and his several social poems make him a revolutionary-like poet. While his neo-Classicist contemporary Hafiz Ibrahim wrote *Khamriyāt* (Poems on wine), Muṭran wrote poems on the harmful effects of liquor both on person and society. Thus, Muṭran's personal emotions and feelings got more emphasis on his portrayal of flowers, natural beauty, monuments etc. while his reaction against injustice, iniquity, oppression and oppressors are more socially inclined.

Even though most of his modern poetic ideals evolved after his migration to Egypt, owing to the deep influence of Barudi's writings and other neo-Classicists, his attempt for the balanced correlation between form and content in Arabic poetry was embodied in his early writing before his immigration. The adequate correlation between form and content which forms an organic entity has only seen earlier in the writings of the Lebanese poet and scholar Ibrahim al-Yaziji whom Muṭrān considers his master and he wrote some poems on his appraisal.¹⁴⁶ This correlation was abundant in his later poems as well, which was not a dilettante decorative formal

poetry, painting, sculpture, engraving are mingled and confused. See *Parnassianism, Symbolism, Decadentism – and Spanish-American modernism*, Poe Carden, Hispania, Vol. 43, No.4 (Dec 1960) Page 545 -551. Dr. Gamal al-Din El-Ramadi argues that Muṭran did not pay much interest in these genres, but only in romanticism, even though he wrote some Symbolic poems such as *Sawr al-ssin* (The Great Wall of China) and *Sheikh Adhina* (The Old Man of Athens) etc. May he think that romanticism is the only genre, which suits to his nature and the nature of the Orient. He considered romanticism as a means of expressing the self after the revolution by which the individual was liberated and human being recognized their rights. See Al-Ramādi, Jamāl al-Dīn, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Shā'ir Al-Aqīr Al-'Arabiyya*, published by Maktaba Al-Dirāsa Al-'Adabiyya, Cairo, Egypt, 1958, page 21. Nevertheless, while talking about the impetus of Muṭran to be obsessed with romanticism than any other prevalent genres in France, Dr. Mishal Jaha gives several reasons. (a) He migrated to France as a refugee from the torture of the Ottoman Empire, not as a student, but rather, seeking protection and livelihood. (b) He has studied French literature from his native land Lebanon, and he impressed with only romanticism and the new literary genres in France did not make any influence in his mind. (c) Everyone has their own proclivities and will be impressed by it and will not accept any new tendencies at the first sight. (d) Romanticism has found a passion in his mind, and its temper suited to him than any another genre. See Jaha, Mīshal, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Bākūrat al-Tajdīd fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Hadīth*, first edition, published by Dār al-Masīrah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1981, page 103.

¹⁴⁶ These are the two lines from his poetry on his master Ibrahim al-Yaziji:

أخلصتها من شائبات المعجم أمحرر العربية الفصحى التي
 في قلب واعي الحكمة المتفهم ما مجدك المشهور إلا مجدها

(O liberator of the pure Arabic language which you have liberated from the shortcomings of the foreign. Your renowned glory exists in the hearts of wise and learned.)

quality, but a natural feature in his whole poetic writing with the concordance of ideas and the distinctiveness of its subject matter. From his earlier youth he pointed out and criticized the lack of unity in the Arabic poetry. While some of his narrative poems managed to sustain the organic unity, some others only managed to keep up the thematic unity.

Instead of the neo-Classicist concepts of pointing up and celebrating or criticizing a specific social or political occasion, the romanticists managed to put up the celebration of the expression of personal experience. Although Mutran was not fully detached from the neo-Classicist ideals, his portrayal of personal experiences and emotions was a brand-new approach in Arabic literature. The subtle expression of personal feelings occupied the place of imagination, and the digressive poetic genre was replaced with poetic unity, in which an entire poetry deals with a single theme. Most of the earlier Arab critics focused on selected lines of an ode and to evaluate the beauty of its aspects by the piece; instead of considering it as a whole, that concept ruins the very idea of ode.

Analogous to several Egyptian writers such as al-Barudi, Hafiz and Shawqi; Mutran was also proud of the Egyptian Pharaonic patrimony and he wrote numerous poems on it. The idea of Pharaonism gained wider currency in Egypt before 1940s as an inseparable part of Egyptian nationalism of Saad Zaghlul, Mustafa Kamil, Mohammad Farid etc. long before the emergence of the Arab Nationalism. Taha Hussein and several other Egyptian writers were anti-Arabists and ardent Egyptian nationalists. Naturally, as a direct impact of the general trend Mutran also wrote poems on admiring the huge statue of Ramses, ancient archaeological city of Karnak, other magnificent pyramids etc. to showcase the glorious antique past of Egypt.¹⁴⁷ Besides, his various

¹⁴⁷For example, these lines are to admire the magnificence of the statue of ancient Egyptian king Ramses in his poem *Fi Zilli Timthali Ra 'amses*: (In the Shadow of the Statue of Ramses), which reads:

يامجد رمسيس كم ابقيت من عجب	فيه ومسألة عنه لحيــــران
أبغض به في العدى من هادم حنق	وحيدا هو للتاريخ من بــــان
عالي الصروح كما والى الفتوح بلا	رفق بقاص ولا عطف على دان

(O the glorious Ramses, how many wonders you left over in it and the examination on it is astounding. How repugnant you are for your ferocious irate enemies, and how marvelous it is in the evident history. With high edifice, and the victory followed one by one without forbearance to the remote opponent or sympathy towards the nearer one.) In fact, the actual intension of the poet by these kinds of poems is not the glorification of the ancient Egyptian kings; on the contrary, to attack those brutal kings of ancient Egypt. Even the last part of this poem talks about the king who is gleeful because of the pitiful condition of his subjects. And another poem *al-Ahram* (The Pyramids) is also discusses almost the same theme. The detailed discussion on this matter is yet to come in the last part of this chapter.

poems on Egyptian patriotism, its history and monuments, great political events, praising national heroes, encouraging freedom fighters, justifying national leaders against their opponents, such as his extolment of Talaat Harb Pasha; the founder of Egyptian National Bank, and Huda Sha'arawi; the feminist women emancipator etc. are also remarkable.¹⁴⁸

One of his biggest contributions to the modern Arabic literature as a direct reflection of Western literary influence on him was his initiation of narrative poetry, which he introduced in his first collection, and that was the longest one in the history of Arabic literature.¹⁴⁹ And he penned numerous descriptive poems too and his poems such as *al-Twiflani* (Two children), *Fatāt al-Jabal al-Aswad* (The Young Woman from Montenegro), *Maqatal Bazarjamhar* (The killing of Bozorgmehr) etc. are ballads. These attempts contributed to the Arabic literature a new genre, which was an epic-like poem as a direct emulation of the European romantic literature, and he wanted to replace the exhausting *Qasīda* pattern with his new genre as an alternative to the prosperity and improvement of the Arabic poetry. The first of his narrative poems is based on the historical event of Franco-Prussian war of 1806 in which Napoleon invaded Prussia and in 1870

¹⁴⁸ This is not to say that he did not interfere or support any issue of the global Arab communities, but rather, the argument is that his writings on those issues were not as an Arab nationalist, but as a humanitarian romantic poet. His poems on international Arab issues include: *Li 'Iganati Tarabals* (To help Tripoli), *'Ithab wa Isthisrah Li Ma'unati Tarabals* (Reproach and appeal for the help of Tripoli), *al-Hilal al-Ahmar* (The red crescent), *al-Shadid al-Tarabalsi Umar Mukhtar* (The martyr of Tripoli Umar Mukhtar), *'Iganati Dimashq* (To help Damascus), *Dam'a ala al-Sham* (Teardrop on Sham), *Nakabat Dimashk* (The Damascus catastrophe), *'Iganati Mankubi al-Anadul* (To help the calamity hit people of Anatolia), *'Iganati Beirut* (To help Beirut), *Muja'at Lebanon* (The Lebanese famine) and so forth. Moreover, Mounah A. Khouri says that "Instead of becoming obsessed by the new idea of nationalism which fascinated several of his colleagues, Mutran was attracted mainly to the current of humanism in Western thought. Small wonder, then, that he joined forces with the few intellectuals who shared his attraction to that current and dedicated the most significant part of his poetry to the propagation of its great ideas throughout the Arab world". See, *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, Mounah A. Khouri, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 161-162.

¹⁴⁹ The endeavors of Khalil Khouri in the nineteenth century is also worthy to mention here in this regard, but he could neither produce any significant literary work, nor to proceed further in this manner. At the same time, even in his first collection of poems Khalil Mutran initiated several good quality narrative poems such as *Wafa'* (Loyalty), *al-'Iqab* (punishment), *Finjan Khahwa* (A cup of coffee), *Fatat al-Jabal al-Aswad* (The Young Woman from Montenegro), *al-Janin al-Shahid* (The martyred fetus), *Gharam al-Tiflain* (The love of two children) etc. We can divide his narrative poems into two parts such as (a) historical narrative poems and (b) social narrative poems. While his poems such as *Nayrun* (Nero), *Fatat al-Jabal al-Aswad* (The Young Woman from Montenegro), *Finjan Khahwa* (A cup of coffee), *Maqatal Bazarjamhar* (The killing of Bozorgmehr) are historical narratives, his several other poems such as *Al-Janin al-Shahid* (The martyred fetus), *Wafa'* (Loyalty), *Hikayat 'Ashiqaini* (The tale of two lovers), *al-Wardat wa al-Zanbakha* (Rose and Lilly), *al-Twiflan* (Two children), *Binth Sheikh al-Khabila* (Daughter of the tribal leader) etc. are social narratives.

they retook it from the French control, and therefore, this poem was titled '1806 – 1870'.¹⁵⁰ Another long poem is *Nayrūn* (Nero) which comprises 20 sections and 430 lines in a single meter, and in its introduction he says that the use of one monorhyme throughout a single poem dealing with a single topic is the biggest obstacle in front of writing a long poem. But he claims that he takes this challenge and when he attains the goal of writing a long poem using monorhyme and dealing with a single subject, he can prove to his colleagues the importance of following different patterns to attain the perfection of poetry which had already gained the European poetry. And some of his long narrative poems such as *Fatāt Jamīla Bā'isa* (A beautiful miserable girl), *al-Janīn al-Shahīd* (A martyred fetus) etc. are based on real events of Egyptian social life.

Modern Arabic literary critics endorsed Khalil Muṭrān as the trailblazer of the romantic poetry in Arabic literature, but the extent to which his romanticism thrived in its European ways is a matter of debate, and the discussion on that will be a bit discursive. Even so, when appraising the significance of Mutran in the field of Arab romanticism, Jayyusi's criticism is also worth mentioning here. She argues that the exact expression of the romantic self which was perceptible in the European romantic writings is visible only in some of his poems which depict his personal romantic melancholic experiences. Even that element completely subsides later in front of two aspects of his poetry, which were: (a) the correlation between form and content, theme and form, which was the characteristic of the Classical poetry. The personal tone is routinely lacking in might in his overabundant narrative poems. And those scanty poems talk about his personal experiences depict some contemplation, Nature with the mixture of emotion and memories, and the poet is not becoming the part of Nature either. (b) The first decades of the twentieth century witnessed the revolt against the subjective elements of the neo-Classic poetry, and the urging of this group of poets to take the way out of the poetic experience. Even Mutran as well partook in

¹⁵⁰ "The discernible imprints of Classical Arabic and the Western traditions are visible in his earlier earnest endeavors to write poetry. That was in his poem which was titled '1806-1870' on the war of Jena-Auerstedt, and it seems that he wrote it in 1888 when he was only 16. If this is true, we can say that the outburst of poetry started in Mutran much earlier of its proper time, and the traditional ode (قصيدة) had a remarkable degree of power in some areas, and that seldom revealed the signs of weakness which were visible in the emerging amateur poems". Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Al-Ithijahātu wa al-harkātu fi al-Sh'ir al-'Arabi al-Hadīth*, translated into Arabic by Abd al Wahid Lu'lu'a, published by Markaz al-dirasat al-wahdat al-'Arabiya, Beirut, Lebanon, second edition, 2007, pages 86.

this form of poetic objectivity, but the succeeded critics intended by the tendency of objectivity in his poetic writings only his afore said narrative poetry.¹⁵¹

In sum, his main romantic themes were: the description of nature, the romantic themes in his narrative poems, and his call for the application of personal experience in poetry etc. and these themes deal with the stories of sufferings, deceits, starvations, death, valour, great deeds, innocence etc. His several poems depict the harrowing melancholic romantic feelings and some of them seeking solace in Nature. Shawqi Daif argues that “Mutran’s poems relies on the style of European lyrical poems to express the feelings of inner self with organic unity in which his harrowing pain and sorrows lead to a complete melancholic form and that is explicit in his poems such as *al-Asad ali-Baki* (The weeping lion), *Fi Tashyi‘i Janazat* (The funeral), *al-Janin al-Shahid* (The martyred foetus) etc. This form of writings fills the mind of the reader with utmost extent of agony and shrouds the living dynamic world with it and this reflects his sorrows, pains, love, feelings and desires etc”.¹⁵²

Mutran’s romantic writings

Out of his several poems deal with romantic themes *Hikāyat ‘Ashiqaini* (The tale of two lovers) is the portrayal of his own story in which he repeatedly changes the name of his lover such as *Hind, Salma, Laila* etc., which was the first experiment in the Arabic literature. It may showcase either that his lover is an imaginative one rather than realistic, or that may be another form of the expression of extreme love. But he says in the preface of this poem that he gives several names to his beloved to conceal the truth and to avert suspicions about her. He says:

وكم عرضت لي غانيات فعفتها وصننتُ ضميري واللسان المشبّيا
وكـــــــم بلد وافيته متلّهيا فغادرته أدمى فــــوآدا وأكأبا
وما زال هذا الحب في مؤيدا مكينا نبت عنه السّتون وما نبا

¹⁵¹ Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Al-Ithijahātu wa al-harkātu fi al-Sh‘ir al-‘Arabi al-Hadīth*, translated into Arabic by Abd al Wahid Lu‘lu‘a, published by Markaz al-dirasat al-wahdat al-‘Arabiya, Beirut, Lebanon, second edition, 2007, pages 90 – 92. Moreover, Jayyusi argues that the original emergence of romanticism in Arabic literature happened from two different arenas, which were: (a) Mahjar literature and (b) prose literature of Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti and others in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. See Ibid, Page, 97.

¹⁵²Daif, Shawqi, *Al-Adab al-‘Arabi al-Mu‘aṣir fi Misr*, fourth edition, published by Dār al-Ma‘arif, Egypt, 1119 A.H., page 125-6.

(I have seen several chaste ladies but I remained self-restrained, and I protected my mind and tongue from any sort of dalliance. How many countries I roamed around, but I left all of it with wounded heart and despondent. This love was with me always invincibly, and several years had passed with its experiences.) (My translation)

This poem is a very long one in a semiautobiographical form, and it seems realistic from the deep feeling of his despondency on account of the subsequent failure of his love.¹⁵³ If that was not realistic at all, the poem delineates the simmering melancholic romantic feelings of the poet, and that represents the exact picture of a firm relation of love and its ensuing break up which causes the aforesaid despondency in a committed naive heart. He says:

فيا وردتي ماذا أحالك جمره ؟ ويا جنّتي ماذا أشارك نارا ؟
جزى الله إخوانا وشوبى عندها فكانوا لسعدى حين تم عثارا
يُسروُن لي شرا ويُبدون رأفة أكانوا إذن يبغون عندي ثارا؟

(Oh my rose what turned you into an ember? Oh my garden what changed you into fair? May God reward those brothers who traduce me to her, and when the malignity was completed they stood for my advantages. They conceal evil towards me and reveal mercy at the same time. Do they look for rage from me?) (My translation)

This constant despondency reflects in his surroundings as well and that grows into a melancholic feeling in his life and literary works.

سلمى أنظري الروضة الغناء ساكتة على نعيم وقلبي ذاكيا قلقا
من علم الزهر أن يفتّر لي كذبا وباكى السحب أن يندى وما صدقا ؟

¹⁵³ Salma Khadra jayyusi says that the story of his tragic love in his early life is an issue which we do not have reliable evidence to confirm it. And Mutran did not marry at all after it. Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, *Al-Ithijahātu wa al-harkātu fi al-Sh'ir al-'Arabi al-Hadīth*, translated into Arabic by Abd al Wahid Lu'lu'a, published by Markaz al-dirasat al-wahdat al-'Arabiya, Beirut, Lebanon, second edition, 2007, page 86. Nevertheless, Dr. Mishal Jaha says that one of the Lebanese dailies published an article on Khalil Mutran before some years of his death in which the author claims that he asked Mutran about the lady in his life. Then Mutran's reply was that "that long story I don't want to tell you, but one thing is sure that there was a lady in my life. She is still alive and will be alive as well as long as I live". Then I asked him: have you written something on her? He said: "Yes, several poems". Jaha, Mīshal, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Bākūrat al-Tajdīd fi al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Hadīth*, first edition, published by Dār al-Masīrah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1981, page 86.

ونائح الطير إيلامي بمنطقه ————— كأنه شارح حالـي بما نطقا ؟
 ومائس الغصن إغرائي بعطفته ————— فإن دنوت تسامى نافرأ فرقا ؟
 هذي دنوبك يا سلمى جعلت بها ————— بعد الصفاء حياتي موردا رنقا

(Oh Salma, look at the crooning garden which is silent now even in its gracious condition, my mind is vigilant and disquiet. Who taught the flowers to show me its feigned smile, and the weeping clouds to dampen me with being truthful? The chirrup of the birds expresses my pains, that seems explains my condition with its utterance. The slightly swaying branches inveigle me into sympathetic, but if I go closer to it that will rise above to move apart unpleasantly. Oh Salma, these are your mistakes by which you made my life muddy after its cleanness.) (My translation)

Later, Mutran's romantic writings turned out to be full-fledged melancholic, which he followed throughout his poetic writings and that is called in French *La maladie du Siècle* or the illness of the Century.¹⁵⁴ After his semi autobiographic *Hikayat 'Ashiqaini* he came out with another poem which was titled *Itāb* (Reproach), in which his melancholic soliloquy takes the form of a conversation between him and a far-flung bird. In this poem once he asks the bird to teach him its song to sing it in his solitude, and in another time he asks to lend him its wings to hover in the broad sky and to go far beyond his home which makes him asphyxiated. Then, he divulges his desire to the bird to fly along with it to escape from this world of deception, nuisance, feud, tussles etc. to the world of love, pleasure, commitment, innocence and so forth.

The utmost melancholic romantic expression is explicitly perceivable in his *al-Asad al-Bāki* (The weeping lion) which he wrote after a fatal disease that inflicted on him both physical and mental agonies. Along with this poem he penned another one as well based on the same context and theme which is titled *al-Masā* (The Evening). Because both the poems deal with almost the same theme in an utmost melancholic way by seeking solace in Nature, the discussion on them is yet to come later in this chapter.

¹⁵⁴ The noted Egyptian poet Abu Shadi says that “the romantic feeling which raged Mutran's heart from his earlier life which later put him in the depth of deep sorrows throughout the rest of his life, which was the main pillar of the mansion of his emotional (Wijdani) poetry”. Dr. Mishal Jaha cites this quote from a magazine named *al-Adib*. Jaha, Mīshal, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Bākūrat al-Tajdīd fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Hadīth*, first edition, published by Dār al-Masīrah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1981, page 134.

Because Mutran's concept of love is platonic, the separation makes him gloomy and melancholic and her fond remembrances haunt him everywhere and her presence is still alive even in inanimate objects. Once he got coincidentally her ragged handkerchief from the pile of his dresses which was in such tattered a condition that he could not decipher anything save two letters of her name that was brocaded on it. This relic arose in him an emotional attachment of his beloved. He says:

أعد أيها المنديلُ ذكرا محببا وانطق به الطيب الذي فيك مطربا
واظن بما تضحكيه عنها فإنه إذ ساء إطناب حبيبك مـطربا

(Oh handkerchief, give me back the pleasant memories and talk about the good thing which is satisfactory in you. Talk about something which made you laugh about her, and if something makes you morose some other things will make you delighted.) (My translation)

Even though he wrote several love poems after this separation it seems that he did not fall in love with anyone and he chose to remain unmarried throughout his life. Because, Mutran believes that the real love is an exalted sort of feeling which leads the seeker to self sacrifice and even to martyrdom and by which he attains eternity and that makes epics. With this sacred feeling one can live and die at the same time.¹⁵⁵

Wardat Mātāt (A Rose has died) is also talks about the early death of his beloved, and he likens her death to the death of a rose in its heyday of youth in which the earth greets it, breezes lullabies, butterflies dances around it. But now birds and butterflies lament around the grave of the rose, and the earth, breezes, flowers etc. participate in the sorrows of the woebegone playmates of it.

Mushakāt Baini Wa Baina al-Najm (The grouse between a star and me) is an outstanding expression of his melancholic romantic emotions which he shares with a remote star, who is the intimate nocturnal storyteller friend of the sleepless lover. Here he compares the charm of his

¹⁵⁵ These lines talk about the love which leads to sacrifice.

أبكي إذا غدت الطباء فلم أر زينة الأتراب في السرب
فارقتها أبغسي سعادتها والحب في القربان لا القرب

(I will cry when the antelopes leave early morning and I cannot see the beauty in the cohorts of the flock. I left them wishing excellence for them. In fact, love is in sacrifice not in proximity.)

beloved to the charm of Nature and he requests to the star to keep him in this celestial passion. And he grouses to that star about his agonies and sufferings, because that star was inflicted the same torments which the poet suffers. The poet feels like the star treads on the heels of the sun incessantly like a deep lover who follows his beloved everywhere. He says:

أرى مثل سُهدي في الكوكب	أحلّ به مثل ما حل بي ؟
يهم هُيامي من وجده	ويهرب من مهده مهربي
ونجتاز هذا الفضاء رحيبا	فأما بنا فهو لـم يرحب
إذا سرت بحرا أراه به	أنيسي عن جانب المركب
وإن سرت بزا يجاري خطاي	ففي الشرق أنا وفي مغرب
رفيق السرى فيك جمر	يُذيب وإن سال كالمدمع الصيّب
أسير هواك إلى صاحب	يُؤاخيكَ في همّك المُنصب
أما كل ذي كلف مُتعَب	شريك لذي الكلف المُتعَب ؟

(“The star does not sleep like me, never / Does it suffer from what I suffer? / It wanders from grief here and there / And flees from bed to the open air! / We cross together that vast tract, / Which in our eyes is narrow in fact. If I go to sea on a trip, / it is my companion beside the ship. / If I go on land it pursues my trace, / At east and west, face to face. / Companion of travel, you melted flame, / Though like a flow of tears you came. / Reveal your love to a friend, so sincere, / Whom he shares your tiresome grief, dear / Is not the fatigued lover / A colleague to the fatigued lover”?)¹⁵⁶

Finjan Khahwa (A cup of coffee) is a romantic narrative poem which talks about the story of a princess who fell in love with her father’s bodyguard. Once upon a dark night, while both the lovers secretly chattering in their hideaway, fortuitously their affair dawned upon the king, and he ordered to give him a cup of poisonous coffee and that brave deep lover drinks the poisoned coffee without hesitation. But, even though this is the essence of the story, Mutran has skewed toward a brand-new method of depicting love in which love does up this universe with its

¹⁵⁶ Jamāl al-Dīn Al-Ramādi, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Shā‘ir Al-Aqṭr Al-‘Arabiyya*, published by Maktaba Al-Dirāsa Al-‘Adabiyya, Cairo, Egypt, 1958, pages 377 – 8.

delicate ropes, nature celebrates it and the lover thaws into his beloved which turns out to be a single entity. His poem *Fi Tashyi'i Janazat* (The funeral) derives its theme from an abrupt fortuitous incident i.e. when he comes out from home he could see a funeral procession, and when he inquired about it he came to know that, that was the body of a youth who committed suicide owing to his failed love. Mutran expresses his heartbreaking distress in his elegy poem in a romantic way. *Al-Janin al-Shahid* (The martyred foetus) is an epic poetry which exceeds three hundred verses and talks about the tragic story of an unfortunate poor young woman, who was compelled to work in some pubs in Cairo to meet the livelihood of his family which includes her old parents. There she fell in love with a young handsome man who impregnated her and throw her away, and finally she decided to go for foeticide as the only way to escape from ignominy and humiliation. Some critics regard this poem as the Iliad of the century. *Al-Twiflani* (Two children) and *Gharamu Twiflaini* (The love of two children) are dealing with almost the same theme i.e. the childhood love of the two lover couples which came to an end with tragic failures.

Description of natural beauty

Similar to several European romantic writers Mutran's concept of Nature is an ideal one, where love amalgamates all of its phenomena and organisms with each other and these form a coherent whole. Nature is neither inanimate nor insensible, but rather, vibrant, dynamic, sentient which sorrows and rejoices. Even though these formulate a whole, every part of it has its own features and characteristics such as winds inhale, the moon expresses its love and hate by enlarging and reducing itself, the earth shelter seeds in its womb etc.¹⁵⁷ Mutran was the first Arab poet who depicts the natural beauty in a complete romantic way with intense feeling. Sometimes Mutran depicts natural elements and organisms against the backdrop of his extreme romantic expression toward his beloved, that is what he says in his poem *Badr wa badr* (The moon and the moon):

لم أنس حين التقينا والروض زاه نضير

إذ العيون نيام والليل راء حسيـر

¹⁵⁷ Mutran says in one of his poems that:

د كماشاءت الحكمة الفاطره	أليس الهوى روح هذا الوجو
بأخر بينهما أصـره	فيجتمع الجوهر المسندق
ر فيرجعه جنة زاهـره	ويحتضن الترب حبّ اليدا

(Is it wind the spirit of this universe as the wisdom of the creator intended? All soft materials meet each other and there is a firm relation among them. Soil nurses seeds and turns it into verdant gardens)

ورشكوا الغرام دعايا	ورب شاك شكور
وفي الهواء حنين	من الهوى وزفير
وللمياه أنيين	تذوب منه الصخور
وللنسيم حديث	على المروج يدور
وللأزهار فكر	يرويه عنها العبير

(I didn't forget that, when we met, gardens were bright and verdant, while the eyes were asleep, night was murky, we were murmuring to our love playfully – Oh! How many thankful complainants are here! There were nostalgic vagary and moaning in the air. Water wails, so that, rocks were thawing. Breezes were mumbling while they were gyrating. Flowers were spirited and their ordure articulating it.) (My translation)

But, one of his most famous poem *al-Masa* '(The Evening) was the path breaker in Arabic literature.¹⁵⁸ That was a beautiful expression of his romantic ideals of Nature, which was the first experiment in the Arabic literature and that deals with a single topic throughout the poem. Mutran goes beyond the traditional method of likening his loved one to natural organisms, and he delineates the amazing synthesis of his personal feelings with Nature which forms a specific entity and both are whispering to each other. The accurate expression of his apparent emotional (wijdani) proclivity emerges from his personal experiences, pains and dreams. He sits on a rock in the seashore, while the waves ripple in the sea, agonies ripple in his mind and both his physical and mental agonies dogging him perennially.¹⁵⁹ The sun set, with its turning colour into

¹⁵⁸ Even some critics describe him as not a full-fledged romantic they were compelled to approve the romantic sensibility in this poem. Roger Allen says that "While the bulk of his poetry is of the more occasional variety (panegyrics and elegies, for example) and thus places him in the company of Ahmad Shawqi and Hafiz Ibrahim, the language and mood of a few poems, '*al-Masa*', (Evening), for example, which was cited earlier, affords an illustration of the kind of sensibility that seems to reflect Mutran's hopes for the future". *The Arabic Literary Heritage, The development of its genres and criticism*, Roger Allen, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Page 205.

¹⁵⁹ When one of his subscribers declined to pay his subscription claiming that it was not the price of bread, to be paid on the first of every month, Mutran decided to quit the field and started some business. Even though at first that was a full success, in 1912 it turned out to be a complete lose and he lost all of his earnings, he even thought about committing suicide. Besides, his already worsened health conditions, which had great imprints on his personality and writings reflected in his poems such as *al-Masa* (The Evening), *al-Asad al-Baki* (The weeping lion) etc. Jaha,

red, the red clouds of twilight, the silhouetting darkness into the earth are the symbols of extreme sorrows. These are some lines of this poem:

يا للغروب ومابه من عبـرة	للمستهام وعبرة للرائي
أوليس نزا للنهار وصرعة	للمشمس بين ماتم الأضواء
أوليس طمسا لليقين ومبعثا	للك بين غلائل الظلماء ؟
أوليس محوا للوجود إلى مدى	وإبادة لمعالم الأشياء ؟
حتى يكون النور تجديدا لها	ويكون شبه البعث عود ذكاء
ولقد ذكرتك والنهار مودّع	والقلب بين مهابة ورجاء
وخواطري تبدو تجاه نواظري	كلمى كدامية السحاب إزائي
والدمع من جفني يسيل مشعشعا	بسنى الشعاع الغارب المترائي
والشمس في شفق يسيل نُضاره	فوق العقيق على ذرى سوداء
مزت خلال غمامتين تحذرا	وتقطرت كالدمعة الحمراء
فكان آخر دمعة للكون قد	مُزجت بأخر أدمعي لرتائي
وكأنني أنست يومى زائلا	فرأيت في المرأة كيف مسائي

(What a sunset it is! And what a moral in it for a deep lover and for someone who perceives it! Is it the end of the day and the downfall of the sun amid the sorrows of the daylight? Is it the expunction of certainty and the reason for quandary amid the perturbation of the dark night? Is it the obliteration of life forever, and the dismantling of the signs of entities? Until the daylight renew it again and the semi resurrection takes place with the return of the sun. I remember you my beloved, while the day wears on and my heart is in the midst of fear and hope. My heart appears wounded to my eyes like red clouds. Tears spout from my eyelids blended with the gleam of dusking twilight. In the horizon the sun spouts its pure gold on agates in the huge black

Mīshal, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Bākūrat al-Tajdīd fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Hadīth*, first edition, published by Dār al-Masīrah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1981, pages 80 – 81.

clouds. That light comes downwards between two clouds and that trickles like red tears. That is like the last tears of the universe blended with my last tears to express my commiseration. And I saw my days are wearing on and I saw on the mirror how my evening will be.) (My translation)

In the same year he wrote the poem *al-Asad al-Bāki* (The weeping lion) which also known as *Sā'at Ya'is* (The hour of despair), because of the same aforementioned reasons, in which the poet talks about the air of despondency which haunts him constantly, even in an unfortunate moment he decided to commit suicide. He tries to find out solace in Nature – in the natural beauty of '*Ain Shams* - from the continually obsessing remembrance of his beloved and from its subsequent melancholy and from the deceitful insincere deeds of corrupted society, which was almost similar to *Werther* who was the romantic hero of Goethe in his famous novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, in which *Werther* was an 'young man, gifted with extreme sensibility, loses himself, as Goethe writes, 'in fantastic dreams and undermines himself with speculative thought', and finally commits suicide because of his unrequited love'.¹⁶⁰ Mutran says:

إلى "عين شمس" قد لجأتُ وحاجتي طلاقة جوّ لم يُدْنَس بأرجاس
أسري همومي بأنفـرادي آمنا مكابد واش أو نمائم دسّاس

(In '*Ain Shams* I sought asylum and my requirement was the salubrious climate which was not desecrated by any despicable things/events. I conceal my sorrows with my secure solitude from the machinations of telltales and the backbiting of the guileful.) (My translation)

Shurūq Shams Fi Misr (Sunrise in Egypt) articulates the joy of living creatures and inanimate things when the sun rises at dawn in the eastern horizon. The universe wakes up from its indolent slumber and the curtains of the frightening darkness gradually disappear. Besides, other salient characters in his romantic poems are flowers which are perceptible in his several poems such as *al-Wardatani* (Two flowers), *Nafhat al-Zahr* (The whiff of a flower), *al-Narjisa* (Narcissus / Daffodil), *al-Zanbakha* (Lily), *Hikayat Wardat* (Tale of a flower), *Wardat Matat* (A Rose has died), *Banafsajat* (Violet) and so on.

One of the predominant features of romantic writings of all time was the description of bucolic countryside life and scenery in which Mutran was also played vital roles. He extensively wrote

¹⁶⁰ *A Preface to Shelley*, Patricia Hodgart, Longman, London and New York, 1985, Pages 18 -19.

about the countryside of both Lebanon and Egypt. Among these writings his description of the Egyptian farmers, sunrise in the farming land, their tilling, sowing, harvest and their songs of these occasions are discernible.¹⁶¹ He says:

أقبل الحارث المبكر يرعى حرثه والفلاح في التبكير
يلتقى من يد الصباح هدايا ليله الناعم الأمين القرير
فارق الدار منشدا لحنه الجرا ر مستمهل الخطى في المسير
إن دنا الهُمُّ منه أقصاه عنه ضحك النَّبت أو تناغى الطيور
وإذا ما شكاه هوأه أعادت مرضع الحقل شدوه بالخرير

(The early morning sower came to nurse his cultivation and farmer came as well. He meets up from the hand of dawn the gift of sleeping honest pleasure giving night. He departs home singing various songs with slow paces of walking. If sorrow approaches him smiles of plants and chirps of birds take it away from him. When his emotion grouses to him the breast feeding mothers of the field bring back his song with its gurgling sound.) (My translation)

Although he spent comparatively a short span of his early life in the Lebanon, its natural beauty and historical monuments left in him great imprints which played considerable roles in forming his later romantic writings. Obviously, the childhood memories and the gorgeous surroundings of one's native land will help to imprint on one's mind the aesthetic of sensibility, poetic imagination, spontaneous feelings etc. especially in a land like the Lebanon where basins, gigantic mountains, ravines, plains, the remains of the Phoenician, Roman and Islamic monuments such as Baalbek fort, Anjar, Byblos etc. make its stupendous views. He says:

¹⁶¹ Dr. Gamal al-Din al-Ramady argues that in the depiction of idyllic natural beauty too Mutran followed the Western concepts. Because the basic idea of the portrait of natural beauty in the West is coming from the Greek epics, and therefore, the European romantic depiction of natural beauty is neither serene nor tranquil, but very turbulent and tempestuous. But the Arab concept from the pre-Islamic period was to portray the serene, tranquil and calm aspects of Nature and to compare these to the charm of his beloved. Even though Mutran portrays at times the tranquil natural scenery, several times he talks about violent natural elements such as turbulent waves, stormy winds and other feverish elements and scenes. Moreover, Mutran's themes of natural beauty were neither intricate nor inscrutable but explicit and transparent. Most of the times he tries to incorporate these two opposites in his writings. See Jamāl al-Dīn Al-Ramādī, *Khalīl Muṭṭarān: Shā'ir Al-Aqīr Al-'Arabiyya*, published by Maktaba Al-Dirāsa Al-'Adabiyya, Cairo, Egypt, 1958, page 135.

تلك الديار أتذكرون جمالها	بين السهول الخضراء والأطواد
أتردها أحلامكم أترودها	أوهامكم في يقظة ورقاد
أما أنا فعلى تقادم هجرتي	عنها ودادي لا يزال ودادي
لبنانها ودمشقها وبقاعها	وضياعها والبحر طي فؤادي

(Do you remember the beauty of those homes which were situated between verdant plains and gigantic mountains? Does it give you back your dreams and excite your imaginations in wakefulness and sleepiness? But now I am in the far distant days of migration from it, nonetheless, my love is always my love. The Lebanon, Damascus, its lowlands, highlands and the sea are the core of my heart.) (My translation)

Among his portrayal of the Lebanese historical monuments and natural beauty, his poem *Qal'at Baalbek* (The Baalbek fort) is a pleasing one, and apart from the depiction of its magnificence; the sweet memories of his childhood days he spent with his beloved is also captivating. These remnants, immortal structures, gardens and scenes arose in him incessant melancholy, agony of separation, sense of loss etc. Certainly, there were several poets who depict natural bucolic scenes in an accurate photographic manner, but that was Mutran who portrayed at first the natural beauty in an emotional melancholic manner. In the same way, another poem *Hal Tadhkurīn* (Do you remember?) also illustrates his bygone wonderful days of childhood in his native village Zahla and the remembrances with his female cousin Najla Saba'a who later migrated and settled in the U.S. The beautiful description of rivers, its shores, rocks of mountains, their roving about gardens etc. gives the poem a romantic attribute. Another poem was titled *Zahla* is also deals with the same theme, in which he says Zahla is not only the place where his body took form but his spirit as well.

Revolutionary ideals

When nationalism acquired popularity and political strength in those days, the turbulent political situations and social issues compelled the debate of Western literary dichotomy among the Arab literati to support the view of either art for art's sake or art for society, which was called in Arabic *Adab al-Multazim* (committed literature) and *Ghayr Multazim* (Non Committed literature). In this context the poetic division as committed and non-committed became prevalent,

and Mutran was also compelled to take a position between this dichotomy, especially because, most of his admirers were ardent supporters of Arab nationalism, thus, instead of the non-patriotic *Sha‘ir al-Qaṭrayn* (The poet of the two regions i.e. Lebanon and Egypt) he became the more Arab nationalistic *Sha‘ir al-Aqṭar al-‘Arabiyya* (Poet of the Arab countries), even though he was not an Arab nationalist. In fact, in this dichotomy Mutran’s position was almost neutral. On the one hand, he was engrossing in personal-emotional-experience poems mainly for his satisfaction, and on the other, he was dealing with socio-political issues in a more implicit cautious way utilizing historical themes and events through the genre of narrative poetry.¹⁶² Pigeonholing him as a full scale romantic considering one part of his writings will be as inaccurate as branding him a full scale revolutionary in view of the other part of his writings.¹⁶³

However, many of his socio-political poetic writings take the shape of explicit interference to a large extent and distancing itself from the trajectory of neutrality. When we read his political poems such as *Wida Li Lord Krumar* (Goodbye to Lord Cromer), *Istiqbal al-Sayr Gursat* (Welcoming Sir Gorst), *Raf‘u al-‘Alamain al-Misri wa al-Injilzi Fi al-Khurtūm* (Hoisting Egyptian and English flags in Khartoum), *Tahiyat al-Ustūl al-Usmani* (Greetings to the Ottoman fleet), *al-Inqilab al-Usmani* (The Ottoman revolution), *al-Harb al-Yabaniyya al-Rūsiya* (The Japan-Russia war) and *Tasrīh 28 Febrāyir* (The declaration of 28 February) and so on, we can see the active participation of a committed poet. At the same time, most of his contemporary poets in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon etc. such Sabri, Hafiz, Shawqi, al-Rusafi, Bashshara al-

¹⁶² When talk about the reasons behind his neutral cautious stand historians and literary critics give different reasons, Mandur says that “It is obvious that his life in exile compelled him to be more cautious about what he says; besides his natural instinct corroborated his innate modesty. There was no doubt that he was an internee by nature, moderate, and reluctant to talk about his personal life”. Mandūr, Muhammad, *Khalīl Muṭrān*, published by Dār Nahḍat Misr, Cairo, Egypt, 1954, pages 3 -4. At the same time, Mounah A Khouri argues that “Mutran, for example, as a Christian immigrant in Egypt, could not and did not share the ideological problem confronting Egypt in his time in the same terms as al-‘Aqad or other committed members of the Muslim intelligentsia”. A. Khouri, Mounah, *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 138.

¹⁶³ Mounah A. Khouri says that “He declared at the beginning of his career that, in one part of his poetry, he was a *dégagé* poet writing mainly for his own satisfaction while, in another part, he was consciously engaged in the common endeavor to solve the social problems of his own people. This declaration found its concretization in the poet’s work; so the judgment of those who considered him to be a committed intellectual is not at all invalid, even with regard to the assertion that Arab nationalism is reflected in his poetry. What cannot, however, be accepted in that judgment is the over-emphasis put on Mutran’s *uruba* (Arabism), which never exceeded a balanced undercurrent of nationalism in his work”. See *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, Mounah A. Khouri, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 159.

Khouri, al-Zarkali and others were more stringent critics of social exploitations, injustice, oppressions etc. than Mutran per se.¹⁶⁴

His modest stand in every issue was his idiosyncrasy even when he approaches the more emotional issue of Arab nationalism with its ramifications such as the pride and glory of the Arab culture and its ancestry etc., and that was not at all a mere emotional reaction of a diehard religious or secular Arabist against the values of Western culture. Moreover, as a Christian secular modernist his response against the West and spotlighting the Arab culture and its glorious past was a positive one to promulgate the liberal, secular, democratic ideals based on the pre-Islamic period Arab paradigms and to replace the religious adherence with the social and intellectual ideals of the nation-state to secure equality of rights among its all members.¹⁶⁵ His poem *Yaqdat al-Arab* (The Arab awakening) is a good example for his moderate stand, which articulates the common sentiment of the Arabs, and in the first part of the poem he criticizes the carelessness, indolence, apathy etc. of the Arab people, even once he asks “had ever nation kept its bed such centuries, as ye have slept?”. Later, in this poem he recollects the glory, generosity, magnanimity etc. of the bygone pre-Islamic period, and therefore, the full text of this poem is given below with A.J. Arberry’s translation.

يا معشر العرب الكرام الأولى بهم أباهي كل ذي معشر
يا أمة أنكرت تقريظها إنكار لا قال ولا مزدرى

¹⁶⁴ For example Ismail Sabri’s poems such as *Istihad al-Ummat al-Misriyya* (Awakening the Egyptian people), *Hath al-Ummat al-Misriyya* (Encouraging the Egyptian people) are worth mentioning here. In the case of Shawqi, after his returning home from exile he became more outspoken for the cause of general public, laborers, marginalized etc. He turned to Arab brotherhood from his former Islamic brotherhood after the First World War. And, Hafiz’s political poems include *al-Harb al-Yabaniyya al-Rusiya* (The Japan - Russia war), *al-Imratura Aujini* (Empress Eugénie), *Ziwaj al-Sheikh Ali Yusuf Sahib al-Mu’ayyad* (Marriage of Sheikh Ali Yusuf; the owner of the al-Mu’ayyad Daily), *Haditha Dinshaway* (The Dinshaway incident) etc. and al-Rusafi’s political poems include *Bani watani* (The people of my country), *Ila al-Ummat al-‘Arabiyya* (To the Arab people), *Nahnu wa al-Halat al-‘Alamiyya* (We and the global situation) etc. al-Khouri’s poems such as *Tahiyat Falastine* (Greetings to Palestine), *Id al-Jihad* (The festival of the holy war) and so on. But the important thing is that, the political narrative dramatic poems were written only by the Diwan group of poets, but the writings of Mutran in this kind of poems were fully replete with his own personal sorrows and feelings.

¹⁶⁵ After talking about some of Mutran’s socio-political poems Shawqi Daif says that “these poems not only entice us into its narrative or dramatic features, but rather, its symbolic features as well. He wrote these poems to depict the oppressed downtrodden Arab people and their miserable conditions under the colonial occupation, and he makes wholehearted calls for their freedom, national dignity, and he ignites exuberance in the minds of the Western general public too”. See Daif, Shawqi, *Al-Adab al-‘Arabi al-Mu’asir fi Misr*, fourth edition, published by Dār al-Ma‘arif, Egypt, 1119 A.H., Lebanon, page 127.

بصدق من يوقظ حبا له
 وقد غفا عن طارئ مفذر
 كم بث أستشفع منها لها
 ونومها من ريبة مسهري
 أقول هل من رقدة قبلها
 بغيرك أمتدت إلى أعصر
 ألم ترى أن قرار الضحى
 غُرم وأن الغنم للمبكر
 أربى على كل سبات مضى
 نومك في المبدى وفي المحضر
 يا أمة تاريخها حافل
 بالأي من مبتدأ الأدهر
 من عهد قحطان تباعا إلى
 قيس بن شيبان إلى عنتر
 إلى اليتيم القرشي الذي
 أعجز بالرأي وبالأبت
 مستنزل الوحي الذي دال من
 كسرى وألقى التاج عن قيصر
 إلى فتى أجنادها بعده
 وشيخها بالعقل والمخبر
 إلى الذي لم يلف نذله
 في مالك في الأرض مستعمر
 إلى ابن عفان وفيما تلا
 دماؤه تجري على الأسطر
 إلى على سيفها في الوغى
 وصوتها المسموع في المنبر
 إلى نجوم عز إحصاؤها
 من قادة غرّ ومن عسكر
 ومن أولى حزم أدارو به
 ومرافق الدنيا على محور
 ومن اولي علم أفاضوا هدى
 على النهى من نوره الأزهر
 ذلك ما كنت على سمعها
 ألقيه إن أسرر وإن أجهر
 وطالما عُدتُ وبي حزن من
 حاول إحسانا فلم يقدر
 سهران لكن رجائي بها
 يُؤنسنى في ليلي الأعكر
 كالكوكب الثابت في قطبه
 يسطع في فكري وفي منظري
 عاتبتها حتى إذا رُعت
 بطيف شرّ أشعث أغبر

جَمَّ مِنَ الْعُدَّةِ مَسْتَكْبِرًا	مَسْتَلْنِمُ الْهَامِ خُورُنَ الْخَطِي
خَوَاضَ بَحْرَ فِي الدَّجَى مَبْصِرَ	مَنْطَادَ جَوِّ فَارِسٍ رَاجِلَ
يُوقِظُهَا يَا نَفْسَ فَاسْتَبْشِرِي	قَلْتَ لَقَدْ حَلَّ الْمَصَابِ الَّذِي
كَالْخَطْبِ مَهْمَا يَطُوهَا تُنْشِرَ	مَا لَشَعُوبٍ جَمَدَتْ بَاعِثَ

“O noble company of Arabs! Ye / My pride and boast, o’er every company, / Long have I chid your carelessness and sloth, / Yet not as one that might despise, or loathe, / But candidly, as if to wake a friend / Unconscious of vast perils that impend. / Long nights of intercession, and of pleas, / Your slumber kept me wakeful with unease, / Till I would cry, “Had ever nation kept / Its bed such centuries, as ye have slept?/ Do ye not know, ’tis loss for those that drowse / Till noon, the spoils to them who early rouse?/Already ye outsleep, in countryside / As in built town, all men that ever died! / Ye are a folk whose chronicles abound / With noble deeds, since valor was renowned / Yea, from when Qahtan found a hero’s grave / Even to Shaiban’s Qais, and Antar brave, / To that Quraishite orphan, who was lord / Of wisdom 120ndeavours, and mighty sword, / Vessel of God’s revealing, battling down / Kisra, and spoiling Caesar of his crown; / And then that hero of the Arab host, / His wisdom mightiest, his experience most, / And next the incomparable ruler, he / Who spread the bounds in peerless equity; / And Affan’s glorious son, who as he read, / The scriptures, o’er the script his blood was shed; / And Ali, his bright sword to battle bared, / His voice from pulpit rapturously heard; / Those flashing stars innumerable that be, / Great generals, and dauntless soldiery; / Wise governors, that with accomplished skill / Revolved the world’s affairs upon their will; / Scholars profound, who shed true learning’s light / On human hearts, to guide mankind aright”.

All this I whispered in my own people’s ear, / Softly persuasive, or cried loud and clear; / And all the while reverted, with the grief / Of one who would, but cannot, bring relief, / Unslumbering, yet through the nighttime drear / My faith and hope still gave my spirit cheer, / Like the pole-star immovable, a light / That lit my thoughts, and shone upon my sight. / In vain I chid; until the terror struck, / A ghost of malice, dusty locks that shook / Upon the wind, in armor helmeted / And terribly arrayed, with treacherous tread, / Able to soar in air, to march, to ride, / To see in murk, to traverse ocean wide. / “Now is the hour of peril come” I said, / “That shall

awake them! O my soul, be glad! / Danger's the thing to stir a frozen soul, / A people's screwed-up virtue to unroll".¹⁶⁶

Nevertheless, this moderation not means any sluggishness or nonchalance. But rather, many of his writings are outwardly about historical themes, but in essence he talks about the purloined freedom of people, the need to take arms to retake their freedom from the oppressors and to criticize them and to revolt against them. He instigates the revolt and to take revenge against those who malign the sanctity of human life with the same manner they initiated first. Therefore, his first historical theme was the Franco-Prussian war of 1806, in which France defeated the Frederick William III of Prussia under the leadership of Napoleon in a place called Jena-Auerstedt. But in 1870, Prussia (now Germany) retook all their lands and even invaded the French capital; Paris in the reign of Napoleon III. The following lines are the implicit instigation for the revolt against the Ottoman Turks, who suppress his native place and the rest of the Middle East with ironclads. When he talks about the anger and revenge of the Germans he says:

يا خجلة الأحرار من موتاهم يثؤون حيث المالكون أعادي
فاستعصموا بالصبر ثم تكاتفوا وتحرروا من رق الاستعباد
وتأهبوا للتأثر ، والأحقادُ في أكبادهم كالبيض في الأعماد
حتى إذا اشتدوا وضاق عدوهم دَرَعًا بهم أصلوه حرب جهاد

(Shame on the freemen regarding their formerly deceased ones, they settled where their masters fought to each other. They grasped patience and assisted each other, and they set themselves free from the bondage of despotism. They prepared to take revenge; the hatred in their minds was similar to the eggs under the wings of brooding birds. When the war escalated, at last their enemy fed up with it and they were incinerated by the holy war.) (My translation)

In the Lebanon, in his early years of youth Mutran was a stringent opponent and an outspoken critic of the Ottoman rule in the Levant, but when he migrated into Egypt he has to take a bit milder stand, because of the existing political and religious circumstances of the country. Politically, Egypt was under the British colonial rule and their oppression of the Egyptians was a

¹⁶⁶*Modern Arabic Poetry, an Anthology with English verse translations*, Arthur J. Arberry, Cambridge at the university press, 1967, Page 15 -16.

common thing. Therefore, most of the Egyptian poets such as Shawqī , Hafiz etc. wrote several poems in defence of the Ottoman Empire, where as the poets of Iraq, and the Levant such as al-Zahāwi, al-Rusāfi etc. wrote bitter attacks on the Ottoman Sultan.¹⁶⁷ Religiously, Egypt was a Muslim majority country, and therefore, the virulent attack of a Christian immigrant on the Turkish Sultan might be considered as the support of the British and stir up hostility.

But Shawqī Daif (1910-2005) argues that, “None of the revolutionary poems he penned in his youth against the Turkish ruler Abdul Hamid and his tyranny was included in his Dīwan (of 1908), which seems that he was not ready to stand firm on his earlier position as a precaution not to express explicitly his political feelings. But he depicts his political and non-political feelings with some kind of covering in what he wrote. Our modern poetry did not know any poet like him who utilized this technique better than Mutran. He depicts both his personal and social feelings covered with a thin curtain”.¹⁶⁸

Though, instead of keeping mum Mutran resorted into allegorical poetry to express his anger against the tyranny of the Ottoman Sultan. When the Turkish ruler Abdul Hamid II unjustly killed his vizier and statesman Midhat Pasha, the liberal reformer and the architect of the 1876 Ottoman Constitution, on fabricated charges Mutran emanated his anger through his poem *Maqṭal Bazarjamhar* (The killing of Bozorgmehr), in which he depicts the cold blooded killing

¹⁶⁷ Unlike the submissiveness of the Khedive Tawfiq, his son Abbas, who came to the throne of Egypt in 1892, had the desire to restrict the British control over his country. Thus, in 1893, he dismissed the pro-British Prime Minister Mustafa Fahmi Pasha, and installed in his place Husayn Fakhri Pasha. But, as a result of the obdurate stand of Her Majesty’s Government Riad Pasha came to the post and Husayn Fakhri was thrown out. But, due to the support of the Egyptian national movement to the Khedive, the British protégé Mustafa Fahmi could not come back to the post until the end of 1895. Moreover, in 1894, it was reported that the Khedive criticized the British Staff during the review of the army. This incident led to the resignation of Kitchener, who was the Sirdar of that time. As a result, the Khedive was forced to publish in the Official Journal his appreciation of the services rendered by the British officers to his army. This incident denigrated the Khedive in the eyes of his subjects and he himself felt humiliated. Thus, the national sentiment of Egypt became favorable to the Khedive, and poets and writers came out to the support of him and the Turkish Sultan as an enemy of the British.

¹⁶⁸ Shawqī, Daif, *Dirāsāt fī al-Shi‘r al-‘Arabi al-Mu‘aṣir*, seventh edition, Dar al-Ma‘arif, Cairo, without publication date, page 128. Moreover, not only the poems which criticize the Ottoman ruler were deleted from the compiled and published volumes, but, so many other poems too. When talks about the reason to expunge many of his earlier writings from his published volumes Mutran himself says in his preface that what he published is just like the wreckage of a drowned ship or the saved remnants of historical monuments in comparison with what he did not publish. For him, the reason behind this was that his earlier works were jotted down before he practices the literary techniques, rules, methods etc. of Arabic language.

of Bozorgmehr; a Sasanian minister and nobleman, who was killed by the king of the Sasanian Empire, who was famously known with the designation *Chosro*. He says in this poetry:

سجدوا لكسرى إذ بدا إجلالا كسجودهم للشمس إذ تتلالا
يا أمة الفرس العريقة في العلا ماذا أحال بك الأ سودَ سخالا
كنتم كبارا في الحروب أعزة واليوم يئّم صاغرين ضئالا

(They prostrated in front of the Chosroes to show their respect, with their same prostration to the sun when it shines. Oh the Persian people, with your deep rooted pride, what turned your lions into lambs? Earlier you were great in battles and powerful, but nowadays you are lowly and feeble.) (My translation)

Mutran goes on further to say that the submissiveness of the Persians encourage the Chosroes. If the laity is not ready to praise and glorify their oppressive kings, they cannot turn into tyrants, so, the people are the responsible ones for all the misdeeds of the tyrants. The general tendency of ignorance, which rules the roost among the oppressed people, is the root cause of despotism and suppression. But the daughter of Bozorgmehr stands against all form of suppression and Mutran depict her as a role model for the suppressed women everywhere. Through his forthright attacks on despots Mutran implicitly indicates the mischievous authoritative dominion and clampdown of the authoritarian Ottoman ruler. He further says:

ما كان كسرى إذ طغى في قومه إلا لما خلقوا به فغـالا
هم حگموه فاستبد تحكما وهم أرادوا أن يصول ، فصالا
والجهل داء قد تقادم عهدـه في العالمين ولا يزال عُضالا
لولا الجهالة لم يكونوا كلهم إلا خلأق إخوة أمثـالا
لكن خفض الأكثرين جناحهم رفع الملوك وسود الأبطالالا
وإذا رأيت الموج يسفل بعضه الفيت تاليه طغى وتعالـى

(When Chosroes cracked down on his people, he did only what they deserved. The general public made him ruler and he tyrannized the power. They endured his oppression and he went on

oppressing them. Since the days of yore, ignorance has been an illness in this world and it still remains incurable. If there was no ignorance, they must be equal brothers. But the majority of them lowered their wings and uplifted their kings, and thus the heroes became leaders. While the tides lowered down, you can see the succeeding ones rise high). (My translation)

Against the perennial cruelties and expansionist ideas of the Ottoman Empire several regions of the south-eastern Europe, the Middle East, North African regions, numerous parts of the Arabian Peninsula etc. arose to withstand and reject the Turkish dictums. Among all of these revolts the battle of the Montenegrins' was remarkable. The aspirations for gaining freedom prompted all the inhabitants of that small region including men, women and children to take arms and came out to oust the invaders. Naturally, the legendary revolt of the Montenegrins became the theme of Mutran's one famous poem titled *Fatāt al-Jabal al-Aswad* (The Young Woman from Montenegro). This poem depicts the valour of a young woman who partook in the conflict by disguising herself as a cavalry-man in order to challenge her nation's foes. Dr. Gamal al-Din al-Ramady argues that this poem is almost similar to *Antigone*; a tragedy written by the ancient Greek tragedian Sophocles, in which Antigone, who is a young woman descended to the battle ground to inter the cadaver of her brother.¹⁶⁹ Here, his focus on the active participation of the inhabitants of that small region for gaining freedom is an implicit persuasion for the Arabs to wake up, even though he is not outspoken in his writing.

In that battleground, after an immense fight the disguised young woman was captured, and, the moment the Turkish commander ordered to kill her they realized that was a woman; not a man. Astounded by the sacrifice and commitment of a young woman for the cause of her native land, the Turkish commander ordered to release her and asked to his fellow soldiers:

أنهلك شعبا غزت داره ثقال الجيوش فلم يخلد ؟
فما بلد تفتديه النساء ء كهذا الفداء بمستعبد

(Do we destroy the people who fought for their home? The military apparatus is not immortal at all. No country will be enslaved whose women sacrifice themselves like this form of sacrifice.)
(My translation)

¹⁶⁹ Jamāl al-Dīn Al-Ramādi, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Shā'ir Al-Aqīr Al-'Arabiyya*, published by Maktaba Al-Dirāsa Al-'Adabiyya, Cairo, Egypt, 1958, page 237.

The Ottoman constitution of 1876 was written under the supervision of Midhat Pasha, which was the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire, and was only in effect for two years, and this period was known as the First Constitutional Era. But the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 compelled the king to put back into effect the former constitution and to amend it to shift more power to the elected Chamber of Deputies, which was known as the Second Constitutional Era. As a result, the Constitution became the official source of law and governance, and all citizens of the Ottoman territory became equal in front of law. With the implementation of the new constitution all subjects of the Ottoman Empire became rapturous and jubilant, because the power of the ruler Abdul Hamid II was curtailed. Mutran did not conceal his ecstasy; rather, he wrote a poem titled *Tahiyyat al-Hurriyat* (Tribute to Freedom). These are some lines from that poem:

حُيِّتْ خَيْرَ تَحِيَّةٍ يَا أُخْتَ شَمْسِ الْبَرِيَّةِ
حُيِّتْ يَا حَرِيَّةِ
الشمس للأشباح وأنت للأرواح
كالشمس يا حرية
أنت النعيم وأعلى أنت الحياة وأعلى
للخلق يا حريَّة
شارفتنا فانتعشنا وفي ظلالك عشنا
بالعدل يا حريَّة
كوني لنا عهد سعد وعصر فخر ومجد
يدوم يا حريَّة

(Oh liberty, sister of the sun of the creatures, best wishes for you. Oh liberty, like the sun to the souls, you are the sun to the shadows. Oh liberty, you are Paradise and sweeter than that, you are life and precious than that to the creatures. Oh liberty, we were revived when you appeared, and we lived in justice under your shadow. Oh liberty, be for us an everlasting era of blessings, an age of pride and glory). (My translation)

He wrote some other poems in which he exalted the Turkish revolutionary movement ‘The Young Turks’ and their endeavours, sacrifices, sufferings etc. and he offered them final victory, and the extinction of the reactionaries, who encourage the ruler Abd al-Hamid II to nullify the new constitution. But all of these reactionary attempts went awry, and the new constitution got wide recognition and acceptance, and finally the ruler was dethroned. When the first anniversary of the new constitution coalesced with the dethronement of Abd al-Hamid, which gave Mutran double bliss, Turkey and the rest of the Ottoman territories witnessed widespread celebration, he could not help but extol and celebrate the situation with his poetic participation. These are some lines of his poem:

يا عيد ذكّر من تناسى أننا لم نك من أبقة العبدى
 كنا على الأصفاد أحرارا سوى أن الرزايا ألزمتنا حدا
 وكلّ شعب كاسر قيوده بالحق ما اعتدى ولا تعدى

(Oh festival, remind those heedless people that we are not the absconder slaves. We were free men with our chains, but tragedies set bounds upon us. The people who break their chains rightfully are not to be considered as violators or aggressors). (My translation)

Analogous to his criticism of the Ottoman high-handedness, he was brave enough to criticize the British colonial rule in Egypt. But “In contrast to Shawqi’s attitude and more in line with that of Hafiz and the whole group of Egyptian and Christian Syrian liberals, Mutran was only occasionally critical of the British occupation and its policies in Egypt”.¹⁷⁰ The reasons behind his modest criticism of the British colonialism may be the consequence of the stringent measures to suppress any opposition against them, which was visible in several cases including the notorious *Denshawai* incident and the ilk. Or it may be as a result of his acknowledgement of the benefit of the cooperation between the two countries. But, whatever the case, in to a large extent he lost his reputation and credibility, especially in the eyes of doctrinaire nationalist who reject any friendly relationship with Britain. But he relied on the legendary Anglo-Boer wars in South Africa, in which the brutal attempts of the British colonialists to expand and tighten up their hold and to impose the detestable system of confederation on the region were thoroughly rebuffed.

¹⁷⁰A. Khouri, Mounah, *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 165.

The British army was outmanoeuvred in front of the highly skilled Boer locals, even the British commander-in-chief of Natal, George Pomeroy Colley was brutally killed and the British were compelled to sign a truce treaty with the locals.

When the cruelties of the British segue into the next incessantly in Egypt, Mutran utilized the Boer wars in his poetic writings as deterrents and warning to the British colonial rulers, and he wrote at least three poems in this regard. The first was titled *al-Twiflat al-Buwairiyya* (The Boer girl child), in which he depicts the legendary withstanding of the Boer people against the British colonial aggressors. To portray the intensity of savagery of the Boer wars he focuses on a small carefree naive girl *Adma* (أدماء), whose father is actively partaking in this war and her mother is dismayed by virtue of it. One night when she caught sight of her father she could recognize him sleepless and chagrined, grows more despondent, tears trickling down his cheeks. Adjacent to him her mother, a distraught woman anguished by her miseries, which were not as a result of her crime of killing numerous innocent people, but rather, the wrongdoers compelled her to participate in the bloody war. Even in this dangerous situation the little naïve girl was not bothered about the seriousness of the situation. But later, when she came to know that her father too has just headed for war she prostrated to God and prays to protect her father and her entire people. Then Mutran goes on to describe the cruelties of the British rulers:

وإن قوما جاؤوا ليفنوا أمتها بغية النُّضار
لا يرحمون الصغار منهم ولا يرقون الكبار
ولا يراعون حق حُر ولا يصونون عهد جار
وإن كل "البوير" حَقَّوا ليدفعواهم عن التمار
وإن أنصارهم قليل وإن أعداءهم كُنَّار

(An army came only to liquidate its people unjustly. They were neither compassionate to children, nor merciful towards old people. They do not consider the rights of people, and do not stick to their words to their neighbours. All of the Boer community departed to defend their people from devastation. And their backers were inadequate and their foes were in large number.) (My translation)

Then, Mutran concentrates on the touchiest scene of the incident in which the little girl prays to God without realizing the word meaning of the prayer, but fully comprehending the seriousness of the situation. The poem says:

تدعوا وما لَقَّنتِ ولكن علمها الحزن الابتكار
"يا أرحم الراحمين يا من يحمي ضعيفا به استجار
أنصر أبي وانتقم لقومي ولا تبح هذه الديار"

(She prays without conscious of the meaning, but the arising sorrow taught her it. "Oh the most compassionate among the merciful ones, Oh the protector of the weak, give us asylum. Please help my father, and you take revenge for my people, and you don't tolerate our enemies in this land.) (My translation)

Mutran's second poem is a bit longer and titled *Harb Gayr 'Adila Wala Muta'adila* (War; Neither Just nor Neutral), in which he compares the bloody Boer war to the pathetic situation of the Egyptian people under the British rule, both the people defend their land and freedom passionately. He says:

اليوم يوم القسط قد قام الأولى ظلّموا فقم
بين الذين يقاتلو ن وبيننا قربي التّم
من يستبجه عدونا فله بنا صلة الرّحم

(Today is the day of justice, the former oppressed one (Boer) perked up, so you stand up as well. There is the proximity of vengeance between us and the people who fight. We have kinship with those people, who defeated our enemy.) (My translation)

In this poem too he offers the final victory to the oppressed people, even though the oppressors possess highly sophisticated weaponry, army, and logistic supports and so on. One day these oppressors must have to withdraw, because, they are the power of injustice and wrongdoing. By all of these persuasions Mutran intends the revolt against the British in Egypt; especially it witnessed two large scale revolutions such as the Urabi revolt of 1879-1882 and the countrywide

revolution of 1919. But these oppressed ones are very virtuous, and even when they became victorious they deal with the aggressors justly and rightfully. Mutran continues:

غلب القليل على الكثير وعفّ عنه فما انتقم
لكنّه مهما يفضّز بدءا يسؤّه المختتم
طُفّ في قُراه فما ترى من يأس كل أب وأم
ومن الجياح الهائمين على الوجوه من الألم
ومن الحبالى المجهضا ت من التّضوّر والسقم

(The small group became victorious over the large one, and they dealt with them in a prestigious manner, and they did not take revenge. But, whenever someone is becoming victorious anew they will behave towards the outsmarted in an obscene way. Saunter through its villages, you cannot find out despondency in any father or mother, or, on the face of the wandering hungry people, or in pregnant women, who were subjected to miscarriage by diseases and travels.) (My translation)

His third poem on the same topic is titled *Fi Isti 'nāfi Harb Jā 'irah* (The resumption of an unfair war), which is more forthright and the direct intervention on the Egyptian freedom than on the Boer revolt. Its first part concentrates on the legendary Boer revolt with their lesser number but they managed to win a dazzling victory, and the poem finally comes back to the Egyptian issue. Mutran says:

فلقد أرنوا إلى "مصر" التي خلّدتها الباقيات الصالحات
فأرى روحا قديما طانفا باكيا مما جنت "مصر" الفئات
كيف تحيا أمة هالتهم شُقة المجد فذلّوا واستماتوا
كيف يقوى معشر عُدتهم هزلهم ، والمشرفيات ، النكات ؟
أبخوف العول يُرجى عندهم خُلق البأس وترجى العظما ؟
أم بآداب وألحان يهـي معها العزم وتقوى الشهوات ؟

فارفع الصوت وأيقظهم فقد طال عهدا بهم هذا السُّبات
ما "المصر" شبه قبر واسع منذ فرعون ، ومن فيها رفات ؟

(I glanced at Egypt, which was eternized by enduring good deeds. I glimpsed there a wandering old soul weeps owing to the crime committed Egypt on its youths. How can live a nation, the far distant glory petrifies them and they were being humiliated and they are longing for death. How a nation can strengthen itself, its outfits are waggishness, dilapidated swords etc.? Are they aspire strength with the fear of death, and they aspire greatness with it? Or with decency and melodies the resoluteness become feeble and the desires become strong? Raise your voice and wake them up, for long periods they were asleep. What happened to Egypt, which was analogous to a vast grave, and what happened to its relics?) (My translation)

His poem *Shaykh Athīna* (The Old Man of Athens) talks implicitly about the political suppression of Egypt under the British colonial rule, and he highlight the need to oppose the British with the courage and steadfastness of the Egyptian youth and he compares the pitiful state of Egypt to the condition of ancient Athens under the devastating invasion of the Roman Empire. In this poem an old man talks about the widespread collapse of Athens, and he worries about the laid-back attitude of its youths and their luxurious life and fright of war, which were the root cause of the decline of Athens. Moreover, this poem is a total negation of social injustice, autocratic rule and foreign domination. Mutran says:

يا دهر إن كنتَ لم تُمهل شبيبتنا حتّى أدلت انحطاطا من معالينا
فأنت خير مربِّ للأولى جهلوا كجهلنا أن ترك الحزم يُشقينَا
فزد مصائبنا حتّى تنهنا تكن حياة لنا من حيث تُردينا
هم سقوا بدم الأكباد عزمهم وبات في صدأ الأعماد ماضينا
فلم تجنهم غلامهم من شوامخهم ولم يجئ خفضنا من خفض وادينَا

(Oh eon, you did not slow down for our youth and you drop degeneration from our grandeur. You are the best teacher for our erstwhile generation, and they became ignorant similar to our

ignorance, and they left their determination, which wretched us. Escalate misfortunes on us, which will make us aware and give us existence from our present ruination. They drunk the blood of our livers, and they spent their nights on the rust of the wrappings of our bygone era. Their highness is not coming from their high places, and our lowness is not from our valleys.) (My translation)

Another poem *Al-Sūr al-Kabir fi-l-ssīn* (The Great Wall of China) depicts the same theme and talks about the inactivity and laziness of youth as the main reasons behind the humiliation of a nation. In this poem Mutran portrays the conversation between a poet and a king, in which the poet asks him why he looks sleepless and uneasy, then the clement king answers that he want to build a wall to protect his people, because his people are incapable of withstanding any kind of external aggression and unable to confront with any dangerous situation because of their laziness, inactivity, cowardice etc.¹⁷¹The poet says to the king after a short narration of his magnanimity, clemency, compassion etc. that a big long wall will not be sufficient to protect the people if they are inwardly coward and slothful. Mutran says:

وما ذا يفيد السور حول ديارهم	وقلوبهم فيها ضعاف هُرب
فأبرُّ من تضيق دنياهم به	أن ترحُب الدنيا بهم ما ترحب
الأمن قتال الشجاعة فيهم	وحياتها فيهم مخاوف تُرقب
لا يعصم الأمم الضعيفة فطرة	إلا فضائل بالتجارب تُكسب
فتكون حائطها المنيع على العدى	وتكون قوتها التي لا تغلب

(What is the use of a long wall around their residence if their hearts are feeble and absconding? Instead of making their land narrower, it will be better to leave it broader as now it is. Safety is the killer of their bravery, and for them its (bravery's) existence among them is fearful and

¹⁷¹ To depict this humiliation and fright of the people Mutran uses very harsh words to scoff at them, which reads in the words of the king:

لا ظلم يُغضبهم ولو أودى بهم	أتعزُّ شأنا أمة لا تغضب ؟
إن يبك تاكل ولده وزجرته	عن نحه ، وألفيته لا ينحب
وإذا نهيت عن الورود عطاشهم	وتحرقت أكبادهم ، لم يشربوا

(Even if they were obliterated, injustice does not make them angry. Is it a dignified thing that a nation is not getting angry? If parents weep for the loss of their child and you utter the cries, you can see they will not cry at all. If you forbid them from drinking anything for their thirst, even if they face death, they will not drink any water.)

monitoring. Any people who are frail by nature will not be saved unless they obtain virtues through their experience. It will be the only impervious wall which saves them from their enemies, and that will be the only power which will not be vanquished.) (My translation)

Al-Iqāb (The punishment) is a beautiful narrative poem based on an unreal event deals with the issue of suppressing and exploiting the oppressed and enslaved people by the authority. An unscrupulous dictatorial brutal king enjoys his gleeful life in carouse, debauchery and bliss. One day the king tries to commit adultery with one of the female subjects of the palace, but she was not ready to forget her husband and to get into that undesirable work, and therefore she was brutally killed by the king. Focusing on this story Mutran rages at the savage exploitation of the powerful to the weak that take place every time and everywhere. He says:

كلوا واشربوا ما لذكم وحلالكم وفضُّوا زجاج السلسبيل المختماً
وطوفوا سكارى راقصين وأنشدوا ولا تسمعوا صوت الضمير مؤثماً
فما هي إلا لحظة ثم تنقضى فسروا بها ماتستطيعون ريثما

(Eat and drink what is desirable and advisable for you and break the glass of sealed Salsabil. Wander intoxicated, dancing and singing, and do not listen to the sound of the soul owing to your over wrongdoing. This is (this world) for just a while and then it will finish, and therefore enjoy whatever extent you can!) (My translation)

Some of his poems on antiques and monuments are expressive of the pride of ancient Egyptian glory; nonetheless, the poem *Al-Ahrām* (The Pyramids) is not about the magnificence of the Pyramids, but rather, a direct attack on the oppressive brutal kings who exploited their subject to build lofty pyramids to showcase their might. Mutran's exhortation to the long before perished founders of the Pyramids is thought-provoking against the backdrop of the colonial invasion of Egypt. Nowadays the common people walk hither and thither on the heads of the ancient mighty kings and the oppressive colonial intruders wandering around their homes. He says:

قوموا انظروا السوقة فيما حولكم تدوس هامات الملوك هُمدًا
قوموا انظروا العدو في دياركم يحكم فيها مستبدًا أيديًا

(Stand up! and look at the subjects around you, they tread on the heads of the extinguished kings. Stand up! And look at the enemy in your homes, he rules there by using might despotically.)
(My translation)

Even though the British Consul-General Sir Evelyn Baring, (later known as Lord Cromer) was taking politically more tough stands against the Khedive and the Nationalists, the intelligentsia, including poets, writers and journalist enjoyed more freedom of expression. After his long proconsulship (1883-1907) he left office as the result of the notorious Dinshawai incident, and then Sir Eldon Gorst became his successor. The new Consul-General was directed by the Liberal Government to relax the British control over Egypt, but later he repealed several liberal policies of Cromer, especially the freedom of the press. In 1898, while Egypt just had 169 papers and journals that increased into 282 in 1913, which was because of the increased number of readers and printing presses and the freedom of expression Egypt enjoyed under Cromer. Among these news papers the most important were founded and owned by immigrant Lebanese/Syrian Christians, those were *al-Muqtataf*, *al-Hilāl*, *al-Jami'a*, *al-Ahrām*, *al-Muqattam* etc. and the Islamist-prone *al-Manār*, *al-Ustādh*, and the nationalist *al-Mu'ayyad*, *al-Liwā'*, and so on. In 1909, Gorst revived the press law of 1881 to suppress the Egyptian news papers. As a result, nationwide protests broke out to resist the excessively draconian law.¹⁷² Unlike his earlier implicit responses, this time Mutran came out with more outspoken stand to condemn this oppressive law with a very short poem which is titled *Muqāta'a* (Boycott). He says:

¹⁷² To protect the British imperial communications from the danger of foreign intervention the British government decided “to restore the authority of the Khedive, to reform the administration, to set up a government working upon human principles, and to withdraw from the country as soon as such a government was made stable and progressive”. ... “But it soon became clear to Lord Cromer that his government leaders in London were committing themselves to engagements which could not be carried out without the prolongation of military occupation. Cromer’s government supported him in his policies as stoutly as it could, and enabled him to become the unchallengeable ruler of Egypt for a period of twenty-three years (1884-1907). See *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt*, (1882 – 1922), Mounah A. Khouri, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 45. But, even though politically this period was tough, poets, writers and journalist were enjoyed more freedom. But the appointment of Eldon Gorst as the Consul-General reversed all these things. But Harold Tollefson argues that the Dinshawai incident of 1906 compelled the British rulers to take more liberal stands to protect the British interest in Egypt, which were discernible in Gorst’s limited liberalization of the Egyptian regime that allows a little more self-governance, and “he came to believe that some concessions to Egyptian nationalist opinion were necessary to mollify and divide the opposition to the British occupation”. On the other hand, he brutally suppressed the radical Islamists and the extreme nationalists alike. See, *Policing Islam: The British occupation of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian struggle over control of the police, 1882-1914*, Harold Tollefson, Greenwood Press, Westport, U.S.A., 1999, Page 111.

واقتلوا أحرارها حرًا فحرًا	شردوا أختيارها بحرا وبرًا
آخر الدهر ويبقى الشرّ شرًا	إنما الصالح يبقى صالحا
يمنع الايدي أن تنقش صخرًا	كسّروا الأقلام هل تكسيرها
يمنع الأعين أن تنظر شرزا	قطّعوا الأيدي هل تقطيعها
يمنع الأنفاس أن تصعد زفرا	أطفئوا الاعين هل إطفاءها
وبه منجاتنا منكم ... فشكرا	أحمدوا الأنفاس ، هذا جهدكم

(Scatter her admirable men on sea and on land, and liquidate her free men one by one. The good remain as good to the end of time, and the evil also remain likewise. Destroy the pens, does that forestall hands from engraving their words on stone? Lop off hands, does their chopping off forestall eyes from looking askance at? Blind the eyes, does their blinding forestall men from suspire freely? Snuff out the breath, which is the uttermost you can do, by which we will be preserved from you, thank you.) (My translation)

As a result, the Egyptian Prime Minister warned him of ousting him from Egypt, but Mutran responded to him with another forthright poem which is titled *Tahdīd bi al-Nafī* (The threat of exile). He says:

فرسي مؤهبة وسرجي	أنا لا أخاف ولا أرجي
فالمطية بطن لُجّ	فإذا نبا بي متن بَرّ
قول هذا النهج نهجي	لا قول غير الحق لي
لديّ طريق فُلجّ	الوعد والإيعاد ما كانا

(Neither am I scared nor expectant. My horse and the saddle are ready. If the surface of land detaches itself with me, then my vehicle will be the depth of sea. Even in that case, I have no words except for the truth, and this is my approach. For me, promise and threat are not the way to win the goal.) (My translation)

The participation of the Ottoman Empire in the World War I turned out to be a great disaster when the Allied Powers gained an astounding victory over the Ottoman Turks and its allies, and

they divided and demarcated the Ottoman territories among the winners. Syria and the Lebanon became French protectorates, and Palestine and Iraq became English colonies. Apart from this, in this historical context almost all of the Arab lands were under the oppressive colonial mandate throughout the Asian-African regions. In this context Mutran surfaced with his long epic poem *Nayrūn* (Nero),¹⁷³ in which he depicts the brutal temperaments of the Roman emperor Nero, who was one of the most brutal of Roman Emperors, he ruled the empire from 54 to 68 A.D. He allegedly set fire to Rome in 64 A.D., and cruelly liquidated his adversaries, Christian minorities and even his parents. At last, due to his misdeeds he was compelled to commit suicide. Here also Mutran raises the important question of what makes a ruler despotic and cruel, which is what he said in some of his earlier poems i.e. the inactivity, carelessness, irresponsibility, flattery, glorification of their rulers etc. Mutran indicts the Roman subjects for inducing Nero by their applause and extolment to indulge in his iniquities. He indirectly connects the pitiable state of the Roman subjects with that of the colonially oppressed people of the Arab lands; here too the responsibility primarily goes back to the people. These are some vital selected lines of this poem:

ذلك الشعب الذي آتاه نصرا	هو بالسببة من نيرون أحرى
أي شئى كان نيرون الذي	عبدوه كان فظ الطبع غرا
قزمة هم نصبوه عاليا	وجثوا بين يديه فاشمخرا
ضحّموه وأطالوا فيئنه	فتراى يملأ الأفاق فُجرا
منحوه من قواهم ما به	صار طاغوتا عليهم أو أضرا
إنما يبطش ذو الأمر إذا	لم يخف بطش الأولى ولّوه أمرا
من يلم نيرون إنى لائم	أمة لو كهفته ارتدّ كهرا
كل قوم خالقوا نيرونهم	قيصر قيل له أم قيل كسرى

¹⁷³ In 1922 he was prohibited from entering the Lebanon, but that ban was lifted in 1924 and he travelled through the Lebanon, Syria and Palestine etc. This itinerary was started with the visit of Beirut, where he presented this poem in a function that was held in the American University of Beirut to promote the Arabic language. See Al-Ramādi, Jamāl al-Dīn, *Khalīl Muṭrān: Shā'ir Al-Aqār Al-'Arabiyya*, published by Maktaba Al-Dirāsa Al-'Adabiyya, Cairo, Egypt, 1958, page 114.

(That people who conceded mastery to Nero are the more deserved one for shame. What was this Nero whom they venerated? He was just audacious and ignorant. A Lilliputian whom they positioned on high and they laid prostrated in front of him, and then he grew haughty. They extolled him and expanded his shadow in order that it encompassed the horizon with misdeeds. They vouchsafed him intentionally, which made him a despot over them, and worse. The ruler cracks down on the people only when he does not be afraid of the opposition of those who gave him power. Some people condemn Nero, but I condemn the people who would have made him retreat, if they oppose him. Every nation produces its own Nero, whether he is called Caesar or Chosroes.) (My translation)

One of his harshest attacks on colonialism comes against the Italian invasion of Libya; its turbulent history goes back to the political aspirations of Italy after the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Even though a secret treaty of 1902 between France and Italy allowed any kind of Italian intervention in Tripolitania and Morocco, Italy remained almost nonchalant until a massive lobbying of the Italian press at the end of March 1911. Among the biggest attractions of Libya in the eyes of colonialism were mineral reserves, availability of water, scarcity of Ottoman troops, disgust of the general public towards the Ottomans dominance etc., but the opposition of the Italian socialist party was the biggest hindrance to the invasion. On the heels of Italian ultimatum the Ottomans were ready to hand over the control over Libya to Italy without any war, but Italy refused the offer and the war was declared on September 29, 1911. In October 10, the invasion was officially started, and on October 15 the world witnessed the use of aero planes for bombing, which was the first in the modern history. In this context Mutran emerged with his poem titled *'Ithāb wa Isthirāh Li Ma 'ūnati Tarābals* (Reproach and appeal for the help of Tripoli). These are some prominent lines of this poem:

إني لأسمع من حزب الحياة بكم:	"نصرا لأمتنا ، سحقا لمن ظلموا"
نعم لئنصر على الباغين أمتنا	لا بالدعاء ولكن نصرها بكم
لتبقى يقضى على الأدهار نابهة	لا الأمن يهفو بها سكرى ولا التعم
لتحيا وليمت الموت المحيط بها	من حيث يدفعه أعداؤنا العُشَم
إن نبغ إعلاءها لا شئى يخفضها	فهل تموت وفيها هذه النسَم ؟

الشعب يحيا بأن يُفدى ، ومطمعه	مال البنين مزكى ، والشــــراب دم
أولئكم إنما بادوا بغرتهــــم	وأنهم أثروا اللذات وانقسمــــوا
عودوا إلى سير التاريخ لا تجدوا	شعبا قضى ، غير من ضلّوا الهدى وعموا
لا شعب يقوى على شعب فيهلكه	فإن تر القوم صرعى فالجناه هــــم
يا أمّتي هبة للمجد صادقة	فالنصر منكم قريب والمنى أمــــم

(I hear the outcry from your coarse surface of life “help our people, damn the aggressors”. Yes, our people must be helped against the assailants, not by mere prayer but by our wholehearted support. That is to endure our people with perseverance through eons; safety and grace will not make them inebriated. And to remain them alive, and to perish the death, which encompasses them, that our aggressive enemies arouse it. If we aspire to uplift the people, no one can debase them. Will it die when they have this expiration? That aggressor people live to get the tax paid, their avarice is for the untainted wealth of the public, and their drink is blood. They were destroyed by their carelessness and they chose luxury and they were fractionated from within. Go back to history, you will not find out any bygone generation, but went astray from the right path and became unperceptive. No nation exert power on another, it would make them defunct, if you see any nation defeated, they themselves are the culprits. Oh nation, who aspires truly for glory, victory is very near to you, and desire is very easy for you as well.) (My translation)

Mutran’s political revolutionary poems include praising national leaders and nationalist movement, elegy on deceased towering figures etc.¹⁷⁴ Mutran’s elegy on Mustafa Kamil is also very apropos to be mentioned in this context. Mustafa Kāmil was one of the great Egyptian public figures, who trained as a lawyer in France and was an ardent nationalist championed the cause of Egyptian independence. He associated with Khedive Abbas Hilmi II to oppose the British invasion of Egypt and the Sudan. In 1900, he established the newspaper *Al-Liwā’* (The Standard) to disseminate his views, and in 1907 he founded the National Party (Al-Hizb al-Watani) with some of his colleagues a few months before his death in February 1908. Mutran;s

¹⁷⁴ For example these are some lines of it:

نجباء مصر الثّائرين لــــعزّها	وجلالها من ذلّة وصغار
خوضوا الغمار لتظفروا بمرادكم	لا فوز إلا بعد خوض غمار

(The virtuous revolutionaries of Egypt who fought for its pride and dignity from shame and humiliation, make sorties to accrue the triumph which you aim, there is no triumph without sorties.)

elegy on him contains Kamil's national pride, educational attempts, women emancipation and so on. These are some lines expressive of those ideals:

هو خير من وافي وأوفى من وفي	جزع النصارى واليهود لمسلم
ليزيل ذاك العارض المتكشفا	بكوا المرجى في خلاف عارض
يعلى لهم صوتا وينشر مصحفا	من بعد كاتبهم وبعد خطيبهم
أ يكون منقصة لها أن تكسفا	أن يعتر الشمس الكسوف هنيهة
يثنى أشعتها إلى أن يكشفها؟	وهل الكسوف سوى تعرض حائل
وأي ترابك من حنين قد هفا	"مصر" العزيرة قد ذكرت لك اسمها
بأعز منك ولم تعزّ بأحصفا	"مصر" التي لم تحظ من نجائها
في الحاليتين ملاينا ومعنفنا	"مصر" التي لم تبغ إلا نفعها
متصدرا لرماتها مستهدفنا	"مصر" التي كافحت لدّ عداتها
بلغ الفداء نزاهة وتعففنا	"مصر" التي أحببتها الحب الذي

(Christians and Jews lamented for a Muslim, who is the best of associates and the most faithful. They mourned for the one who settled their conflicts, when the conflicts occurred. Who is their writer, and who is their orator after you to raise the voice for them and to spread their Quran. If the sun is eclipsed for a while is that the defect of the sun? Is not an eclipse but a passing shadow followed by sunshine as bright as before? Beloved "Egypt"; I say her name to you (Kamil), I see how you yen for her, even in your grave. "Egypt"; she had no offspring more beloved than you, nor gloried in one wiser. "Egypt"; you searched only for her welfare, whether reprimanding or extolling her. "Egypt" you fought against her enemies and withstand their attacks. "Egypt" you have loved her with the pure love of a martyr.) (My translation)

Mutran as a Lebanese Christian inherited the disposition of standing up for the cause of educating women, and their emancipation and empowerment from al-Bustani and al-Shidyaq, who upheld the idea long before Qasim Amin. Mutran says:

هدب بنات الشعب إن شئت أن تبلغه أقصى المنى من أمم

إن لم يكن أم فلا أمة وإنما بالأمهات الأمم

(Educate the daughters of the nation if you seek the highest hope among all societies. If there is no mother, there is no nation; it is only through mothers nations exist.) (My translation)

He wrote in Qasim Amin's elegy:

دعوت إلى رفع شأن النساء برغم المسفه واللائم
فحل بذارك في مخصب وبشر جيلك بالقادم
ترى الشعب إن ظل في جهله بمنزلة النعم السائم
فلا شيء مما صرفت إليه مشيئة مقتدر عازم
كجامعة كنت حتى الممات أساسا لبنيانها القائم
مضيت وفي النعش منك خطيب ينادي على المأ الواجم
أنيروا أنيروا فإن الظلام حليف المظالم والظالم
أنيروا أنيروا فإن الضياء عدو الجرائم والجارم

(You called for the advancement of women, despite censure and blame. The seeds you have sown fell on fertile ground, and your generation (of reformers) foreshadowed those were to come. You saw that people in ignorance are no better than beasts. Of all to which you turned your strong, determined will. Nothing resembles the University for which, till death, you were a firm foundation. You died, leaving behind in your coffin an orator, crying to the crowd: “Let there be light! Let there be light! For darkness befriends oppression and tyranny. Let there be light! Let there be light! For light exposes criminals and crime”) ¹⁷⁵

Mutran's poem such as *Wafa'* (Loyalty), *al-Twiflani* (Two children) etc. are the direct revolt against the social conditions in which money, social status, genealogy etc. are getting more importance than love in a society where it considers marriage as a business. While the poem *Wafa'* depicts the sincere love of a rich young man with a vagrant street singer, *al-Twiflani* talks

¹⁷⁵ The translation of this piece of poetry is taken from Mounah A. Khouri's book *Poetry and the Making of Modern Egypt, (1882 – 1922)*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, page 172.

about the love of a poor young man with a rich girl. Both these love stories are going through several difficult situations and finally come into tragic ends because of several social barricades and lack of freedom and some other unanticipated abrupt turns.

Chapter IV

Romance and Revolution in the Writings of Percy Bysshe Shelley

Life and Works

Shelley, who was a great poet, Platonist, classical scholar, Godwinian radical atheist, and amateur scientist etc., was born on 4th August, 1792 in to an old elite ruling family of one of the wealthiest landowners in Broadbridge Heath in Sussex, Britain, in a period of rampant suppression of the English government of radicalism, also stamping out all kind of popular dissent and framing laws which compels the poets and writers to live under the spectre of constant fear of prosecution for treason, ensuing The Reign of Terror of the French Revolution. Shelley spent his early years of life in aristocratic Whig ambience of his family, he was sent to the Syon House Academy at Isleworth in 1802,¹⁷⁶ and that succeeded his study in Eton College as an Oppidan in 1804 when he was 12. Rather than a centre of scholarship and learning, Eton, however, at that time was a place which is suitable for lay the foundation for future career and to make acquaintance with the people of one's own rank. Shelley failed to live up to such worldly rules and he was a misfit in the rough conditions of bullying and fagging, and he had been labelled 'Mad Shelley' by his school-fellows because of his violent reactions to oppression and bullying. His six years at Eton College are more remarkable for his early love interest and literary efforts and his fascination with modern science.

Shelley was attracted by science because of its promise of wonders rather than its promise of truth. In 1806 his father had been given a baronetcy by the Duke of Norfolk for his services to the Whig party. In 1809 Shelley wrote five or six poems which were included in The Esdaile Notebook. He entered the University College, Oxford, in October 1810, but instead of a perfect English gentleman, he emerged as a radical atheist against all customs and beliefs of established religion and society. This time he undertook three publishing ventures, out of which the first two were Gothic fictions, which were *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* in November and *St. Irvyne* in December and he wrote some pieces of poetry as well.¹⁷⁷ The third one was a

¹⁷⁶ Shelley's 'misbehavior' was started in his boyhood when he was only six at his Syon House period. Paul Foot says that 'At Syon House, a barbarous place even by the barbarous standards of British 'preparatory schools' (in which young boys of the aristocracy, often from the age of six, were trained to behave like their parents), the lad had been reported 'out of step'. See Foot, Paul, *Red Shelley*, Bookmarks Publications, London, 1984, Page 47.

¹⁷⁷ It will be suitable to adduce a piece of poetry from this work which discloses his social commitment in his early days at Oxford. In these lines he attacks the imposters of court: "Yes! Smooth-face tyrants chartered by a Power / Called king, who in the castellated keep / Of a far distant land wears out his days / Of miserable dotage, pace the quay / And by the magic of a dreadful world, / Hated though dreadful, shield their impotence, / Their lies, their

prose pamphlet which was written in February 1811 in collaboration with his friend T.J. Hogg, entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. He had sent a copy to the Vice-Chancellor, to all the heads of colleges and to all the bishops with a written letter of his own signed Jeremiah Stukeley. He was expelled from Oxford in March 1811 due to this pamphlet. Both the endeavours of the Oxford authority and his father did not make any effect on him to withdraw the pamphlet and to recant. Even though he was brought up and educated to meet the demands of his father to heir a large estate and social stature, he came up against the anger of his father owing to his failure to conform those demands.

In August that year Shelley eloped with the sixteen-year-old Harriet Westbrook to Edinburgh where they got married on 29th of August, and in November they moved to Keswick and are befriended by the famous poet Robert Southey. In February 181 they travelled to Ireland and settled in Dublin for a while. That time the state of Ireland was much worse because of the poverty and the never-ending conflicts of Protestant and Catholics. Inspired by the success of both the French and American Revolutions, Wolfe Tone founded the United Irishmen with his colleagues to seek for Parliamentary reforms where over three million Catholic populations did not have the right to sit in Parliament or to become judges. The rising was suppressed ferociously, and the Act of Union of 1800 gave more power to Britain over there, but the Bill of Emancipation was finally passed only in 1829 after more political turbulences. In this context Shelley joined the movement for Catholic emancipation and published 1500 copies of his *An Address to the Irish People* (1812),¹⁷⁸ and he spent his days with Harriet handing out pamphlets

murders and their robberies”. See, *The Voyage. A Fragment... Devonshire – August 1812, The Poems of Shelley, Vol. 1, 1804 – 1817*, Geoffrey Matthews and Kelvin Everest, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, 2014, Page 255.

¹⁷⁸ It will be suitable to quote here some of his points from this pamphlet to allude to his revolutionary ideals. Against the discrimination on the basis of religion and religious sects, and his support for universal brotherhood he says that “...they [the Protestants] trust the reign of earthly government only to the hands of their own sect; in spite of this, I never found one of them impudent enough to say that a Roman Catholic, or a Quaker, or a Jew, or a Mahometan, if he was a virtuous man, and did all the good in his power, would go to Heaven a bit the slower for not subscribing to the thirty-nine articles – and if he should say so, how ridiculous in a foppish courtier not six feet high to direct the spirit of universal harmony, in what manner to conduct the affairs of the universe!”. He says denouncing the priest craft: “Take care of smooth-faced imposters, who talk indeed of freedom, but who will cheat you into slavery”. He explains one of the root causes of the Irish poverty: “The union of England with Ireland has withdrawn the Protestant aristocracy and gentry from their native country, and with them their friends and connections. Their resources are taken from this country although they are dissipated in another”. And, he proffers the solution: “The way to liberty and happiness is never to transgress the rules of virtue and justice”, and he says:

in the public-houses, throwing them to passers-by from his residence, and stuffing them into passing carriages. This time, he wrote a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on Valentine's Day, in 1812, in which he included one of his Esdaile poems in it, entitled *To the Republicans of North America* that refers to the revolution in Mexico, which was ongoing since 1810. In this poem Shelley likens Mexico's 'new bursting Liberty' to the eruption of Mount Cotopaxi, which is an active volcano in Ecuador, and he says the mountain will spread the revolutionary message throughout the world. He says: "Cotopaxi! Bid the sound / Through thy sister mountains ring, / Till each valley smile around / At the blissful welcoming!"¹⁷⁹ His second pamphlet addresses the educated middle-class audience which was titled *Proposals for an Association of those Philanthropist, who Convinced of the Inadequacy of the Moral and political State of Ireland to Produce Benefits which are Nevertheless Attainable are Willing to Unite to Accomplish its Regeneration* in which Shelley says that "do not spend your money in idleness and drinking" to advocate the virtues of sobriety and temperance. Later years Keats was pessimistic about Shelley's philanthropic ideals for the enlivenment of the Irish people, but he stuck to his beliefs, and even when Godwin was a little bit sceptical about the success of his plans (Godwin said "Shelley, you are preparing a scene of blood")¹⁸⁰ Shelley assured him that his pamphlets could not "in the slightest degree lead to violence" to reiterate his pacific measures, which was totally against armed rebellion. He remained optimistic and detached from violence and the irrationality of war, whereas his contemporary Byron says that "revolutions are not made with rose-water". In February he published another pamphlet as well titled *Declaration of Rights*.

"Be calm, mild, deliberate, patient..." *An Address to the Irish people*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, with an introduction by T. W. Rolleston, published for The Shelley Society by Reeves and Turner, 196 Strand, London, 1890.

¹⁷⁹ *To the Republicans of North America*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Poems of Shelley, Vol. 1, 1804 – 1817*, Geoffrey Matthews and Kelvin Everest, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York, 2014, Page 207.

¹⁸⁰ A. Clutton-Brock argues that Godwin's opposition to Shelley is not only because of his campaign propagates violence in Ireland, but rather, on account of the impracticability of his ideals. He says that "It was not likely that the arguments of an English boy would cause them to desert their national and persecuted faith". Moreover, Shelley was not aware of the quality of the people; instead, he imposes his thoughts on them. In this case he is like a painter who depicts the ideal based on his own imaginations, not conscious of real things. And "when they forced themselves upon his notice, affronted his dreams, and therefore seemed to him devilish instead of human". Clutton-Brock further says that "Not only did he ignore realities, but he acted as if they were not, and as if his own dreams were true. A man in this taste of mind could learn nothing except from fierce conflict with realities, and the painful defeat that must ensue". See *Shelley the Man and the Poet*, A. Clutton-Brock, Methuen & Co., London, 1910, pages 62 – 63.

His views on religion did not get much attention in Dublin among the Catholics, but it brought him to the notice of the Home Office. In April 1812, Shelley, Harriet and Eliza left Dublin for Holyhead, and their plan to buy a house with two hundred acres of arable land to meet their livelihood by farming doomed into failure, because he failed to meet the required security for the purchase money of the estate. And when he sent a packet of copies of both the pamphlets together with a *Declaration of Rights* to his faithful correspondent Eliza Hitchener, it had been opened by the Customs and intercepted at Holyhead, but the *Declaration* was a mild enough and non-violent document. In July, they settled in Lynmouth, where he started writing his long poem *Queen Mab*. In August, Shelley's Irish servant Daniel Healy was arrested at Lynmouth when he distributed the pamphlet and he was fined £ 200. Healy was sent to prison for six months, because Shelley had no money to pay, and he departed hastily from there even without paying their landlady. In short, his Irish days were valuable experiences which brought him a sense of reality that his gospel of moderation and reason is too feeble to counter the distress and hopeless ignorance of that fully oppressed people.

In October 1812 he went to London with three of his companions mainly with the aim of raising more money, and he met Godwin family at the bookshop in Skinner Street for the first time. In May 1813, he published *Queen Mab*. In June 1813, Harriet gave birth to a healthy girl Ianthe, who was similar to the heroine of *Queen Mab*. Through Godwin Shelley met one of the radical intellectual J.F. Newton in July and he made a rapturous friendship with Mrs. Newton's sister Mrs. Boinville, who was a widow of a French émigré. He said years afterwards that she was the most admirable specimen of a human being he had ever seen.¹⁸¹ J.F. Newton was the author of *Return to Nature*, which Shelley devotedly recommends in his notes to *Queen Mab*, and Shelley

¹⁸¹ For more details on Mrs. Boinville see *Shelley and his Circle, 1773 -1822*, edited by Kenneth Neill Cameron, Vol.III, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970, Page 275 – 276. Moreover, Hodgart says that “In that same year Shelley met her in London and was impressed by her sympathetic character, her intelligence and the fact that grief had turned her hair white, he called her Maimuna, a character in Southey's *Thalaba* who also had a youthful face ‘And yet her hair was grey’. She later moved to Bracknell and when the young Shelley also moved there to High Elms House they frequented her salon. As his marriage to Harriet became more difficult he moved into her household, ‘the delightful tranquility of this happy home’, and became rather too fond of her daughter Cornelia Turner. Mrs Boinville was kind to him, nursing him on an occasion when, in the frenzy of his divided feelings for Mary and Harriet, he took an overdose of laudanum. However, she disapproved of his relationship with Mary and after they eloped did not meet him again”. *A Preface to Shelley*, Patricia Hodgart, Longman, London and New York, 1985, Page 177.

converted to vegetarianism due to the influence of this book. This time at night two attempts on his life were successfully foiled by his cautious vigilant resistance.

In January/February 1814, he published *A Refutation of Deism*. In March, Shelley and Harriet were remarried when some doubts have been raised about the validity of their Scotch marriage. But some of Shelley's letters to Hogg this time shows that he was no longer happy with her. There has been much controversy on the actual reasons of his estrangement with Harriet and his elopement with Marry, such as Harriet's intellectual inferiority, her indifference about feeding her child, the changes in her tastes and thoughts which was produced by her motherhood, the presence and influence of Eliza, and even her unfaithfulness to Shelley etc.¹⁸² Whatever may be the reasons, his total fall out with Harriet ended up in his elopement in July 1814 with Mary and Clair Clairmont, who was the daughter of the second Mrs. Godwin by her first marriage. They reached Dover, and then in a small boat they set off for Calais, from where their rest of the journey was in a cabriolet for Paris. Amidst their financial difficulties he sold his watch and chain to meet the daily expenditure, and in August he managed to get the remittance of £ 60, and they decide to roam around Uri in Switzerland. In the middle of September they came back to London.

Harriet delivered a boy child on 30th November 1814, who was named Charles Bysse, and for some months Shelley continued to meet her at intervals, and the last one was in April 1815. In January – April 1815, Shelley, Mary, Claire and Hogg engaged in free-love experiment, nonetheless, the physical nature of this experiment is obscure. However, it is clear from Mary's

¹⁸² But, Thomas Love Peacock says in his memoir when he discusses this issue that Shelley "said more calmly: 'Everyone who knows me must know that the partner of my life should be one who can feel poetry and understand philosophy. Harriet is a noble animal but she can do neither'". *Peacock's Memoirs of Shelley with Shelley's Letters to Peacock*, ed. by H.F.B Brett-Smith, Oxford: Horace Hart Printer to the University, London, 1909, page 48. In the same way, none of the critics of his time or later justifies Shelly's stand. When talks about this issue another literary critic Mathew Arnold says that "The man Shelley, in very truth, is not entirely sane, and Shelley's poetry is not entirely sane either". See *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, Mathew Arnold, Macmillan London, 1888, Page from 205 onwards. Similarly, after discussing the issues such as Shelly's total sfall out with Harriet, and his some delinquencies and dalliance with some other women, Paul Foot says that "There is an element of prurience in any close examination of Shelley's personal relations, even though so much of what he thought and felt about them are laid bare in his poetry. But people's personal behavior can never be entirely disassociated from their ideas. Few socialists are stockbrokers, and a wife-beater makes a poor feminist. On almost any test, including the testimony of everyone who knew him, including Peacock, his most severe and honest critic, Shelley in his relationship with women strove to live up to his own high ideals". *Red Shelley*, Paul Foot, Bookmarks Publications, London, 1984, Pages 149-50.

letters and journals that Mary at least theoretically espoused his ideology of free-love and during this period all members of this group were at least emotionally intimate to each other.¹⁸³ In August they settled near Bishopsgate, and in Autumn/winter he wrote *Alastor*. William Shelley was born in January 1816, and in May the same year, Shelley, Mary and Clair set off to Geneva, where Shelley met Byron for the first time in a hotel named Hotel d'Angleterre, even though he had already great admiration of Byron's poetry. Both were nearly equal in intellect and genius and were rebels and outcast, and while Shelley could see that Byron was the greatest he could ever met, Shelley was the most intimate a friend for him he has ever got. Byron challenged the Shelleys one lonely, misty morning to the competition of writing a ghost story. Mary won the competition, even though she had never written anything significant before, and it became her most famous and marvellous literary work even today, which is titled *Frankenstein*. In June he wrote *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* which talks about his own experience of something supernatural, the experience of a hilarious expulsion of happiness, which's absence makes the poet sad and disappointed. In July he penned *Mont Blanc*, a powerful depiction of picturesque natural landscape mixed with the scientific cognisance of those days. As he wrote very little in 1816, that was a barren year for Shelley, at the same time, that was a remarkable year for Mary because of her *Frankenstein*. Shelley, Mary and Clair came back to London in September, and shortly afterwards Leigh Hunt reviewed Shelley's poem *Alastor* in his *Examiner*, although they had met before, now they became friends. In December Harriet Shelley drowns herself and her body was found on December 10th. But Shelley came to know the incident only on 15th December when he got a letter from the publisher Hookham, telling him that Harriet had drowned herself in the Serpentine. He was pining away recollecting Harriet, but he planned on marrying Mary immediately to prove his faithfulness to her, thus, that took place on 30th December 1816.

In the beginning of 1817, while he was in London, among many others he made acquaintance with Keats, but, since both were diverse in character and genius, they never became great friends. He also met Hazlitt who disregarded Shelley's genius and considered him only as a revolutionary puritan. He severely criticized and abused Shelley when he wrote an essay about

¹⁸³ For more details about their free-love ideology and its experiment see *Shelley*, Newman Ivey White, A. A. Knopf, New York, 1940, Vol. 1, pages 348 -51.

1821 in his 'Table-Talk' which was titled *On Paradox and Common-Place*.¹⁸⁴ Shelley published a pamphlet in March titled *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote* which proposed to conduct a meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern to ascertain whether or not the majority of the British people support the Reform in Parliament. His impractical proposals include his support for annual Parliaments; not Universal Suffrage, because "in the present unprepared state of public knowledge and feeling, a measure fraught with peril".¹⁸⁵ For him, the franchise should be limited to those who pay a small sum of tax, and the regal and aristocratical branches of the constitution should not be abolished in haste until the general public attain the maturity to disregard it. Nonetheless, even these proposals were progressive those days. In March – September he wrote *Laon and Cythna* and on the 2nd of September Clara Shelley was born. In November he wrote *An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte* and in December *The Revolt of Islam* was published as a revised version of *Laon and Cythna*.

In January 1818, he started writing *Rosalind and Helen*. In March, Shelley, Mary, Claire, (Claire had a daughter from Byron) three children and two female servants left England to Italy, but Shelley never to return. When they reached Milan Claire's daughter was sent to Byron, who was at Venice, and from the sufferings of both Claire and her child Shelley realized that marriage was not only a tyrannical imposition upon mankind, but rather, an imperfect attempt to protect women and children, but that produces only evil and only by its eradication the evil will be taken away. They stayed one month at Leghorn where they met their old friends Maria and John Gisborne and Maria's son Henry, and in May-June they settled in the Bathes of Lucca during which he completed his eloquent and free translation of Plato's *Symposium* into English which is titled *The Banquet of Plato*. He penned *On Love* and completed *Rosalind and Helen*, which deals with the issues of poverty and women emancipation, and they reached Venice on August 22.

¹⁸⁴ Even though Hazlitt was a famous English literary critic, his criticism of Shelley was neither sanguine nor disinterested. Hazlitt says: "The author of *Prometheus Unbound* (to take an individual instance of the last character) has a fire in his eye, a fever in his blood, a maggot in his brain, a hectic flutter in his speech, which mark out the philosophic fanatic. He is sanguine complexioned and shrill-voiced. As is often observable in the case of religious enthusiasts, there is a slenderness of constitutional *stamina* which renders the flesh no match for the spirit". *On Paradox and Common-Place*, Essay XV, from the book *Table-Talk, Essays on Men and Manners*, William Hazlitt, Printed by R & R Clark Limited, Edinburgh, without publication date, page 199.

¹⁸⁵ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Kingdom*, quoted here from *Shelley's Prose Works*, Vol. 1, ed. by Richard Herne Shepherd, Kingston Vale, Lent, 1888, page 365.

They were allowed to lend a villa which was taken by Byron at Este among the Euganean Hills, but as a result of a long journey across Italy to reach the villa in that hot season caused baby Clara to fall ill and she died on 24 September, who was the second child she had lost. During his sojourn in Este Shelley began to write *Prometheus Unbound* and in September he wrote the poem *Lines written among the Euganean Hills* which portrays his mood of sorrow mixed with delight against the backdrop of the odd and half-unreal beauties of Italy. In October, when he was in Venice he wrote *Julian and Maddalo* which is almost vague and incoherent, but his description of the sunset over the Lido, the ensuing eloquent conversation between him (Julian) and Byron (Maddalo), the madhouse etc. are not tedious at all. Julian argues that men are enslaved to evil due to their torpor and make no effort to be free, but Maddalo retorted “You talk Utopia”, because we are too weak to control our own destinies, the debate continues, and finally the poem terminated with the argument still unsettled. From the first of December to the 28th of February 1819, he was in Naples where he underwent severe melancholy and bad health, therefore, his poem *Stanzas written in dejection near Naples* displays plenty of ennui. The main attribute of the poem is the vague melancholy that clashes with delight, out of which the troubled music emerges. He says: “Yet now despair itself is mild, / Even as the winds and waters are; / I could lie down like a tired child, / And weep away the life of care / Which I have borne and yet must bear”.¹⁸⁶ About this time he also wrote some shorter poems such as *The Woodman and the Nightingale* and *Mazenghi* etc.

On March 5 1819, they reached Rome and adored the pictures and sculptures with deliberation, and he completed Acts 2 and 3 of *Prometheus Unbound*.¹⁸⁷ As a result of extreme heat of Italy Shelley’s son William fell sick and died on 7th of June who was the third child Mary had lost. Mary was in deep grief and was already in blue due to the death of her second child and she was also in poor health conditions. But Shelley was in dire need of consolation, and he was hurt by Mary’s apparent coldness. Instead of drawn more closely together to be solaced with each other,

¹⁸⁶ *The Poetical Works of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats*, Complete in One Volume, published by A. and W. Galignani, Paris, 1829, page 225.

¹⁸⁷ Shelley says in his Preface to this poem that “This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama”. See Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Author’s Preface to Prometheus Unbound*.

the incident estranged them some more, because nothing could distract her from her sorrows. Anyhow, the outcome was the loss of their married happiness and their temporary fall out with each other.¹⁸⁸ But, their relationship survived even after this incident, but there is no denying that he had lost her passion and her political companionship, even though he did not deserted her as he had deserted Harriet earlier. A few days after they left Rome for Leghorn, where he continued writing the tragedy of *Cenci* which was started earlier in May. On the 16th of August the notorious Peterloo Massacre occurred, which provoked Shelley to write *Mask of Anarchy* in September. The poem enjoins the populace to “Rise like lions after slumber” but this was not read until ten years after his death when Leigh Hunt himself, assuming correctly that the demonstration round the 1832 Reform Bill would protect him from censorship. Addressing Liberty he says: “Science, poetry and thought / Are thy lamps; they make the lot / Of the dwellers in a cot / So serene, they curse it not”.¹⁸⁹ This time he wrote the sonnet *England in 1819* as well. In the first week of October, they reached Florence and he penned his famous lyrical poem which made him the greatest of English lyrical poets which was titled *Ode to the West Wind*, in which he hails the wind as “Thou breath of Autumn’s being”. His poem *Indian Serenade* was also written this time. In October he wrote a satirical squib on Wordsworth, titled *Peter Bell the Third*, and in December he began to write the uncompleted prose work *A Philosophical View of Reform*.

At the end of January 1820 they reached Pisa, and in March he wrote one of his shorter poems, but a beautiful and a famous one, the *Sensitive Plant*. In the same month he wrote *Ode to Liberty* which personifies liberty in a way of fancy of the eighteenth century, which comprises nineteen

¹⁸⁸ Some of the poems he wrote later to Jane and Edward Williams allude to this fact. Shelley writes: “When I returned to my cold home, you ask / Why I am not as I have ever been ; / You spoil me for the task / Of acting a forced part in life’s dull scene, - / Of wearing on my brow the idle mask / Of author, great or mean, / In the world’s carnival. I sought / Peace thus, and but in you I found it not”. *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Mrs. Shelley, Edward Moxon, London, 1839, page 300. Besides, Shelley’s admiration towards Jane increased these days, but Edwards Williams, who is her husband and friend of Shelley’s did not take this issue seriously. He only considered it as the pretty sayings of a divine poet, but as for Mary, she was subject to jealousy toward Jane. At the same time, Simon Haines argues that during the 1818 – 19 period Shelley frequently complained of lack of inspiration, and the death of his two children only exacerbated the growing estrangement between the couple. But the real problem was the lack of first-hand political inspiration such as the French Revolution or his first excited discovery of politics in general in 1812. Apart from this, he was in exile in Italy far from the public affairs at home, and only the Peterloo incident of August 1819 re-ignited his flame of inspiration once again. See *Shelley’s Poetry: The Divided Self*, Simon Haines, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1997, page 82.

¹⁸⁹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Mask of Anarchy*, Stanza 63.

regular stanzas of fifteen lines each, which was written when the despotic monarch Bourbon Ferdinand VII was overthrown, for Shelley that was 'the glorious events' that brought about a liberal government in Spain. The poem talks about the pathetic condition of the world before the birth of liberty, and its first birth in Athens, its short life in Rome, its unbeknownst state for a thousand years to the Italians and so on. The third poem he wrote in March was *To a Skylark*. In August they went into a mountainous village named San Giuliano di Pisa, where he conceived the idea of the poem *Witch of Atlas* during he was climbing alone the mountain Monte san Pellegrino, and he wrote the poem in three days that consists 670 lines. In August he also wrote *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, a dramatic satirical squib on the English enthusiasm for Queen Caroline. Another poem is *Ode to Naples* which was to extol the new but short-lived constitution in Naples, which succeeded by a Spanish success. The year 1820 was Shelley's chief year of lyrics, in which he wrote *The Cloud*, *Hymn of Apollo*, and *Oedipus Tyrannus* among other works.

In January and February of 1821 he wrote his fanciful Italian Platonic *Epipsychidion*, and in February-March he wrote *A Defence of Poetry* as a counter against Peacock's attack on Romantic writers. His friend Keats died at Rome on February 23, but Shelley came to know it only on 11th of April, and within two months he completed an elegy on him titled *Adonais*. In August he travelled to Ravenna and he met Byron, and in October-November he wrote *Hellas*, a lyrical drama on the struggle of the Greek people against the invasion of the Turkish Empire. In the process the choruses tell us the way the radicalism of Jesus Christ was polluted by the savage religion by stealing his name, and the way the religious oligarchy wiped out the democratic Athens which rose from thought and reason, and how the Greco-Turkish war will prolong forever if it seen only as a battle of religions. In January, 1822, he once again started writing the same tragedy which he had started and laid aside in 1819 which is titled *Charles the First*, but in June he abandoned it in despair after completing only four scenes and a fragment of the fifth. In January he also made friendship with Edward John Trilawny who has given us a full and vivid account of Shelley's last year of life and wrote his biography as well. In the 30th of April Shelleys and Williams moved to San Terenzo and they were spending their time in joyful boating in the Bay of Lerici and in May-June he was occupied with the poem *The Triumph of Life*. On the first of July he sails with Williams to Livorno in his boat Don Juan. On the evening of the 7th July Shelley and Williams drove to Leghorn after saying good-bye to the Hunts, and on the night of the next day, they begin return voyage from Leghorn and at Casa Magni Mary and

Jane were waiting for their husbands to turn up. But, Shelley drowned in the gulf of Spezia as a result of a sudden storm on 8th July 1822, less than a month before his thirtieth birthday. On 19th July Trelawny identified two bodies; one is adjacent to Via Reggio and the other is nearby three miles down the shore at Lericcio, both were those of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Williams. Interestingly enough, reporting his death the London Courier sneered: “Shelley, the writer of some infidel poetry, has been drowned; now he knows whether there is a God or no”.¹⁹⁰

Thematic Analysis of his some Important Works

Queen Mab

Shelley probably started writing *Queen Mab* at Lynmouth in 1812 and that was sent to the printers in 1813, and its revised edition came out in 1816 added with *Alastor* under the title of the *Daemon of the World*. The best known part of this poem is its musical opening which attained widespread acclaim. This important long poem is an astonishing debut of the twenty-year old Shelley which outpours his all youthful intellectual excitement that he wrote after reading *Encyclopédistes*. This book was edited by Diderot and d’Alembert and written by so many free thinkers to endorse the importance of reason as the highest of the human faculties. This encyclopaedia was an influential manifesto of the ideas of the Enlightenment, a model for the Age of Reason, a promoter of religious and political freedom and the precursor of the ideology of Revolution. So that, this poem is very radical in content and a forthright attack on religion, monarchy, war and tyranny, and it orders to root out the poisonous system of injustice: “Let the axe / Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall”.¹⁹¹ “Full of ardent speculation, contradictory theories and material gathered from his eclectic reading, it is his salute to the philosophers of the Enlightenment, both French and English”.¹⁹² This poem is an angry

¹⁹⁰ Heath, Duncan and Boreham, Judy, *Introducing Romanticism: A Graphic Guide*, ed. Richard Appignanesi, Icon books U.K., Totem books U.S.A., First published in U.K. and Australia in 1999 and reprinted in 2002 and in 2006, page 109.

¹⁹¹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Queen Mab*, Book IV – 82- 83.

¹⁹² Hodgart, Patricia, *Shelley’s Philosophical Beliefs*, in *A Preface to Shelley*, Longman group, U.K. 1985, page 65. Hodgart continues: “As the copious notes show, he had responded with enthusiasm (an enthusiasm which also embraced Lucretius, Bacon, Hume, Spinoza and many others named there) to the more provocative views of the French *philosophes*, citing among his sources d’Holbach and Cabanis, the most materialistic and atheistic of them all”.

denunciation of society and its founding principles and being described as ‘the Chartists’ Bible’ on account of its radical content on political views and social disparities.¹⁹³

The poem begins with the description of the beautiful girl Ianthe who sleeps while her lover Henry keeps watch over her and the Fairy Queen Mab turned up to her in a chariot. Queen Mab descends from her chariot, the soul of Ianthe travels away with her in a magic car leaving her body. Even though the description of this journey is too ambiguous to make much mark upon mind, it proffers the upcoming clearer shapes of beauty as a whole. The moment they reached the remnants of Palmyra and Jerusalem, Mab utilized the context for a speech against the religion of the Jews. The important points of Mab’s sermons include: the unfortunate mankind was afflicted with miseries not due to man’s evil nature, and the evil nature is only a figment invented to excuse crimes, but rather, in Nature everything is perfect and harmonious and “on Man alone, / Partial in causeless malice, wantonly / Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery”.¹⁹⁴ What can all this mischief be due? “Nature! - - No! / Kings, priests and statesmen blast the human flower / Even in its tender bud; their influence darts / Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins / Of desolate society”.¹⁹⁵ Queen Mab deplors all kings, priests, and statesmen, who are something outside Nature or logically opposing it. She abhors wars, commerce, money and capitalism, because each component of civil, commercial and religious power with its interdependence to each other functioning together collectively to loot the general public. Even though Shelley identifies this interlocking power structure and gives a dismal account of the world, Stuart Curran argues that “the poem fails exactly at the point of explaining why so monstrous a structure exists in the first place”.¹⁹⁶ But, when Ianthe asks whether there is any hope after this, she answers there is.

In the section VI Mab showcases Ianthe a vision of the ferocities of institutional religion which alters the natural world into a framework of oppression, which is to be replaced with the Spirit of

¹⁹³ In 1892, George Bernard Shaw wrote an essay titled *Shaming the Devil about Shelley*, in which he recalled Shelley’s poem *Queen Mab* being described as ‘the Chartists’ Bible’. See *Shelley: the Pursuit*, Richard Holmes, Harper Perennial, 2005, page 208.

¹⁹⁴ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Queen Mab*, Book IV.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Curran, Stuart, *Shelley and the End(s) of Ideology*, in *The Most Unfailing Herald: Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792 - 1992*, ed. Alan M. Weinberg and Romaine Hill, Unisa press, Pretoria, South Africa, 1996, page 22.

Nature or Necessity.¹⁹⁷ Book VII is an all-out attack on Christianity and Mab invokes the spirit of the Wandering Jew, Ahasuerus, to adduce how malicious the god Jehovah is and how he perverted the world and she gives a new horrific account of his offence. Mab victoriously cries “There is no God” and she offers Ianthe comfort and hope and she celebrates the natural world of socially renovated mankind. The best part of the poem is what Ianthe envisages the bright future, which will take place only when Religion is collapsed; nevertheless, he is still in the dark about the niceties of its happening. But he is sure that when that happens, all nature - not only man - will be kind and good, sea will not be stormy; but tranquil, and deserts will turn to be wooded. At the end of the poem Shelley declares the immortality of the soul, and Queen Mab takes her back to her couch where her beloved Henry ‘kneeled in silence’. When she opened her eyes: “She looked around in wonder, and beheld / Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch, / Watching her sleep with looks of sleepless love, / And the bright beaming stars / That through the casement shone”.¹⁹⁸

In *Prometheus Unbound* Jupiter is the source of all evil, but in this poem religion is the evil source and the Wandering Jew Ahasuerus represents the oppressed good man, and therefore, Shelley raises the slogan *Ecrasez l’Infame*.¹⁹⁹ We can see the rigid dichotomy between religion, which is the “prolific fiend”, and the Spirit of Nature in *Queen Mab*, in the same way which occurs between Jupiter and Demogorgon in *Prometheus Unbound*. Shelley not at all talks about the inner struggle of good and evil, but rather, the struggle of the good that is within men, with the evil that is outside them. From the outset he was obsessed with the thought of our present imperfection which was imposed upon us by a wicked external power and whenever that will be caved in, that time only we will all become perfect. But the disappointing thing is, as he said in

¹⁹⁷From his youth Shelley had flirted with the doctrine of Necessity, which comes straight to him from William Godwin. In this poem that was expounded by the Fairy Queen in two main passages (IV 139-67, VI 197-219), which he calls ‘mother of the world’. This doctrine is founded on the conviction that the ‘perfectibility’ of man will eventually overwhelm tyranny and destruction. It has appealed to revolutionaries and radicals throughout history in various disguises. It was comforting, because it is certain that good will triumph over bad and the victory is coming anyway. It requires no action, which is the repercussion of this theory. But, in his helplessness the doctrine sometimes comforted Shelley and enabled him to fudge the disparity between reform and revolution.

¹⁹⁸ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Queen Mab*, Book IX.

¹⁹⁹ Even though Voltaire was neither a revolutionary nor an atheist, he uses the famous phrase *Ecrasez l’Infame*, which literally means “crush the infamous”, when he talks about an enlightened government under which freedom of thought and religious tolerance could be flourished. Voltaire merely meant intolerance by ‘*l’Infame*’, but when he attacks the enemies of society, which are religion, warfare and the monarch, Shelley utilizes this usage in the epigraph of the poem *Queen Mab*.

his preface to *Alastor*, that many men are too easily syncretise themselves with the imperfection of this life, neither by love nor by the wisdom of experience, but by mere apathy.²⁰⁰

Alastor

This poem was written in 720 lines of blank verse in 1815 when Shelley was living with Mary in a cottage at Bishopsgate, in the Thames Valley west of London. At the first sight this seems a stereotypical romantic poem since that encapsulates many conventional elements, but in further perusal it makes feel contrariwise.²⁰¹ The poem begins with a search for the ideal in landscape and womanhood, but suddenly that turns out to be a quest for the supernatural spirit which transcends earthly ideals. This poem comprises two central characters, but neither of whom is named: the first is the Narrator, who, in lines 1- 49, invokes the elements of Nature and talks about his own early search for knowledge of the Ultimate, and the second is the idealistic “poet”, whose story the Narrator states in the main framework of the poem and for whose fate he laments in the closing 49 lines. In other words, this is a meticulously staged dialogue of sorts between these two protagonists, possible to say that neither of whom stands for Shelley, or he could not come to a decision on the issue between them.

The poem starts with a Narrator who celebrates the powers of Nature as “Mother of this unfathomable world” and he considers himself a passive lyre or wind harp, analogous to the Romantic image in Coleridge’s poem *The Eolian Harp*. Another character of the poem is an

²⁰⁰ William Godwin’s influence on Shelley’s writings is widely known. But Leslie Stephen finds out the utmost degree of this influence in *Queen Mab*, he says that “many passages [of this poem] read like the Political Justice done into verse”. He further says: “Shelley improved as a poet and in a degree rarely exemplified in poetry, between Queen Mab and the Prometheus; but even in the Prometheus and his last writings we find a continued reflection of Godwin’s characteristic views”. See Stephen, Leslie, *Godwin and Shelley*, 1879, Hours in a Library, 1874 -79, 1904, Vol. 3, Pages 377 – 406.

²⁰¹ Simon Haines identifies three varieties of thought in Shelley’s poetry and the second one is starting with this poem and continues through several upcoming poems. Contrary to ignore human relationship and passion, and emphasize more on the reformist politico-moral idea of the first, this variety celebrates the kind of life it proposes to condemn. For detailed discussion on this issue see *Shelley’s Poetry: The Divided Self*, Simon Haines, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1997, pages 96 onwards. According to Bloom this poem, whatever Shelley’s intentions, is about the destructive power of imagination. “For Shelley”, Bloom says, “every increase in imagination ought to have been an increase in hope, but generally the strength of imagination in Shelley fosters an answering strength of despair”. And Bloom sees the recent imagining of Shelley’s own death lingers on this poem, and on one level this is the poet’s elegy for himself. See Bloom, Harold, *The Unpastured Sea: An Introduction to Shelley*, reprinted in *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*, Ed. by Harold Bloom, Published by W. W. Norton & Co., London, 1970, page 379.

alienated solitary poet; whose name, nationality and any other worldly circumstances are unknown, except for the route of his extraordinary journey that he sets out after leaving “His cold fireside and alienated home / To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands”.²⁰² Except for some parts, the narrator devotes almost all the poem to the story of the life of the Poet. The line “There was a Poet whose untimely tomb” points out that he died young, and the lines “– no mourning maiden decked / With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath, / The lone couch of his everlasting sleep”²⁰³ indicate he died unknown. He has fully communed with Nature and roams about as a footloose person through sublime and Gothic landscapes, which initially reflects his quest after for ‘solemn vision’ i.e. his own desires to find out some corporeal manifestation of his ideal love, but that ends up in vain. The Poet refuses to respond to the ministrations of the Arab maiden who was “Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe / To speak her love”.²⁰⁴ Instead, when he turns up in Kashmir during his travels he has “a dream of hope” in which a veiled maid Sate spoke or sang in a voice “like the voice of his own soul”. She is also a poet, sings of “lofty hopes of divine liberty” and she spreads her hands to embrace him, and he rises to meet her, but that ends as unexpectedly as it began, and he drowns in sleep. His seeking for a chimerical maiden in the vision in lieu of the realistic Arab maiden exposes nothing other than his solipsism.

The passage depicting the Poet’s imaginary dream-consummation of desire is openly sexual, and the post-coital aftermath is the disruption of his earlier communion with Nature. Then he comes to believe that the world is barren, which is implicitly the retribution of ‘the spirit of sweet human love’ who despatched the Arab maiden. The poet goes beyond Nature searching for communion with a supernatural spirit or ideal self after denying natural human ties, but the Narrator, on the other hand, as a nature-poet is fully bound by the natural world. This poem proposes two contrary standpoints, a worldly and an otherworldly, or a natural and a supernatural, and showcases the shortcomings and uncertainties of each. The poem rejects not only the over-intense idealism of the Poet, which was awakened by the ‘Power’ of Nature, but also the total ignorance of such aspirations of the ‘meaner spirits’ as ‘morally dead’ since both are different varieties of selfishness and anti-social individualism.

²⁰² Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Alastor*, 76 -77.

²⁰³ Ibid, lines 55 – 57.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, lines 132 -33.

The Poet is driven further East traversing various lands, beyond the Egyptian/Ethiopian *Ürsprung* of the French mythographers, to the terrestrial paradise of the Indies i.e. the Kashmir valley, whence the Poet roves about through volcanic caves, lonesome vales, and the remnants of ancient civilisations and he stares at its mysterious hieroglyphs.²⁰⁵ But, on the “lone Chorasmanian shore” the Poet is engrossed in a comparison between a swan which flies to its home, and his own homelessness. He contemplates suicide, even though he was doubtful whether death will usher him to the realm of sleep. When he decides to encounter lone death on the sea, he sets out in a little boat, which is blown by a whirlwind and tossed by ferocious waves, but finally he enters the tranquil isolation of a sepulchral landscape of surreal sublimity. This part of the elucidation of the Poet’s journey reflects his psychological and emotional state of mind more explicitly.

Here, the Narrator is also a poet lamenting the collapse of another poet’s visionary pursuit, because the poet here is an ideal projection of the Narrator, and both of them are vegetarians and fascinated with death as well. The Poet is desperate and subjected to a passive suicide, due to the loss of the maiden, and the Narrator is also in despair due to the loss of the Poet. In a sense, Alastor is the dark double of the poet-hero. In the end of the poem, the aforesaid image of the wind harp goes back to describe the dying poet himself as well. Moreover, when the Narrator acknowledges ‘earth, ocean, air’ as ‘beloved brotherhood’ that signifies the resemblance of the same individualistic condition of both the Poet and the Narrator. In this poem the social commitment is asserted as paramount, which possibly showcases Shelley’s critique of Wordsworth for deserting truth and liberty and betraying his commitments to social revolution and retiring into Nature and to his own ego. Nonetheless, there is no denying that Shelley’s fictional Poet is not an outright portrait of Wordsworth, even though that propounds the idea that the non-committed poets and poetry are worthless.

The Revolt of Islam

²⁰⁵ When talks about the wandering of the Poet, Shelley says that: “The Poet wandering on through Arabie / And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste, / And o’er the aerial mountains which pour down / Indus and Oxus from their icy caves, / In joy and exultation held his way; / Till in the valley of Kashmire”. Lines 140 – 45. The Poet’s wandering starts from the Middle East to Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, Kerman Shah over the Hindu Kush to the aphelion, Kashmir, then he sets forth to north-west through Aornos and Petra, Balk and Parthia to Chorasmia (in Uzbekistan) and the Caspian Sea to the Caucasus.

The Revolt of Islam is the longest poem (five thousand lines) in twelve cantos by Shelley which was originally titled *The Revolution of the Golden City: a Vision of the Nineteenth Century* was composed when Shelley and Mary were living at Marlow in 1817. The poem gives a balanced account of the years of the Revolution with his thoughts on the purpose of it and fosters the sentiment of justice, liberty and equality, with special emphasis on gender equality through the story of Laon and Cythna. At first this was an incestuous love story titled *Laon and Cythna*, but later he turned them into mere lovers and changed the title as now it is under the compulsion of the publisher Charles Ollier.²⁰⁶ Its blank verses make the poem more difficult to read, and since the description is deliberately ambiguous that makes the story almost impossible to the reader to follow, and that derails his goal of making a myth. Of course, he vouchsafes in his preface to this poem that, this is a narrative one; not a didactic, based on comprehensive morality and human passion against the backdrop of turbulent political conditions.²⁰⁷ Although this is a wonderful poem, this is a cumbersome work in some ways. This is written in the Spenserian stanzas inspired partly by Torquato Tasso's *La Gerusalemme Liberata* (Jerusalem Delivered). This poem deals with the story of a defeated political revolution, depicts the struggle for the Golden City which is attainable only when the world acquires the Godwinian lessons of love and reason.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Stansbury says that "Though Shelley did intend to shock his reading audience with the incestuous relationship of Laon and Cythna, he also presented that relationship as an excess of love and rejection of conventional morality. Regardless, this blatant use of the theme prompted a caustic review, the aforementioned enforced emendations to the text, and the republication of the poem under the title *The Revolt of Islam*". *Romantic Incest: Gender, desire and defiance*, Heather Lyn Stansbury, Ph.D thesis, submitted to the University of Washington, 2008, Page 101. Thus, in the revised text, both Laon and Cythna are not blood relatives, but rather Cythna is an orphan living with his parents. But Anahid Nersessian argues that "Although it attempts to make the poem less subversive, the cancellation of genetic ties between the two lovers finally underscores the importance of elective affiliation within the text itself, which, in its second incarnation, appears yet more invested in developing social alternatives to kinship". Then, Nersessian quotes some lines from the poem to adduce that Laon's kin is "cold" and "it is Cythna alone whose heart, like his, wages "patient warfare" against injustice". And "The coldness of kin is supplemented by Cythna's romantic friendship, which warms Laon into sympathy with his human kind". See Nersessian, Anahid, *Radical Love and the Political Romance: Shelley after the Jacobin Novel*, ELH Volume 79, Number 1, Spring 2012, published by Johns Hopkins University Press, pages 111 -134.

²⁰⁷ Shelley declares his moral purpose in his *preface* to this poem "to enlist the harmony of metrical language, the ethereal combinations of the fancy, the rapid and subtle transitions of human passion, all those elements which essentially compose a poem, in the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality.

²⁰⁸ Shelley was an avid fan of Godwin's philosophical anarchism i.e. the establishment of a free and affectionate society in which all men are equal which is to come into existence after the withering away of the state. But he went a step forward from Godwin to define his Perfectibility which is not the capability of being brought to perfection, but rather, that is 'the faculty of being constantly made better and receiving perpetual improvement'. Shelley's romantic writings such as *Alastor* and *The Sensitive Plant* are the direct influence of the virtuous Houyhnhnms of

Here, the Turks represent evil and Laon wants to destroy it. Cythna was an orphan lives with her parents, and carried away by the Turks and raped, but in the rescue attempt Laon kills three of them. Like Prometheus, Laon is also chained on a high precipice to be killed and feed on carrion, but Shelley depicts these sufferings as inevitable in the way of liberty, and finally the mankind will be “Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless / Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king / Over himself; just, gentle, wise”²⁰⁹ by the birth of ‘a diviner day’.

The poem begins with the visionary depiction of a battle between an eagle and a serpent which embodies cosmic clashes between good and evil forces. Good does triumph over evil for a brief moment like what happened in the first glorious days of 1789 in the French Revolution. Cythna; the female revolutionary, is uncorrupted by the impact of unequal society, plays the common Romantic role of the child of nature, once asks “Can man be free if woman be a slave?”²¹⁰In a breakdown and madness Laon experiences a nightmare of tyranny in which Laon was imprisoned and Cythna enslaved, but an old Hermit rescues him and told him that “blood need not flow” since it replaces one kind of tyranny with another.²¹¹ Both Laon and Cythna return to the Golden City to see the toppling of the despotic king Othman through the inspirational power of the ideas and words of the rebels. After the overthrow of the tyrant, the compassionate revolutionaries set him free, rather than executed, because Laon earlier pepped them up to forgive, since “We are all brethren – even the slaves who kill / For hire, are men”.²¹² To this point Shelley clearly represents a ‘beau ideal’ of the French Revolution, i.e. the king should be pardoned rather than guillotined. But that ended up in his brutal retake of power; and thusly Shelley puts forward simultaneously the idea of the avoidance of the bloody excesses and the limits of such idealism in a revolution. The liberation of the City and the attainment of freedom were celebrated jubilantly around a vast altar, almost the same way like that of the French Revolution. Meanwhile, the armies of the evil came back during the festivity, and after a huge desperate fight between them, their all associates were killed and on a huge black Tartarian horse

Godwin’s ideal community and the Encyclopedistes, but his romantic sensibility turned them alive from ‘the mere touch of cold philosophy’.

²⁰⁹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Prometheus Unbound*, Act III.

²¹⁰Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Revolt of Islam*, line 1045.

²¹¹ “If blood is shed, ’tis but a change and choice / Of bonds, - from slavery to cowardice / A wretched fall!” *The Revolt of Islam*, lines 1657 – 9.

²¹² Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Revolt of Islam*, lines 1812 -13.

of giant frame Laon and Cythna escaped to a far-off hill where both the lovers forget public disasters and turned to solitude in their deep love and she tells him her story. Even though Shelley had been critical of the retreat of the first generation Romantic writers, this passage is dialectic between engagement and retreat, and through the celebration of the incestuous love affair he tries to make it a rebellious one. Here Shelley connects love with revolution, social change with personal change, and he gives a long and detailed ode from Cythna about freedom, that extends even to the importance of vegetarianism.²¹³ But the couples once again turn their attention to re-sow the ‘seeds of hope’.

In Canto Seventh Cythna tells her story to Laon, which is also distressing. After she was carried away in a slave ship, she was conscripted into the slave harem of the tyrant and she was raped by him too. The tyrant imprisoned her in an underwater penitentiary, because she showcased her displeasure about the rape, and there, she gave birth to a child, which was taken away from her. She was rescued by a passing ship from that dismal cavernous cell after a massive tremor, which destroyed it completely. She inspired the sailors to trigger a mutiny against their rulers, and the sailors took over the ship and abjured their allegiance to their rulers. Other ships followed the revolutionary ideals of this ship and the fleet arrived at the Golden City. Here, her revolutionary ideas to promote mutiny include: attack on established religion, faith, God, and the attack against accumulating wealth in the hands of a few, and the rampant tyranny of man over woman, and women emancipation and so forth. Then her story comes to an end, and including this story, the total stories of revolutions are three in this poem.

Cythna returns to the Golden City, but she was disconcerted to see the absence of belief in liberty. But she once again begins her campaign for Nature, truth, liberty and love, but this time in an ideological and nonviolent manner, and she assuages herself by likening tyranny to the winter of the world in which the seeds are sleeping in the soil. This time Othman enlists help

²¹³ When Cythna’s speech segues into one after another, Shelley reaches the peak of his ‘unbounded enthusiasm’ when he reaches in these two magnificent verses: “Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations! / Bear witness Night, and ye mute Constellations / Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars! / Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more! Victory! Victory! Earth’s remotest shore, / Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars, / The green lands cradled in the roar / Of western waves, and wilderness / Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans / Where morning dyes her golden tresses, / Shall soon partake our high emotions: / Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear / The Fiend-God, when our charmed name he hear, / Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes, / While Truth with joy enthroned o’er his lost empire reigns!”

from all the tyrants of the earth and they gathered to help each other. As a result of an abortive attempt of the tyrant to eradicate revolt the land was ravaged, and plague and famine were ensued. The tyrant uses a Christian priest to impose the ideology of obedience, and the priest proposed to build a huge altar and Laon and Cythna burn upon it to appease the god of war. A stranger appears in front of the tyrant's throne and says that he will fetch Laon on the condition that Cythna should be allowed to go to America where "freedom and truth are worshipped". The moment the tyrant agrees to the stranger's terms he divulged he is Laon himself, but they placed him on the altar to burn him alive, and the altar was about to be lit when Cythna turned there up on horseback, "a steed / Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed, / Bursts through their ranks"²¹⁴, and both the lovers offer themselves heroic martyrdom on the tyrant's *auto-da-fé*. Even though the evil has triumphed here, their spirits freed by death, and embarked in an alluring boat for the Temple of the Spirit, which is a paradise where they lived in bliss. Here, the frightening account of the 'death-polluted land' may indicate Shelley's shock at seeing the ravaged countryside of France in 1814, and his disgust towards war. Similarly, this poem like *Queen Mab* gives a picture of the kings and priests and tyrants who prove their strength and cruelty and breaking their promise by burning the two lovers to death.

Although at last Laon and Cythna were killed, *The Revolt of Islam* is an optimistic poem whose final message is 'despair not'. Moreover, it spotlights hope for the future in a time when most of the romantic writers turned aside disillusioned by the aftermath of the Revolution.²¹⁵ Definitely, this poem is not an explicit interference in the political arena of that time; but it implicitly deals with the issues of the French Revolution and its outcomes. He wrote this optimistic poem when he was only twenty-six, which envisages it coming true in a distant future, and he did not change it over the years, but it grew to be more and more cloudier with despair at the irrationality of mankind. The symbols of the Snake and the Eagle are a bit confusion making, and it is Lucifer; the Moring star, turned out to be 'a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled' is the symbol of Wisdom who combats with a blood-red Comet. Shelley deliberately reverses the traditional values by making the fallen angel as a representative of Wisdom, but finally the serpent turns out to be an image of real evil. In the same way, the Comet confusingly turns out to be an eagle that

²¹⁴ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Revolt of Islam*, Lines 4516 – 18.

²¹⁵ Even at the beginning of this poem Shelley seems to be struggling to fend off his own impulses to give in to despair. The poem starts making reference to the failure of the French Revolution: "When the last hope of trampled France had failed / Like a brief dream of unremaining glory, / From visions of despair I rose".

soars aloft 'with overshadowing wings of evil' as well that is an image of Cain who 'turned and shed his brother's blood'. Whether the image of eagle represents Napoleon or not, one thing is sure that the two warring forces of good and evil he borrowed partly from Milton and the Zoroastrianism which he absorbed from Peacock.

Ozymandias

This is one of Shelley's most well-known poems, in essence a political one, he wrote late in 1817 and was published in 1818 in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* with the title *Ozymandias*. *Ozymandias* is the Greek name of the Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramses II (13th century B.C.), who built extensive buildings and colossal statues and waged disastrous wars against Hittites, Libyans and so on, and under whose reign Egypt reached its zenith of imperial power. The tyrant believed that he will be an awe-inspiring ruler and his works will be more stupendous and everlasting, but he and his message to the future became deeply ironic. By writing this poem Shelley wants "to mock" the mighty king and to express his contempt on his authoritarian rule. His statue is deserted amputated in a desert, in an arid and lifeless terrain, and, of course, the "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone / Stand in the desert" signifies the pitiable condition of the mighty king. A series of disturbing images such as "Near them, on the sand, / Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown, / And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command" are appropriate, because these are voluble about the ruin and disgrace of a fallen king, on whose pedestal a distich appears: "My name is Ozymandias. King of Kings / Look on my Works, ye mighty, and despair! Nothing beside remains". But, whether the sculptor composed this distich and carved is uncertain, probably the sculptor simply has inscribed what the living king himself dictated. Whatever may be the case, the distich remains as a derisive epitaph after having been an arrogant proclamation.

The astounding thing is that this sonnet did not attract much attention of Shelley's commentators and critics, conceivably because this is too brief and obvious and remains at odds with Shelley's typical styles.

Prometheus Unbound

This long poem is the greatest and the most difficult and was also his own favourite, which was written in 1818 – 1819 period. Even though Shelley believed that this literary work "very few

will understand or like”, this is the culmination of his moral and political ideas with more maturity. Even Mary said in her note to this poem: “It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout”.²¹⁶ Here Shelley celebrates the Greek legend Prometheus, who dared to invent fire and hand it over to mankind and challenged the domination of the king of the gods. This poem is generally known as an esoteric one, because it is based on Greek myth, added to it Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought, and its theoretical bases are Godwinian perfectibility and complex scientific theories, and this takes place in dream-landscapes of unearthly beauty. It promises a new golden age and the redemption of fallen man if men learn the lessons of love and compassion, besides, it shares the philosophical problems of evil and good.

For Shelley, Prometheus (meaning ‘fore thinker’ in Greek) is not only a rebel who fought against the brutal tyranny, but also a wise, kind, brave god, a Titan, and a cultured, intellectual, scientific man who tries by his discoveries to change the world. In this poem he likens Prometheus to Milton’s Satan of *Paradise Lost* and confers on him all virtues,²¹⁷ and ends the poem with his triumph, contrary to the view adopted by Aeschylus in his *Prometheus Bound* in which a final reconciliation is taking place between Jupiter and his victim. Shelley cannot be satisfied with the intimate mixture of good and evil, but rather he wants absolute good contrasted with absolute evil, which he might have adopted from his venerated Bacon, and therefore, he was “averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the champion with the oppressor of mankind.”²¹⁸ Thus, Prometheus symbolizes all that is good in oppressed and suffering humanity, whereas Jupiter represents the tyrannical external evil, who inflicts pain and sufferings on

²¹⁶ Shelley, Mary, *Note on the Prometheus Unbound*, in *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. By Mrs. Shelley, Edward Moxon, Dover Street, London, 1839, page 127.

²¹⁷ At the same time, in his *Preface* to this poem Shelley himself differentiates between Satan and Prometheus. Prometheus is a more poetical character than Satan and “he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement”, even though both are alike in courage, majesty, firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force. He further says that “The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling, it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends”.

²¹⁸ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Preface* to the *Prometheus Unbound*.

humanity.²¹⁹ But the motives of the wickedness of Jupiter are ambiguous and his overthrow is causeless which may showcase that his idea of the underexposed aspects of tyranny is superficial. Demogorgon, the child of Jupiter, represents Eternity, who comes and descends to abyss with Jupiter, remains as a symbol of unknown. While he was writing this poem in 1818 he was translating Plato's *The Symposium* too, therefore, impressed a mind with Platonic ideals, which had already bristled with the Godwinian Utopia of Political Justice, can easily envisage the heavenly future world, which is 'great and joyous, beautiful and free'. Prometheus is the supreme example of virtue, science and knowledge, and the highest perfection of the masculine intellectual nature and the power of the will, but after his fall he undergoes to torment on the icy precipice in the Indian Caucasus that fraught with 'crawling glaciers' which pierce him with 'the spears of their moon-freezing crystals'. Prometheus is lacking in Asia, the female instinctive principle, and the heavenly Uranian Love and Beauty, like Plato's reciprocally searching halves in *The Symposium*, and these two halves to be united, then only the cosmic chaos will be redressed and the chain of the tyrannical Jupiter which does up the entire world will be fallen apart.

In the first act, Prometheus was bounded to a precipice suffering eternal torments, and Mercury comes to him with the Furies, to compel him to divulge the secret and make his submission to Jupiter. Prometheus himself holds the secret to topple Jupiter's tyranny, but regrettably, he is not conscious of what he knows. He gets awareness through the offices of Asia (Love), Ione (Memory), and Panthea (Hope), all are sisters. But when he refuses to disclose the secrets they inflict the worst torture on him by telling the stories of how all the good of the world is changed

²¹⁹ Even reviewers of those days believed that in this poem Jupiter represents religion and institutionalized religious systems. For example, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* says that: "it is quite evident that the Jupiter whose downfall has been predicted by Prometheus, means nothing more than religion in general, that is, every human system of religious belief; and that, with the fall of this, he considers it perfectly necessary (as indeed we also believe, though with far different feelings) that every system of human government also should give way and perish". The article continues: "It appears too plainly, from the luscious pictures with which his play terminates, that Mr. Shelly looks forward to an unusual relaxation of all moral rules—or rather, indeed, to the extinction of all moral feelings, except that of a certain mysterious indefinable *kindliness*, as the natural and necessary result of the overthrow of all civil government and religious belief". *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, September 1820, Page 680. Furthermore, the world dominated by Jupiter is the world of negatives, in which his slaves and worshippers live under constant fear, self-contempt, barren hope, in physical and mental sufferings. That is the world of disease, death and endless emptiness, the world without form, color, variety of sounds etc. and similar to the world of God of Milton: "Universe of death, which God by curse / Created evil, for evil onely good, / Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds, / Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things ..." See *Paradise Lost*, II, 622 -25.

to evil, including the failure of the French Revolution, and any endeavour to improve the human condition only end up as a buttress to the tyrants.²²⁰ Then the chorus of Spirits who live in the dim caves of human thought, sing of prophetic of the good in human life. In the second act, after watching these tortures Panthea travels to meet her sister Asia; the lover of Prometheus, who has been expelled into the Indian Caucasus by Jupiter. Asia mourns for him and then comes to Panthea to tell a dream of her in which she had seen Prometheus transforms by love and Asia witnessed it in her eyes. As the two sisters talk, Asia sees the vision, which is Prometheus, but between him and her, a 'shape' cries "follow, follow" and when they followed it that led them to a rocky mountainous terrain; Asia and Panthea entered the cave of Demagorgon, and then the choruses of Spirits sing beautiful songs about their way. When they find Demagorgon Asia interrogates him about God and the nature of the universe etc. Demagorgon represents the force of historical necessity, which is the force definitely overthrow tyranny by the force of liberation. Then a Spirit appears with 'the dove-like eyes of hope' with its chariot and takes both of them away into the top of a snowy mountain. Panthea realizes the change in Asia when a light flows from her, and finally when a disembodied beautiful voice sings "Life of life, thy lips enkindle!" Asia replies "My soul is an enchanted boat",²²¹ after two stanzas this act comes to an end.

The third act occurs in Heaven where Jupiter is seated in his throne, no one but the soul of man can rebel against him. Ironically, this time Demagorgon discloses the secret that he is the banished child of Jupiter, who fated to depose him, and this was the secrete Prometheus had known but failed to recall with his original curse. In the car of the Hours Demagorgon approaches, and to Jupiter's question he introduces himself 'Eternity'. He roars to Jupiter to "Descend, and follow me down the abyss; / I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child, / Mightier than thee; and we must dwell together / Henceforth in darkness".²²² But, even though Jupiter earnestly beseeched to him for mercy, which was rejected and both of them "sink on the wide waves of ruin". Prometheus was unbound by Hercules in the presence of Asia, Ione, Panthea, the Earth and Spirits etc. and now there are no more tempests on the sea and no more

²²⁰ "The nations thronged around, and cried aloud, / As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love! / Sudden fierce confusion fell from heaven / Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear: / Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil". Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Prometheus Unbound*, Act 1, lines 650 -54.

²²¹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Prometheus Unbound*, Act II, quoted here from *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, selected and edited by Donald H. Reiman, and Neil Fraistat, second edition, Norton company, New York and London, 2002, page 254.

²²² *Ibid*, Act III, page 257.

poisonous nightshade berries as well. Prometheus orders the Spirit of the Hour to travel in her car around the world playing the music of deliverance, and the Earth says that all her children will be joyous henceforth. Panthea is now voluble about the love of the Spirit of the Earth toward Asia before the tyranny of Jupiter, and the Spirit of the Earth returns to Asia and talks to her about the change that has come over the world. This act ends when the Spirit of the Hour enters and eulogizes liberation, in which society and human psychology transformed. The Spirit continues that, although the thrones, altars, prisons, and judgement-seats etc. are still remaining intact, its importance was lost and remaining unregarded instead. And the forth act is the depiction of the ecstatic state of the delivered universe in which a long duet happens between the Earth and the Moon, and finally Demagorgon addresses all of them which ends with the praise of Prometheus.

The depiction of the majesty of the Universe, and the earth and skies bristling with ‘countless spheres’ is a fantastic one which he describes in Act IV, and Shelley’s outline of the new heaven and the new earth is in distinct feature when the Fairy Queen reveals the future. Even though this poem is a philosophical one that transforms to a metaphysical level by putting forward the way to overthrow the tyranny and to establish a free and fair society by the power of Love. *Prometheus Unbound* reveals the development of intellectual and poetic abilities of Shelley, and also his direction in which he is moving towards from *Queen Mab*. Prometheus is in love with Panthea, Asia’s sister, and he escaped from incessant sufferings inflicted by Jupiter by ‘going out’ of his nature, and he grew even to be compassionate to his torturer. At this point the magic of Love begins to work, and the blessed spirits appear to comfort him, but instead of what usually happen in Greek tragedy, Shelley puts the climax at the beginning of the poem, not at the end. After the depiction of the fall of Prometheus at the beginning, the poem goes on to portray the journey of Asia, who was released from her exile in the ‘far Indian vale’, to reunion with Prometheus and the subsequent overthrow of the tyrannical Jupiter. Here, like that of Prometheus, in accordance with the gradual ‘going out’ of her nature, her soul gets the Platonic identity, and even the language of the poem changes from the lucid masculine verse of its beginning to ecstatic poetry fraught with the images of light and colour.

The Cenci

If we exclude his lyrical dramas which are suitable to be played that time only in the theatre of imagination, as a playwright Shelley's works are limited to a few verse dramas such as *The Cenci*, and *Charles the First*, which is an unfinished one, and another uncompleted drama about an enchantress and a pirate, which takes place in an Indian isle.²²³ *The Cenci* was his only attempt at a true play dissimilar to his other poetic dramas, which is a story about the Cenci family and that was by far the best of all the plays of the romantic writers of that time. This is a powerful and impressive dramatic debut; not mere an imitation of Elizabethan or Jacobean tragedy. When he visited the Cenci palace and the Colonna Palace in Rome in 1819 with his wife Mary, he had seen Guido Reni's portrait of Beatrice, who had been subjected to frequent rape by her father Count Cenci, which is the severest private form of his exploitations and manipulations. Count Cenci was also joyous in the death of his two sons. As many critics have noted, Count Cenci is a demonic parody of Jehovah, and he has a certain resemblance to Shelley's Jupiter. But, "after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind",²²⁴ two bravoes have been appointed by her to assassinate him, but just after his death the papal legate arrives, and one bravo dies fighting and the other was captured. Under severe torture the bravo confesses that the plot had been commissioned by Beatrice. The Pope does not pardon her, because, the Pope himself was afraid of Parricide and Count Cenci had been paying vast sums for the atonement of his sins. Just before the execution of Beatrice, the play ends. s

Shelley started writing this drama in May 1819, which is fraught with violent action and turbulent emotions taking place in gloomy atmosphere inside the dark subterranean chambers of the Cenci Palace which was depicted in classic Gothic background.²²⁵ Whereas the drama simultaneously oppugns persecution and the nature of justice, the heroin moves from virtue to vice and vulnerability to fortitude contrary to the noble and revolutionary Cythna and the loving

²²³ But Leigh Hunt believed that "for assuredly, had he lived, he would have been the greatest dramatic writer since the days of Elizabeth, if indeed he has not abundantly proved himself such in his tragedy of the Cenci". *Imagination and Fancy or Selections from the English or Poets*, Leigh Hunt, A New Edition, Smith, Elder & Co., Waterloo Place, London, 1891, Page 295.

²²⁴ *Preface to The Cenci*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

²²⁵ Several critics argued that Shelley selected this story for writing drama solely on account of its horror. But De Quincey says that "Shelley found the whole attraction of this dreadful tale in the angelic nature of Beatrice as revealed in local traditions and in the portrait of her by Guido". See *Essays on the poets, and other English writers*, by Thomas De Quincey (1785 – 1859), Page 66.

nature and idealism of moral excellence of Prometheus. Here as well, Shelley attacks the coterie of religious and political hegemonic powers, as Stuart Curran says that “Cenci appeals to God to support his sadism; the Pope his temporal power; Cardinal Camillo his ineffectual sentimentality; and Beatrice her demand for justice”.²²⁶ Since she lives in a corrupt and decadent world, the assassination “is a high and holy deed” to withstand the real evil, at the same time, she rejects suicide as it is forbidden by God. At last, when she recognizes the fact that her lies are incapable of saving her and her mother’s and the haired killer Marzio’s lives she loses her all faith in justice and she weeps: ‘No, Mother, we must die: / Since such is the reward of innocent lives; / Such the alleviation of worst wrongs’.²²⁷

The Mask of Anarchy

This is the longest political poem and also the greatest political protest of Shelley, which was written in colloquial ballad form.²²⁸ It’s more popular tone than usual, encouraging call for action and caustic satire etc. are the factors virtually guaranteed a wide audience, besides it is in simple language bristle with generalities. He started composing this poem before the Peterloo massacre and during the impassioned composition the government violently suppressed the demonstrators. Here the term *Mask* is relevant in two ways, the first refers to a dramatic pageant like the masks which monarchs stage to celebrate their power, and the second is the organised deception, i.e. the plays behind the masks of those in authority.

The poem has three main sections. The first section proffers a trenchant criticism and satire on the government of the day. He also pours out his critical opprobrium on the high echelons of the authority, lawyers, priests, military personnel and so forth. The leading political leaders march like monsters; on a white horse they lead the figure of Anarchy around to trample the crowd, who adore him. Lawyers and priests, who took possession of Palace, Bank and Parliament are

²²⁶ *Shelley and the End(s) of Ideology*, Stuart Curran, from *The Most Unfailing Herald: Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792 -1992*, ed. Alan M. Weinberg and Romaine Hill, Unisa press, Pretoria, South Africa, 1996, page 24.

²²⁷ *The Cenci*, Percy Bysshe Shelley.

²²⁸ Holmes says that this is perhaps “the most powerfully conceived, the most economically executed and the most perfectly sustained” of Shelly’s poems. *Shelley: The Pursuit*, Richard Holmes, E. P. Dutton, New York, 1975, page 532. And G. M. Matthews says that the poem is “a vigorous fusion of Biblical prophecy, poetic vision, and street-balladry”. G. M. Matthews, *Shelley*, Longman Group Ltd., London, 1970, page 22.

also the followers of Anarchy.²²⁹ He describes the law sarcastically as ‘Golden and sanguine’ and the army as a ‘two-edged sword’, and even though the society is of ‘graves’, but the poem promises the rebirth of the ‘glorious Phantom’ of Liberty. The poem declines the official view of events and those to blame for the incident are only who rode the horses to trample the crowd to death. The people are also to blame only because they adore of their own servitude. A figure of an unarmed mother, a ‘maniac maid’, called Hope, appears to challenge them, though “she looked more like Despair”. She was about to be trodden into the field between the hooves of horses as a martyr when a shape arises like a mist to kill Anarchy. Now ‘an accent unwithstood’ of a voice is audible, advocating freedom, which let out the cries to encourage the people to retake freedom. but reborn in stanza 26, because Hope can never die.

In the second section Hope delivers a long speech delineating different kinds of freedom. After depicting the false freedom, which exploits the poor for the advantage of the rich in stanzas 39 - 51, she puts forward a vision of real freedom, made up of justice, equality, wisdom and peace. The description of real freedom comes after the question “What art thou Freedom?” (line 209), which follows these answers: “For the labourer thou art bread” (217), “Thou art clothes, and fire, and food / For the trampled multitude” (221- 22), “To the rich thou art a check, / When his foot is on the neck / Of his victim” (226-8), “Thou art Justice” (230), “Thou art Wisdom” (234), “Thou art Peace” (238), “Thou art Love” (246), “Spirit, Patience, Gentleness, / All that can adorn and bless / Art thou” (258 – 60).²³⁰ And, in the third section Hope demands a series of massive protests throughout England to achieve political rights. She asserts that the defenceless crowd should face the military suppression and be massacred, because that will demonstrate the

²²⁹ Anarchy comes on a white horse, splashed with blood, who wore a kingly crown, and a conspicuous mark on his brow reads “I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW” (line 37). The soldiers, who are the hired murderers, clothed in arms like blood and flame, sing “Thou art God, and Law, and King” (line 61). The agents, who are lawyers and priests, whisper “Thou art Law and God” (line 69). “Then all cried with one accord; / “Thou art King, and God, and Lord; / Anarchy, to Thee we brow, / Be thy name made holy now!” (lines 71 -74). Shelley also personally attacks some top brass of the authority such as (1) Viscount Castlereagh, who was the leader of the Tories in the Commons and a spokesman of the stringent measures of political suppression (“I met Murder on the way / he had a mask like Castlereagh”), (2) Lord Eldon, who was lord chancellor, who ruled that because of Shelley’s “immoral and vicious” principals he was not fit to take care of his own children after the suicide of his first wife Harriet, (“Next came Fraud, and he had on, / Like Eldon, and ermined gown;”), (3) Viscount Sidmouth, who was the home secretary defended the Peterloo massacre. He reminded the poet of shadows, because he was in charge of the secret service of the government and he is “clothed with the Bible” because of his apparent piety (“Clothed with the Bible, as with light, / And the shadows of the night, / Like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy / On a crocodile rode by”).

²³⁰ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Mask of Anarchy*.

inequality and injustice of the British law, and finally even the soldiers per se feel ashamed of the consequences of their doing. The poem comes to an end suggesting serious actions like “Rise like lions after slumber”, but what action he means is unclear.

Ode to the West Wind

Shelley started writing this poem in October 1819 when he was in the Cascine wood near Florence and he published it in 1820 in the *Prometheus Unbound* volume. This is not simply a nature poem, but it originated from his intense mental strain and contradictions being enacted and felt in the time of Peterloo massacre. These feelings are the concoction of his awareness of the potential for reform, the forces marshalled against it, his personal feelings of failure and despair from the massacre and his historical insights and so forth. The poem comprises five stanza-rima sonnets, the first three of which depict the impact of autumn on the foliage of the land, the sea and the sky. The fourth stanza compares the poet's condition with these natural elements, and the final one is a request to the wind, the mover of the seasonal cycle, to assist him to spread his message, and thereby, to help him in a moral or political revolution. Analogous to several Romantic poems, here too the wind, rain, sunset and other natural environment in his surroundings exhilarate and enliven the poet's inner being, and these all remain as the source of his poetic and spiritual vitality and inspiration.²³¹ But the central theme is a ‘tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating’, while it ‘collecting the vapours’ to ‘pour down the autumnal rains’ it simultaneously produces the regenerative powers and intimation in his inner being, but he states this thing in an indirect or concealed manner. For him, the wind is a messenger or a spaeman of future events, which is among the attributes he ascribes to the wind. Here the poetic genre is Ode, and combines many of the classical elements, which is more similar to the Latin poet Horace's (65 – 8 B.C.) odes than that of Pindar (between 522 and 442 B.C.) of Greek.

²³¹ When talks about the context to jot down this poem Shelley himself says in his note to this poem that “This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions”. In other words, as he walked fretting about a hostile review in the *Quarterly Review* about *The Revolt of Islam*, a wind blew up from the west, and autumn leaves strewn in front of him. Then, his ideas, revolutionary inspiration, his powerlessness etc. appear in silhouette against the wind and all the things associated with it.

Shelley starts the poem by describing the “wild West Wind” also called “Wild Spirit” as an invisible mover and carrier which drives dead leaves and bears seeds with its pervasive force and he elucidates its other changing movements in nature. The Wind is not only the embodiment of transformation, but also connects natural and social changes, and the spirit of revolutionary turmoil and the spirit of poetic inspiration. Simultaneously, the poem amalgamates these to the role of the poet as a breath of motivation like the wind, a saviour confronting with melancholy, a prophetic clarion harbingering a new sunrise with the incantation of verse. The wind is a spiritual agent and the “breath of Autumn’s being” who takes on human attributes from the first lines of the Section One per se, and he creates a duality for the wind when it becomes a breathing entity like all living creatures of the world. Later on, the wind comes as a spiritual messenger that swiftly performs its duty²³² and that becomes an animating source so powerful which infuses quasi-liveliness into the dead. The “pestilence-stricken” multicoloured dead leaves – analogous to the oppressed and indoctrinated multitudes of *The Mask of Anarchy* - assume an active afterlife due to the buffeting of the West Wind, and “the winged seeds” which were lying in their graves, resurrect with the clarion call of the spring.

The poem moves on to the Section Two, and now the imagery of the leaves is applied to the stratocumulus cloudscape, which the wind shakes “from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean”.²³³ And the cloud is “the locks of the approaching storm” along the banks of the Arno River, which performs dual functions, as “angels of rain and lightning” and brings divine messages to the poet simultaneously. The clouds participate in the rites sacred to Dionysus; a twice-born god of Greek mythology, who is immortal and self-revelatory, and simultaneously male and female, man and animal, young and old etc., and violently revolting against established social order, and powerful enough to transcend the boundaries of the physical world. The ‘maenads’ in the line “Like the bright hair uplifted from the head / Of some fierce Maenad ...”²³⁴ are the female participants in the Dionysiac cult who go away from the city shouting aloud to the mountains and start their frenzied dance after letting down their hair.

²³² Here its duty is: “Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead / Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing”. *Ode to the West Wind*, Stanza I, line 1 -2.

²³³ Ibid, Stanza II, line 3.

²³⁴ Ibid, Stanza II, lines 6 -7.

In the Section Three Shelley talks about the sea's response to the wind that "didst waken from his summer dreams" and from the "isle in Baiae's bay" Shelly can see the ruins of imposing villas, images of overthrown powers and other signs of the transience of human aspirations. At the same time, amidst this serenity, some turbulence occurs far below the placid appearance of the surface waters due to the West Wind "and the oozy woods which wear / The sapless foliage of the ocean, know / Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear, / And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!"²³⁵ Section Four summarizes the previous effects of the West Wind, on land, in the sky and upon the ocean, and the tempestuous performance of the wind makes the poet pant for imposing himself as the true subject of the poem. And then he longs for joining with the wind to sop up its divine power, and finally even he falls into supplication to perk him up like the leaves, clouds and waves from his present restrictions.

Finally, in the fifth section Shelley's entreaty comes close to self-pity teemed with disenchantment and disillusion. But, since his aim is to enliven himself; not surrender, he beseeches for an inspiration similar to the Dionysiac frenzy by possessing the strength of the wind, and along with the dispersal of the leaves, the wind must disperse his thoughts and words among the humankind. Analogous to most of the Romantic poets Shelley also considers the Eolian lyre an important symbol of poetic inspiration and it will assist him to spread his poetic voice everywhere, which will proclaim the message of a new beginning. In sum, considering the preparatory role of the wind which drives the leaves into decayed ones to become the humus which prepares the seeds for growth, and its anticipatory role in anticipating the forthcoming "living" elements, he wishes the West Wind to disperse his thoughts and words to clear away the rotten ideas and sow the new ideas, then the wind becomes the real "Destroyer and preserver". The poem ends with a rhetorical question, but that is capable of being read as a declaration of inevitable truth, which is "can Spring be far behind".

To a Skylark

Shelley wrote and published in June 1820 in the *Prometheus Unbound* volume this lyrical poem *To a Skylark* in which the poet hears an evanescent song and stares at the elusive skylark but to see nothing and hailing it as nonexistent, but he seeks to communicate with it. Skylark is a small

²³⁵ Ibid, Stanza III, lines 11 – 14.

European bird that sings only when it flies too high for visibility, and therefore, addressing skylark may be a fiction, based on the notion of a metaphor or comparison in which Shelley juxtaposes images or ideas that seem to have no real correspondence but actually that can proffer an important and memorable statement. Here Shelley's skylark is a carefree bird; he calls it a "blithe Spirit" which is not belongs to this world, but rather, that is a celestial visitor comes "from Heaven, or near it" whose only purpose of life is to celebrate its heart "in profuse strains of unpremeditated art", like an inspired poet. This bird is a pure spirit, which is "an unbodied joy" that sings beautifully while it is getting to be in evermore distant.²³⁶

If we divide the poem thematically into three distinct parts, the first part depicts the flight of the skylark and the second tries to find a fitting resemblance for the bird and its songs, and the third asks the bird to impart the secret of its joy to the humanity. When the poem moves on a little further from its first lines, the bird transforms into a pure spiritual being and moves away from him farther and farther, and being far aloof both from his vision and grasp, the bird only manifests the desires of the poet to possess the same power to fly high both in poetry and from the miseries of life. When the skylark vanishes it becomes increasingly difficult for him to explain the object of his desires in human terms, which is perceptible several times in the second part of the poem. Since the bird embodies the spirit of inspiration, idealism, joy, aspiration etc. the disappearance of the bird conveys the evanescence of these same things as well, even though these are re-discoverable, but only through the imagination. As we are lacking in a material sense of the skylark and what it represents, at first Shelley seeks some extraordinary figurative descriptions, whereby he can make its abstractness concrete. But, then he finds some earthly comparisons for depicting this highly idealized skylark, since language is a definite obstacle for

²³⁶ Wordsworth also wrote a poem with the same title *To a Skylark* in 1825. Even though Shelley's poem is a little bit longer, in several points both the poets' skylarks are in agreement. While Shelley's skylark is 'of rapture so divine' and flies 'Higher still and higher' ... 'Like a cloud of fire' Wordsworth also refers to his skylark "A privacy of glorious light is thine". Even though Wordsworth's skylark pays attention to its earthly nest, it is definitely an 'Ethereal minstrel', at the same time Shelly's skylark is purely bodiless, and a 'blithe spirit', it has no knowledge of pain, even does not know the 'love's dad satiety' and no 'shadow of annoyance' can come near to it. For both of them the skylarks are mystic which represent divine inspiration, while Wordsworth's skylark cascading 'flood / Of harmony' upon the world, Shelly's skylark 'Singing hymns unbidden, / Till the world is wrought / To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.' But in Wordsworth's another poem *The Solitary Reaper* the opposite is happening i.e. the bird-song is closely linked to the song of a man. Interestingly, Keats is also wrote a poem on almost the same theme titled *Ode to a Nightingale*, but his pursuit of the bird goes downwards into the half-light and fails in due course, and that sense of lost vision is the subject of the poem.

defining this “imaginary” bird. So, once he compares the bird to the morning star, which is the poet’s prime emblem of desire, poetry and relationship, but, the piercing daylight makes the star and the bird unseen, however, the poet may hardly hears or sees them anymore, but he feels that they are there. Then another simile comes between song and light, even the song of the poet comes from the light of his thought per se. After some other similes the poet himself asks: “What thou art we know not; / What is most like thee?”²³⁷ But all these similes make dual effects, i.e. even though he tries to understand the truth about this celestial skylark through natural phenomena, his endeavours go awry owing to the hierarchy of earthly existence, which begins with the highest order he belongs and downs through the animal world and vegetables even to roses and vernal showers. The second effect is that Shelly’s all endeavours to contrast the skylark with anyone and anything fail, since the man is not ready to apprehend the spiritual message hidden in the earthly powers of the sense.

When Shelley was unable to make any similitude to the skylark, and fails to recognize what makes this bird beyond the descriptive powers of human language, he moves on in the third section to entreat the bird to teach the world “What sweet thoughts are thine; / I have never heard / Praise of love or wine / That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine”.²³⁸ However, he admits that this world of mortality and longing is capable of producing great poetry. At last, the poet beseeches the skylark to grant him at least half of its powers, so that humanity can absorb the inspired message of the poet: “Teach me half the gladness / That thy brain must know, / Such harmonious madness / From my lips would flow, / The world should listen then – as I am listening now”.²³⁹ According to Bloom, this poem terminates in sorrows, because it cannot give any satisfactory detail about the joy which gives entity to the skylark’s song. And it cannot “suggest what determines the bounteousness of that effluence of melody. Enough that it affirms the limitless possibility of relationship; content to be a lyric, it does not attempt finalities”.²⁴⁰ To sum up, the song of the skylark proposes to him that we are doomed to “look before and after”

²³⁷ Shelley Percy Bysshe, *To a Skylark*, quoted here from *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, selected and edited by Donald H. Reiman, and Neil Fraistat, second edition, Norton Company, New York and London, 2002, page 305.

²³⁸ Ibid, page 306.

²³⁹ Ibid, page 307.

²⁴⁰ Bloom, Harold, *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961, Page 305.

and we have to “pine for what is not”. The sweetest songs of ours are those which tell of saddest thought.

Epipsychidion

Shelley composed Epipsychidion, when he was at the zenith of his fanciful and unreal Italian Platonics, at Pisa in Italy early in 1821. This ardent love poem is an idealisation of passion, which celebrates purely imaginary symbiotic union with the unattainable beloved, and is dedicated to ideal divine (Uranian) love. From the preface of the poem it seems that this was written not as a record of his actual experience, but rather, as an imaginary rhapsody, which can be said an attempt to escape from reality, with Emilia is a pretext.²⁴¹ When a woman (Emilia) transforms into an allegorical personification through the depiction of the mind's process into the act of creation, the search for the relationship or gap between rhetoric and history may be significant, but it also exposes the power of the poet's metaphor to create. If Shelley is capable of personifying “Liberty” in a powerful and mythic way in his Ode to Liberty, the personification of a person in a fantastic way is comparatively simple. Anyway, this poem is the most forthright and eloquent appeal for free love in English poetry and it derives from Dante's Vita Nuova. Basically this sort of Platonic love is fanciful and unreal, based on a rebellion against nature, and through the endurance of useless torment they seek perfect happiness. The poem portrays the male pursuit of an ideal woman, who is a fantasy-like figure lives in his imaginary world, even the meaning of this Greek title is “On the Subject of the Soul”.

He met with the nineteen-year-old daughter of the governor of Pisa Teresa Viviani in 1820, and was introduced to Mary and Claire. The Shelleys called her Emilia, because, her story was similar to that of Emilia, the heroine of Boccaccio's Teseida, who was in a triangle involving two suitors. Her parents forced her into a marriage of convenience against her will, thereby Shelley was indignant at her misfortunes, and he placed her in a convent. Moreover, Shelley was enchanted by her as a person, and the poem from its first to 189th lines deal with an invocation to

²⁴¹ Shelley writes in the preface of this poem: “The writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realized a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this”. Quoted here from *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, Wordsworth Poetry Library, first published in 1994 by Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire, reset with Introduction and Notes 2002, page 488.

her, then an allegorical history of their encounters, and lastly an address to her about the nature of love. Lines from 190 to 383 depict the idealized history of his life and feelings, which conclude with an address to the Sun, Moon and the Comet, and these symbols imply probably Emilie, Mary and Claire respectively. The rest of the poem is a short transitional pleading address to Emile, and then he concludes the poem with a proposal that both the poet and Emile elope to an island paradise. Here, she is the embodiment of the highest forms of beauty i.e. the Ideal Beauty, like the moon or a star, sometimes something else, like a 'Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning', and she is also the incarnation of the Platonic ideal, because she stands at 'the height of Love's rare universe'. He explicitly follows the Platonic idea when he says 'I am part of thee', because, she as well is the missing half of his being, and he hopes when they retreat to their island paradise 'We shall be the same, we shall be one / Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?'. Later he searches to find her again, but that led him to several false Venuses, 'One, whose voice was venom'd melody' and others in 'many mortal forms'.

Even though Shelley fell in love with several women such as Harriet Grove, Harriet Westbrook and Mary etc., he could not find out any ideal woman for one reason or another, and even his reigning goddess Emilia too fell from her pedestal in Shelley's mind. Mary became increasingly withdrawn and cold after the loss of her children, and Shelley looked elsewhere to satiate his strong need of love, which ended in disparaging Mary and looking at the happy life of Edward and Jane Williams jealously. Shelly writes in his *The serpent is shut out from paradise: When I return to my cold home, you ask / why I am not as I have ever been. / You spoil me for the task / Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene-*'. In *Epipsychidion*, Emilia owns a divine and unearthly figure in the beginning, but at last turned out to be too human, in the same way the Elysian isle, with its flowers and natural beauty, turning aside into pure romantic imagination of earthly beauty than the paradise of Asia's cave of the high-minded Platonism. In its worship of feminine beauty this poem owes much to Dante, and this is the most explicit example of his commitment to the Platonic love.

Shelley considered this poem as an 'idealized history' of his 'life and feelings', and from the beginning of the poem he invokes to Emilia as his spiritual sister, and once he calls her a "captive bird" and an angel of light. She has to become the sister of what is mortal in him and

*the bride of what is imperishable as well.*²⁴² *She is the lamp surrounding whose light his muse flies and he is extinguished by her love and beauty. She passed by him and finally disappears and misses altogether in his frenzy to find her perfect form. Shelley realized from this experience with Emilia that there is no ideal woman in this world, and no women could give him perfect happiness or golden age. But he always rebelled against that reality by bitterly arraigning some malign tyrannical external elements in this universe who thwart love for ever and turn it into bitterness.*

Adonais

Keats was Shelley's friend and fellow poet and Shelley regarded him as being a poet of "the highest genius" of the age. Shelley had invited him to stay with him in Italy, but on February 23, 1821, Keats died on his way at Rome in his early age of 25 owing to Tuberculosis. But Shelley believed that the health conditions of his beloved and sensitive friend had further worsened and led to his immature death due to a critique in the April issue of the 1818 *Quarterly Review* on *Endymion* written by John Wilson Croker.²⁴³ One year before, on the evening of February 3, 1820, he had coughed up blood and realized that he had to face the inevitable. "I cannot be deceived in that colour; that drop of blood is my death warrant. I must die".²⁴⁴ Even though Keats had died on 23rd February, 1821, Shelley came to know about his death only on April 11th of the same year, and within two months i.e. by June 8th he completed *Adonais* as an elegy on his death. In this poem many conventions of literature have been discredited by starting from ancient pastoral country and moving into the heights of Shellyan thoughts by combining music with

²⁴² "To whatsoever of dull mortality / Is mine, remain a vestal sister still, / To the intense, the deep, the imperishable, / Not mine, but me, henceforth be thou united, / Even as a bride, delighting and delighted". Epipsychidion, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lines 389 – 93.

²⁴³ Shelley says in his preface to this poem about the tragic death of his beloved friend Keats: "The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics, of the true greatness of his powers, were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted". This passage quoted here from *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, Wordsworth Poetry Library, first published in 1994 by Wordsworth Editions Limited, reset with Introduction and Notes 2002, pages 505 - 6. He further says that "these wretched men know not what they do. Shelley assumes the murdering critic is Robert Southey, whom he also suspected of writing a critique of *The Revolt of Islam* which also appeared in the same *Quarterly*."

²⁴⁴ See Brown, Charles Armitage, *The Life of John Keats*, ed. by Dorothy Hyde Bodurtha and Willard Bissel Pope, Oxford University press, London, 1937, Page 64.

abstract ideas. Shelley himself averred that this poem is “a highly wrought piece of art” and “the least imperfect of all of my compositions”,²⁴⁵ which was written in the structure of the classical elegy and contains a classical device known as the “personification of the hours” i.e. he addresses Time as an essential living entity.

In Greek mythology Adonais was born from a myrrh tree and was killed by a boar during his hunting, and was transformed into an anemone, an inodorous flower. But in this poem Keats is the Adonais, who was killed by an evil critic, a wild beast, who “pierced by the shaft which flies / In darkness”.²⁴⁶ Even though in Greek mythology Urania is Adonais’s lover, in this poem Urania (Aphrodite) is the mother figure, whose negligence is the root cause of his death. The poet calls out to her to pay heed to her son and attend to her duties.²⁴⁷ Shelley also utilizes another myth from the Latin poet Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* regarding the story of Echo and Narcissus in which Narcissus was eventually transformed into a beautiful white flower after a chain of events. If we divide the poem into three parts, the first part (stanzas 1 – 17) is a lamentation, in which the murderous Critic is implicitly attacked throughout, because he was an invaluable member of the human community, and this part concludes with accurse: “As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain / Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast, / And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!”²⁴⁸ Albion here is an older name for England and he compares the reviewer to Cain, who is a Biblical character, killed his brother and therefore, his angelic soul has not yet been reunited with his body and he cannot find any transcendental resolution to his predicament.

The second part (18 -38) offers several consolations to the mourners, but the poet was also undergoing to great mental anguish and overwhelmed with abject despair: “Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone, / But grief returns with the revolving year”.²⁴⁹ Then, Nature is also becoming sympathetic to him and participating in Shelley’s grief and even Echo resurrected from her “deathlike” state into a more heightened form of awful pain. At last, Adonais’s mother

²⁴⁵ “In his letters Shelley expressed great satisfaction with this poem: ‘It is a highly wrought piece of art, perhaps better in point of composition than anything I have written’ (letters to the Gisbornes 5 June 1821)”. See *A Handbook to English Romanticism*, ed. by Jean Raimond and J.R. Watson, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1992, Page 253.

²⁴⁶ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Adonais*, stanza II.

²⁴⁷ “Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep! / . . . For he is gone, where all things wise and fair / Descend;— oh, dream not that the amorous Deep / Will yet restore him to the vital air.” Stanza III.

²⁴⁸ *Adonais*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, stanza 17, lines 151 – 53.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, stanza 18, lines 154 – 55.

Urania is prepared to accept the tragedy which was fallen upon her son and mourn for him that hitherto she has evaded. Then Shelley talks about a procession of mourners, the participants are “the mountain shepherds” among them the prominent one was the poet Byron. This part also ends with a curse on the murderous Critic: “Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee”²⁵⁰.

When the poem comes to end the unalleviated sorrow begins to lighten and some sparks of hope appear when he denies the death’s ultimate victory. Because, Adonais begins to approach death as a means with which he can escape from “the ebb and flow of the world”. This is the final part (39 – 55), which is the victorious celebration, because Adonais’s spirit was immortally reborn and communes with the universe of beauty and spirit. He says that Keats’s death was only a dream from which he now awakens and the living ones are the real dormant ones, accordingly, they have to fight against unknown fears and demons. Death is an invitation to eternity, therefore, “The soul of Adonais, like a star / Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are”.²⁵¹ Keats is in his faraway lofty position from the narrow circumference of our own nether world, hence he no longer needs Nature’s sympathy and “He lives, he wakes-’tis Death is dead, not he; / Mourn not for Adonais”.²⁵² Keats procured youth, vitality and immortality through the attainment of reunion with Nature.

Hellas

This 1100 lines containing lyrical drama is an undramatic prophecy of freedom, written in the cause of Greek liberty based on the *Persae* of Aeschylus, in which a desperate Turkish tyrant

²⁵⁰ Ibid, Stanza 37, line 331.

²⁵¹ Ibid, Stanza 55, lines 494 – 95.

²⁵² Ibid, stanza 41, lines 361 - 62. Here, Shelley’s development towards a Platonic mysticism or an asocial spirituality similar to those of medieval ascetics, raised several discussions and criticisms of late. Earl Wasserman argues that when Shelley reaches in Adonais he finally gives up his earthly hopes and searches for the ideal in the afterlife. See *Shelley: A Critical Reading*, Earl R. Wasserman, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1971, pages 462 -472. Milton Wilson argues that in Adonais when Shelley turns towards an uncompromising Platonism, Shelley the radical eclipses and he approbates human life itself an evil and the liberation comes only through death. See *Shelley’s Later Poetry*, Milton Wilson, Columbia University Press, New York, 1959, pages 235 – 252. But, interestingly enough, Michael Scrivener argues that the dualism operating in this poetry is neither new nor contradicts his utopianism at all. When he is skeptical he delivers more hope through his poetry, but his prose writings keeps mum about anything affirming immortality. Maintaining his skepticism, Shelley seeks solace in death to provide what life had not, Adonais divulges his desire for immortality, but the Neoplatonic One to which the spirit returns after death is a metaphor, a symbol, and a poetically useful fiction. See *Defending the Imagination*, in *Radical Shelley: The Philosophical Anarchism and Utopian Thought of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Michael Scrivener, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1982, pages 272 - 81.

foresees his own dethronement. Before the Greek had captured a Turkish citadel in Crete and openly revolted and declared independence in the last of March 1821, the Shelleys had met Prince Alexandros Mavrokordatos at Pisa, in December 1820, who took part in the revolt and served later as prime minister of independent Greece in four different times between 1833 and 1855. Shelley wrote this poem as a “mere improvise”, but a powerful political action by which he can promote the struggle for both Greek freedom and English liberty by rallying public sentiment in England around the Greek cause.²⁵³ As a strong proponent of freedom, three or four times Shelley tried to write a poem on Greek uprising, but Keats’ immediate premature death diverted his attention and made him busy with *Adonais*. At first he meant to write a poem on Greek freedom fight in a *Faust*-like form with the title *Prologue in Heaven*, but later he rejected that genre and finally wrote in the model of Aeschylus’ *The Persians*, in which the defeat of the Persian grand army is reported to the Persian capital by way of a series of messengers. In the same way, Shelley’s drama takes place in Istanbul, the capital of the Greek’s chief adversary, the Sultan Mahmud II, and in Greece, and in Constantinople a chorus of Greek slaves and concubines ponder over the struggle of their people for freedom.

Shelley urges his country to come to assist the Greek people, because “We are all Greek – our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their roots in Greece”.²⁵⁴ He associates Greece with peace and the eternal as he says Greece was “built below the tide of war, / Based on the crystalline sea / Of thought and its eternity”,²⁵⁵ and if Greece is not effected the spirit of liberty at the moment, that will definitely be embodied at some future time, because Greece is “above the idle foam of time”.²⁵⁶ He extends sympathy for the reformed Sultan Mahmud II and he refers to him as “the Reformer”, which may be considering the Sultan’s pedigree, viz. his mother was a French woman, named Aimée Dubucq de Rivery, who was the cousin of Joséphine Bonaparte, both were from the Martinique island. In the reign of Abdul Hamid and his successor Selim and later in the tenure of her own son as an advisor she played a sterling role in turning the Ottoman foreign policy toward a pro-French one. Sultan Mahmud II narrowly escaped an attempt on his

²⁵³ Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud argues that “Fading reformist hope for peaceful change registers in the evolution from Shelley’s *Revolt of Islam* to his *Hellas*. While the first imagines peaceful crowds laying despotic government low with the “light of language”, the more revolutionary *Hellas* requires incendiary energies to secure political liberty”. See *Radical Orientalism: Rights, Reform, and Romanticism*, Cambridge University Press, U. K., 2015, page 21.

²⁵⁴ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Preface to Hellas*.

²⁵⁵ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Hellas*, II, lines 697 – 99.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, I, line 1007.

life by janizaries when he came to power, and also he decided later to replace the feudal army with a modern professional one. But, even though Shelley calls the Sultan as a reformer, the succeeding lines focus on Turkish atrocities, which further deteriorate any notion of Turkish improvement, and rouse Western revulsion towards the Turkish Sultan in support of Greek insurgence.

After Shelley's death, in 1824, in accordance with the terms and conditions between Sultan Mahmud II and the Egypt ruler Muhammad Ali, the Egyptian fleet turned up to change the course of war, and subsequently, by the pressure of public opinion a combined British, Russian and French fleet activated to drive out the invaders and assure the Greeks their independence. (A concise description of this lyrical drama is given here, because more discussion on it is yet to come in the final chapter.)

The Triumph of Life

The Triumph of Life is Shelley's last major poem, perhaps one of his finest ones, which was written in the early summer of 1822, as the story of his psychological journey through an idyllic landscape lulled by the comforting sounds of Nature in which he falls asleep.²⁵⁷ Shelley got inspired to write this bleak visionary poem from his reading and translation of Dante, and this was written in a hard uncompromising style without lyrical qualities. This final major poem was fittingly unfinished, but it manifests such vitality and incisiveness that even Mary Shelley vouchsafed a major place among Shelley's *Posthumous Poems* of 1824, and T. S. Eliot acclaimed it as Shelley's finest work.²⁵⁸ Much as this contains great poetry, the crux is still

²⁵⁷ Mary Shelley says about the context of writing this poem: "In the wild but beautiful Bay of Spezzia, the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements, were his principal occupation. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and, sitting beneath their shelter, wrote the *Triumph of Life*, the last of his productions". "Preface" to *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, Mary Shelley. In 1839, Mary Shelley divided his all poems into "the purely imaginative, and those which sprung from the emotions of his heart". And she included *The Triumph of Life* in the first category i.e. the purely imaginative one in which he clings "to the subtler inner spirit" and "he gave the reins to his fancy, and luxuriate in every idea as it rose", and these category of poems bristled with the sense of mystery which formed a lion's share of his perception of life, that was "a curious and metaphysical anatomy of human passion and perception". See *Preface*, Mary Shelley, *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 1839.

²⁵⁸ Even though T.S. Eliot was not an adherent of Shelley's poetic ideals, and moreover, he rejected Shelly as a revolutionary thinker, he concedes Shelly may have been gaining maturity in his last poem. Eliot says that "in his last, and to my mind greatest though unfinished poem, *The Triumph of Life*, there is evidence not only of better

remains ambiguous, because the poem remains a fragment, and cannot be read as a finished one. After an introduction the poem hints at an unstated disturbing personal crisis of the poet, despite the harmony of Nature, he chances upon a triumphal pageant. His curiosity about the meaning of what he sees brings to his mind the shades of Rousseau, which warns him against giving way to despair, and the diverse degrees of opposition to Life's evil influences. In the last section, Rousseau talks about his own story by way of a sequence of allegories, and a new section begins when the poet raises the question "Then, what is life", but the fragment breaks off during the first words of Rousseau's reply.

According to Bloom, the two poems, *Adonais* and *The Triumph of Life* are the great monuments of Shelley's arrival at his final phase of poetic writing, in which he had become the poet of this shadow of ruin, and stopped the celebration of the possibilities of imaginative relationship.²⁵⁹ This poem is a ghastly vision of Hell, which is analogous to Dante's Inferno. Shelley picked out the title and the theme from the triumphal procession of the Roman conquerors who coming back after conquering distant lands. The defeated kings and soldiers were done up to the chariot and drawn by it, and the general public receive them jubilantly. While the Roman crowd celebrate their victory gleefully, the captives are completely disillusioned with their future, to whom Shelley refers "Ribald Crowd, Fierce and Obscene". But, in this triumphal procession of life, some of them are excluded from this crowd and shy away from the influence of the chariot, and some others renounced their amenities of life, and some of them withdrew into their own glowing horizon after lighting a divine fire to the Earth, Socrates and Jesus are clearly discernible among them.

The poem begins with the depiction of exuberant Nature, which partakes of the festivities, like "the Sun sprang forth, / Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask / Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth"²⁶⁰, and the mountain snows, oceans etc. are also enamoured of this festivity,

writing than in any previous long poem, but of greater wisdom", *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England*, T. S. Eliot, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961, page 61.

²⁵⁹ Bloom, Harold, *The Unpastured Sea: An Introduction to Shelley*, reprinted in *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*, ed. by Harold published by W. W. Norton & Company, London, 1970, page 376.

²⁶⁰ *The Triumph of Life*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, quoted here from *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, selected and edited by Donald H. Reiman, and Neil Fraistat, second edition, Norton Company, New York and London, 2002, page 483.

and the dancing flowers “unclose / Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day”.²⁶¹ But this pageantry enters into a dream-like vision at line 29, “a strange trance over my fancy grew / Which was not slumber”²⁶² and the same trance later transforms into quietude. Subsequently, along with the poet we are conveyed into a hair-raising procession of “a great stream / Of people”, consists of young and old, who are “as gnats as upon the evening gleam”, equal in their bounds towards imminent death “with steps towards the tomb”. Here, the poem put forward the image of those who waste their energy in which they can never attain, and therefore, they appear doomed in their futile pursuits and exhaustion. Inside a fearsome theophanic chariot a deformed Shape whose all four faces blinded by a bandage, shepherding the procession, who is also a messenger of death and cannot be trusted. He is similar to the Roman god, works as a sentry on the gates of the city, and even so his four faces were blindfolded, he looks both ways, before and after. Those who lambast their power were shackled to the chariot, and that chariot also bears “a captive multitude”, who are the representatives of destitute people “who had grown old in power / Or misery”,²⁶³ are compared with those who had wisdom to reject the trappings of worldly power. This motley crew of shadowy figures in “this sad pageantry” is nothing other than “Life”.

The rest of the poem expounds a “grim Feature” who himself is one of the captives; he is the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau was depicted here as a terrifying apparition on the hillside like an old root, eyeless like the hollows of a skull, with “thin discolored hair”, and he guides the poet through the pageant of Life which passes in hellish and unholy frenzy. He is a fallen figure, but as a guide he introduces himself to the poet and explains the meaning of the triumphal procession.²⁶⁴ The crux of the matter Rousseau teaches him is

²⁶¹ Ibid, pages 483 – 484.

²⁶² Ibid, page 484.

²⁶³ Ibid, page 487.

²⁶⁴ Rousseau deeply influenced the French revolutionaries and Romantic writers alike, and stood for political freedom and a more emotional and individual response toward God. But, even though Rousseau was a hero for Shelley and he included him among the philosophers who liberated humanity in his *A Defence of Poetry*, he was a strange and a contradictory person for Shelley and many of his contemporaries. But here Rousseau is a guide and Shelley is a narrator, which is almost similar to *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, in which Dante is the narrator and the Latin poet Virgil is the guide, who guides Dante through his visions of hell. But, unlike Dante’s Virgil, Shelley’s Rousseau is not free from the hellish vision. According to Dowden this is Shelley’s only poem which depicts “the danger of yielding the heart intemperately to even the purest passion”. In this poem, “Rousseau and Plato appear as victims of their own hearts: Rousseau, a ruin of manhood; Plato, who had loved more nobly, punished less cruelly, yet a captive to the triumphal car; both suffering the inevitable doom of those who are intemperate in

related to the abuse of power which is people's lack of understanding themselves and their motives and impulses and their failure in distinguishing desire and virtue. In the present mad frenzy of life maidens and youths seem ready to revel and exult in their delight for ever, only to find themselves forsaken in abject despondency. This powerful expression of the severity of the organic process of age discloses the illusionary sense of living with full control of one's life, and while the time wears on everyone catapults through the years in accordance with the unstoppable activity of time. Only "the sacred few who could not tame / Their spirits to the Conqueror"²⁶⁵ can exempt from Life's triumph, but the frenzy will predominate over all who come inside its field of influence. Then Rousseau confesses that he himself fell prey to the Bacchanalian carnival of Life after he accepted a drink from an idealised female spirit, which turned his brain to sand and led him into the multitude of damned revellers, thereby his talent was wasted, and his endeavours have been subverted.²⁶⁶

The magnificent appropriateness of Rousseau's presence is the highest act of Shelley's imagination in this poem. Shelley depicted Rousseau as a complex mixture of idealism and corruption may be because of his idealistic figure in his novel *Julie: Ou, La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and his immoral figure in his symbolic autobiography *Les Confessions de J. J. Rousseau* (1781). *The Shape* appeared in front of Rousseau is a spirit with a crystal glass of *Nepenthe*, brings more forgetfulness, who is a Shelleyan vision of ideal Beauty, but what she represents is unclear.²⁶⁷ When Rousseau quenches his thirst from the glass, the *Shape* disappears, and his

desire and delight". See *Last Words on Shelley*, 1887, Edward Dowden, Transcripts and Studies, 1888, Page 93-111.

²⁶⁵ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Triumph of Life*, quoted here from *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, selected and edited by Donald H. Reiman, and Neil Fraistat, second edition, Norton Company, New York and London, 2002, page 487.

²⁶⁶ Basically this poem talks about the consequences of the overemphasis of intellectualism on imagination, and it affirms the importance of imagination as a guiding power against the excessive dominance of reason. Because, the absence of imagination is the root cause of the enslavement of mankind to the phenomenal or empirical view of reality. Fred L. Milne, argues that "The Triumph" implicitly points toward the means of reviving imaginative vision, for its apparent failure reflects, according to Shelley, man's prior embrace of selfhood, an act negating imagination's power. Consequently, the only light left to guide the mind is reason, without imagination a cold and loveless power, its knowledge limited to the empirical". See "The Eclipsed Imagination in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 21, no. 4 (Autumn 1981) Page 681-84

²⁶⁷ But, David Quint argues that "The two major "allegories" of the poem, the theophanic chariot and the female soul-figure who appears to Rousseau, are derived from two central myths of Western civilization, and portray their own progress from representation to myth and their eventual ideological domination over the human mind. In both instances, Shelley reduces the representational image to its lowest common denominator, to mere "Shape." See,

“brain became as sand” and he underwent a severe change. At last one question remains prominent and unanswered, which is ‘Then, what is life?’ Here both Shelley and Rousseau became a single agonized figure confronts with the inevitability of death and final decay, and the apparent senselessness of life.

Shelley’s Revolutionary Ideals

Shelley was a child when the first generation Romanticists turned out to be disillusioned enthusiasts owing to the turbulent political situations and the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution. In 1804, Shelley was only 12 when the coronation of Napoleon took place as the emperor, which succeeded his incessant victories and invasions which changed the face of Europe. Britain and most part of the Europe were at war with France until 1815; even the Congress of Vienna could not make any change. Even though the young Shelley was witnessing this political turmoil, most of his letters and other writings did not mention the great affairs outside the British Isles, which may showcase his less concern in it.²⁶⁸ At the same time, he wrote the poem *Henry and Louisa* in 1809 when he was only seventeen against the British invasion of Egypt in 1807. When he started writing his first undeniably important work *Queen Mab* in 1812, he just turned twenty, expelled from Oxford, estranged from his father, and married to Harriet, and the poem later became a canonical text for socialist groups such as Chartists, Owenites and others, because of its radical content, subversive in intent and vigorously polemic in attack.

“Representation and Ideology in *The Triumph of Life*,” *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 18, no. 4 (Autumn 1978) Page 640.

²⁶⁸In 1816, he published a sonnet titled *Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte* that blames Bonaparte for the betrayal of liberty and starts with “I hated thee, fallen tyrant!”, but it dilutes his misdeeds by highlighting other worse enemies such as “old Custom, legal Crime / And bloody Faith the foulest birth of Time”. *Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, quoted here from *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Vol. III, ed. by Donald H. Reiman, Neil Fraistat and Nora Crook, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2012, the eighth poem without page number. Later, he wrote some other lines under the title *Lines written on Hearing the News of the Death of Napoleon*, which puts some more blames on him as a tyrant who brought to Europe the torrent of “terror and blood and gold”, / A torrent of ruin to death from his birth”. *Lines written on Hearing the News of the Death of Napoleon*, Stanza V, Percy Bysshe Shelley, quoted here from *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, selected and edited by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, Norton & Company, second edition, 2002, New York and London, Page 466.

In an age when the pattern of life and political atmosphere were changing and the European people wished for democracy and freedom, as a politically aware and responsible writer Shelley responded to the spirit of the age. Even though some people call him Red Shelley as an unremitting left wing fanatic, neither his early political activities in Ireland nor his attachment to the Leigh Hunt circle do manifest anything other than his natural enthusiasm of responding against the attacks on liberal ideas. Several factors played pivotal roles in forming his political ideas and Reform, such as his Whig background, his earliest days in Field Place etc., and his concepts of economic equality and its social effects took shape from his reading of William Godwin. Shelley's political prose writings which tackle the issues in a wider theoretical view are relatively radical, especially the *Address to the People on the Death of Princess Charlotte* which he wrote in November 1817 when the air of England overcasted with the grief of the death of the Princess in childbirth. But, when three agricultural labourers were hanged for plotting armed revolution in Derbyshire on the succeeding day of her death, Shelley considered it as the greater cause for mourning, not as a sentiment against capital punishment, but rather, it is inequality and oppression which are the biggest incentives led them to "that anarchy which is at once the enemy of freedom".²⁶⁹ The poverty of the labouring classes was increased in accordance with the increase of the profit of the post-war financiers and stock-jobbers much higher than the exploitation of the traditional aristocracy, and therefore, the working classes were forced to achieve justice at any cost.

Shelley's political criticism of literary writers starts as early as the last months of 1811, after his contact with Robert Southey at Keswick, who was "a really great man" for him. But that time his political stand was not radical at all, but rather, he was getting to be increasingly conservative and public Tory.²⁷⁰ The same Southey once wrote a revolutionary poem *Wat Tyler*, and as a

²⁶⁹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte*, Shelley wrote this pamphlet with the sobriquet *The Hermit of Marlow*.

²⁷⁰ Much as Southey was an advocate of liberty and equality, he was a supporter of existing establishments and against parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. But Shelley's adoration to him drastically changed within less than a month. He wrote in a letter to Godwin: "Southey the Poet, whose principles were pure & elevated once, is now the servile champion of every abuse and absurdity. I have had much conversation with him. He says 'You will think as I do when you are as old'. I do not feel the least disposition to be Mr. S's proselyte". *Letter to Godwin*, 16 January 1812, quoted here from *A Preface to Shelley*, Patricia Hodgart, Longman, London and New York, 1985, Page 106. And both of them also involved in a bitterer quarrel because of an adverse review of *The Revolt of Islam*, Shelley suspected Southey wrote that, but in fact that was written by John Taylor Coleridge. Several literary critics believed that Shelley's *The Triumph of Life* is a direct counter-response to Southey's poem *The Poet's Pilgrimage to*

school boy Shelley voraciously read his *The Curse of Kehama* and *Thalaba the Destroyer*. Even though Shelley met him in 1813 and sponged off him, he became Poet Laureate in 1814, and sycophant-in-chief to the Castlereagh administration. Shelley criticized not only Southey but also Coleridge and Wordsworth among others for the pillorying of the French revolution by magnifying the shortcomings in its implementation as an excuse for brushing its gains aside. His severest attack was on Wordsworth, because he had drifted to the extreme right in due course, and published the infamous lines on “carnage”, interestingly, the same Wordsworth’s writings like *The Cumberland Beggar* once spurred Shelley’s fiercest writings, even though he never met him. He wrote in 1816 the sonnet ‘To Wordsworth’ in which he puts across his sorrows at the change of his early revolutionary stands. Three years later in October 1819, he wrote in the style of *Don Juan* of Byron the most literally and politically biting satirical squib, *Peter Bell the Third*, which accurately parodying Wordsworth’s *Peter Bell*, by creating a Methodist Peter Bell, who was predestined to damnation. Wordsworth’s Peter Bell has just appeared at the end of April in the same year, dealing with the story of an itinerant potter, named Peter Bell. Apart from the poem’s madcap wit, which offsets the virulent satire on Wordsworth, Shelley likens him to Napoleon, as having betrayed his youthful radicalism. In the final part of the poem Shelley accuses the genius poet of selling his genius for a state sinecure and he caved in into gentility and to an awful dullness, which were not appropriate for a dynamic poet. Shelley says: “By that last book of yours we think / You’ve double-damned yourself to scorn; / We warned you whilst yet on the brink / You stood. From your black name will shrink / The babe that is unborn”.²⁷¹ When he wrote *The Witch of Atlas* in the summer of 1820, there were three lightly satirical stanzas of anti-Wordsworthian jest as well.

But Shelley’s political inspiration in poetic writings came under criticism during his life from John Keats, who was an equally brilliant contemporary to him. Sometimes Keats was a radical,

Waterloo (1816). John Morillo argues that “Shelley’s *Triumph* reveals how Southey’s *Pilgrimage*, despite its anti-war sentiment, participates in a Tory ideology that naturalizes imperialism as the necessary result of England’s cultural history, an ideology as ultimately destructive as the Napoleonic conquest Southey overtly condemns”. Moreover, “Shelley directly challenges Southey’s vision of Rousseau as the malignant spirit of the French Revolution and of Napoleon as the satanic instigator of its downfall”. See *Vegetating Radical and Imperial Politics: Shelley’s “Triumph of Life” as Revision of Southey’s “Pilgrimage to Waterloo”*, John Morillo, *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 43, published by: Keats-Shelley association of America, Inc. 1994, Page 117 -118. But even after all these criticisms Southey took kindly to Shelley.

²⁷¹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Peter Bell the Third*, part sixth, Damnation.

even some of his poems are outright attacks on the pomp and poverty of the time, most notably the poem *Isabella*. But he was a professional writer as well, who disapproved of poets who had thrown themselves into being 'swayed' by political ideals. Keats wrote a very friendly letter to him shortly before his death, which included a word of critical advice: "You, I am sure will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore"²⁷² At the same time, Claire believed that Shelley's political ideas are crucial and deeply connected with his poetry and his genius. A young man William Graham, from an English literary establishment interviewed her in Florence when she was eighty in 1878, he expounded the conventional argument that "A pity Shelley wasted so much of his short life over matters that did not relate to his art at all", but Claire retorted "Ah, but you are wrong there!" She replied. "Had it not been for his intense love of mankind, that fervid zeal of his which could not content itself poetry alone, he would never have been the great poet you admire!"²⁷³

Due to the turbulent political situations of England, Shelley's writings focused more on the internal political issues than the rest of Europe. His most prolific political writings in his life time came about during the tumultuous working class resistance to the English government. He composed the poem *Queen Mab* during the Luddite uprising. During the Pentridge revolt and the ensuing post war popular agitation he wrote the *Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote*, *The Revolt of Islam* and the *Address to the People on the Death of Princess Charlotte*. Following the Naples uprising he jotted down the *Ode to Naples*, after the Greek uprising he wrote *Hellas* and in the wake of the most magnificent Spanish uprising he wrote *Ode to Liberty*. The biggest of all these uprisings was Peterloo, after which he wrote several poems such as *The Mask of Anarchy*, *Peter Bell the Third*, *Ode to the West Wind*, and an extra act for *Prometheus Unbound*, and prose works such as *A Philosophical View of Reform*, a metaphysical essay *On Life*, a sarcastic anti-Christian essay *On the Devil and Devils* etc.; ergo a bit detailed description of it will be suitable here.

²⁷²Letters to Percy Bysshe Shelley, 16 August 1820, quoted here from *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, Vol. 4, *The Age of Romanticism*, second edition, 2010, page 859.

²⁷³ William, Graham, *Last Links with Byron, Shelley and Keats*, , Leonard Smithers and Co., London, 1898, page 25.

In 1812, after a long political turbulence the Prime Minister Spencer Perceval was killed, and Lord Liverpool came to power, and Sidmouth, Eldon and Castlereagh were ministers of his cabinet. These three ministers were responsible for the government's unpopular policies, especially Castlereagh's foreign policy at the Congress of Vienna and his policy in Ireland. In 1816, the military clashed with the demonstrators for Reform and the Luddite at Spa Fields in London when they marched on the Tower. The same year witnessed for the march of the Manchester Blanketeers - who carried their blankets to sleep in – to protest against the bad conditions of the cotton trade. There was a new radical reform movement by 1807 under the leadership of William Cobbett, Orator Hunt and others, whose reform debate Shelley bolstered up with his pamphlet in 1817 titled *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote through the Kingdom*. By 1819 England was under brutal military suppression. This turbulent situation prompted a wave of events which paved the way to the notorious Manchester massacre aka Peterloo incident of 16th August 1819, which came to be known in ironical reference to Waterloo. The incident occasioned as a result of the continuing post-war slump in the cotton trade, but already the “Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know, / But leechlike to their fainting country cling / Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow. / A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field”.²⁷⁴ The Stockport and Manchester areas were cram-full of Irish immigrants, disbanded soldiers, weavers etc. were demanding for higher wages and political rights. Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds were the centres of public meetings of radicals who claim for the right of freedom for the press, political organisations, and also the vote for a limited franchise.

On 16th of August, people from all walks of life, estimated 60000 to 80000,²⁷⁵ came from miles around to St. Peter's Fields in Manchester, spurred on by left-wing agitators and a well-known Reform orator Henry Hunt. The magistrate declared it illegal and seditious and sent in troops to suppress the protesters. As a result, at least 15 people, including a woman and a child were killed and four hundred people were injured.²⁷⁶ This time Shelley was in Italy, he came to know the

²⁷⁴ [Sonnet] *England in 1819*, lines 4 -7, Percy Bysshe Shelley.

²⁷⁵ The contemporaries estimated the number of people roughly from 30000 to as many as 150000, but some modern historians' estimate is given above. For instance see *The Peterloo Massacre*, Joyce Marlow, Rapp & Whiting Ltd., U. K. 1969.

²⁷⁶ Several reports of the incident are given in the *Examiner* of August 22, 1819, and several books are also giving the detailed account of the incident, but Joyce Marlow says that the exact number of the killed and injured has never

incident on 5th of September, which provoked him to write *The Mask of Anarchy* within the next twelve days, which was probably Shelley's most famous and powerful political poem. It was a burst of hatred for Liverpool's Ministry and an impassioned cry of "Rise like lions after slumber" and a stirring call to action. But, even though Mary Shelley had sent this poem on September 23, 1819, to Leigh Hunt to publish in the *Examiner*, he did not dare publish it since the Reform Bill had won the battle in 1832, because he was afraid of prosecution. Later the same year he wrote the sonnet *England in 1819*, which was a superb piece of ridicule on the arthritic body politic of England those days, but whose scope extends beyond Peterloo. He denigrates the king as "An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king"²⁷⁷, and he castigates the corrupt court of the Prince Regent and priests as well. He likens the volcanic eruption of Etna, which occurred this time when he was in Italy, to the chaotic situations of England, and he predicts a glorious revolution in the last two lines. But in *Ode to the West Wind* of October he succumbs to the general mood of hopelessness and melancholy, yet the poem ends with a question mixed with hope as he asks: "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"²⁷⁸ Apart from this poem, he wrote after this incident *Peter Bell the Third, A Philosophical View of Reform*, one of the fancies the 'glorious Phantom' of Liberty might burst forth again. The sonnet is a catalogue of oppression, which opens by lambasting George III in a startlingly frank manner like exquisite acts of *Prometheus Unbound*, the open letter on Carlile and at least a dozen shorter political poems.

Arthur Thistlewood was in prison after the Spa Fields riots, but he organized the Cato Street Conspiracy in 1820 to kill all the members of the Cabinet. But the plot went awry and the conspirators including Thistlewood were executed, which brought about widespread anger against the Government suppression. Shelley was also deeply shocked by this incident and wrote to Peacock that "Everything seems to conspire against Reform", because he believed that this kind of violent actions only help to delay the Reform from coming about. Shelley was, like

been established with certainty, (pages 150 - 51). And for the detailed description of the incident see also *The Making of the English Working Class*, E. P. Thompson, Victor Gollancz, London, 1964, pages 681 - 89. And *Shelley: The Pursuit*, Richard Holmes, E. P. Dutton, New York, 1975, pages 529 - 31.

²⁷⁷ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, [Sonnet] *England in 1819*, line 1.

²⁷⁸ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Ode to the West Wind*, Stanza V.

Godwin, a determined supporter of non-violence and the advocate of passive resistance.²⁷⁹ He totally rejected the *Sans-culotte* brand of revolutionary ideology and the ‘vulgar agitators’ who stir up the idea of retribution and anarchy. Moderation in political revolutionary ideals is discernible in almost all of his writings, even in the preface to the most tragic drama of *Cenci* he says that “Revenge, retaliation, atonement are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character”.²⁸⁰ Much as some people called him an unremitting left-wing fanatic or Red Shelley, his life and works dawn us upon the contrary, except his early political campaign in Ireland and his affinity with the Leigh Hunt circle were nothing other than the natural enthusiasm of a young man. But there is no denying that his writings, especially his prose writings confirm his commitment to radical programs on the affairs of his time in a wider theoretical way and set the contemporary movements for social and political freedom in a historical perspective.²⁸¹ Some of his poems explicitly supporting revolution in other countries,²⁸² but regarding change in England

²⁷⁹ Art Young in a vastly unusual but wonderful book *Shelley and Non-violence* anoints Shelley the pioneer of forbearance, non-violence and passive resistance in early nineteenth century England. Even one of the chapter titled *Shelley and Gandhi*, in which he tries to liken both of their ideas of liberty, and Gandhi’s ‘course of nature’ to Shelley’s *Necessity*. Since *Prometheus Unbound* promotes liberation through the abjuring of hate and vengeance, that is the most Gandhian of all his poems. He further says that during his struggle for liberty and dignity when he was in South Africa, Gandhi quoted from *The Mask of Anarchy* to a large mob of people committed to non-violence. See *Shelley and Non-violence: Studies in English Literature*, Art Young, Mouton, The Hague, 1975, page 24- 25.

²⁸⁰ At the same time, in the beginning of the same *Preface* he himself flatly says that her conspiracy to kill her brutal, rapist and tyrannical father in 1599 is the act of an “amiable” and brilliant young woman, who is “a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion”. *Preface to The Cenci*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, quoted here from *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, selected and edited by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, Norton & Company, second edition, 2002, New York and London, Page 141-2.

²⁸¹ Several studies tried to highlight Shelley’s revolutionary ideals like *Red Shelley* by Paul Foot, *Radical Shelley: The Philosophical Anarchism and Utopian Thought of Percy Bysshe Shelley* by Michael Henry Scrivener, and *The Unacknowledged Legislator: Shelley and Politics* by Paul Dawson and definitely we cannot reject these studies as over-embellishment. Because as a social and political revolutionary, Shelley was in the vanguard of all his romantic contemporaries and his works are sufficient enough to shock many who attempt to read him. Harold Bloom says that “He is to the left of whatever you are, whoever you may be. In some respects he was the Leon Trotsky of the romantic period, greatly admired by Karl Marx and by socialist and anarchist until this day. Every historical institution – state, religion, marriage, family – is denounced in Shelley’s prophecy, which is Promethean and visionary and radical beyond every expectation”. *Introduction to Percy Bysshe Shelley, Bloom’s Classical Critical Views*, Harold Bloom, edited with an introduction by Harold Bloom, Infobase Publishing, New York, 2009, Page XI.

²⁸² For instance, he wrote a short poem in October, 1819, before the Spaniards had recovered their liberty, which is a radical clarion call to wake up. The poem starts with these lines: “Arise, arise, arise! / There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread; / Be your wounds like eyes / To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead. / What other grief were

he asserts that change should come about gradually through the joint efforts of both enlightened leaders and awakened populace. Ultimately, whereas his advice to “Rise like lions after slumber” in *The Mask of Anarchy* does not provide with any further details of the reaction, his another bidding in the same year “Forge arms in your defence to bear” in *A Song: Men of England* seems sanctioning violence as a last resort, but the fact is quite otherwise.²⁸³

The dethronement of the king and the ascension of his people to power is a common Shelleyan vision of revolutionary imagination, but due to the ensuing tyranny of Napoleon, the French Revolution had been inapt to depict such a prophecy, and *The Revolt of Islam* creates a prophetic fantasy of the future overthrow of the tyrants, but that not related to any historical facts. And, even though he also widely talked about political reform in his several pamphlets, and he actively partook earlier in reform activities in Ireland, all these enjoyed less practicability. To redress all these shortcomings, Shelley selected the topic *Charles the First*, which was a remote British theme permitting fictitious adaptations, depicting dethronement and reform simultaneously. He started research to write the drama *Charles the First* in 1818, but somehow he could not make any progress, and once again he started working on it in 1822. He completed four scenes and the fragment of the fifth, but virtually all remain in an imperfect state. Apparently the theme is about the dethronement of the King and the emergence of Cromwell, because the brouhaha of the congregating crowd of citizens in the opening Masque of the Inns of

it just to pay? / Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they; / Who said they were slain on the battle day? / Awaken, awaken, awaken! / The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes; / Be the cold chains shaken / To the dust where your kindred repose, repose: / Their bones in the grave will start and move, / When they hear the voices of those they love, / Most loud in the holy combat above”. *The Poetical Works of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, Complete in One Volume*, published by A. and W. Galignani, Paris, 1829, page 210.

²⁸³ In *The Mask of Anarchy* Shelley himself talks about the suitable weapons to be forged in unvanquished war, which is resoluteness. He says: “Stand ye calm and resolute, / Like a forest close and mute, / With folded arms and looks which are / Weapons of unvanquished war”, lines 329 – 32. But when the poem comes to an end his idea of nonviolence becomes rather elusive, as he says: “With folded arms and steady eyes, / And little fear, and less surprise, / Look upon them as they slay, / Till their rage has died away. / Then they will return with shame / To the place from which they came, / And the blood thus shed will speak / In hot blushes on their cheek”, lines 354 – 61. Much as his poems such as *Henry and Louisa* (1809), *The Revolt of Islam* etc. champion the cause of nonviolence, *Hellas* puts forward a bit more anti-Turkish radical idea, the reasons is yet to discuss in the final chapter. Moreover, several studies put forward detailed discussions on the revolutionary and non-violent connotations of Shelley’s call to take arms in this poem such as (1) the chapter *Public Politics Once Again: 1819 and After* from the book *Shelley and his Audiences*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1989, pages 187 – 201, (2) the article *Rise Like Lions? Shelley and the Revolutionary Left*, William Keach, INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM, the quarterly journal of the Socialist Workers Party (Britain), issue 75, July 1997, (3) the article *The Necessity of Response: How Shelley’s Radical Poetry Works*, Richard Hendrix, Keats-Shelley Journal, 1978, Vol. 27, pages 45 -69 etc.

Court makes the ambience of a civil conflict. The identity of each speaker is clear among the hubbub of the agitated throng who exchange their views to each other, even an old man who is the Second Citizen in the play, prognosticating the upcoming revolution, which will happen when the land 'will be refreshed with civil blood'. Another man enters who was branded on his face and punished by the men of Archbishop Laud. Another important scene is the pro-Catholic Court Party, the king is privileged with divine right, and Hampden; the representative of Puritans, is about to immigrate to the New World which is free from the privileged kings and the 'impious rites' of the Church. The King and the Queen are seen in the midst of the sea of political argument and from 'the terrors of the time' they are seeking asylum in the solace of music and in the pictures in the royal gallery. A sad Shakespearean court fool Archy highlights the danger of the place where they stand.

His essay in 1819, *A Philosophical View of Reform*, must be considered as the basis for his political philosophy, since it includes a long theoretical discussion of Reform, and illustrates the historical uprisings of humanity against tyranny to achieve an inevitable system of liberty. In December 1819, he wrote this pamphlet as a thoughtful political philosophy, but left it unfinished in his note-books without further revision, even though it makes him a serious thinker. This piece of writing further develops the theoretical discussion of Reform from his initial ideas in the *Address* and considers the whole movement like those in Italy, France, Spain, the Americas, and others, and the philosophical ideas which gave rise to them, as part of the evolutionary process of history towards an inevitable system of liberty. Due to economic inequality and the inefficiency of the Government in England, it is "at a crisis in its destiny" and England is in a serious threat of declining under the tyranny of plutocracy and only Reform can redress the problem and the rights of all men will be given only by it. In this pamphlet also he argued for equality in possession,²⁸⁴ but he reiterated simultaneously the importance of nonviolence too.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴He says "Equality in possessions must be the last result of the utmost refinement of civilization; it is one of the conditions of that system of society, towards which, with whatever hope of ultimate success, it is our duty to tend". *Probable Means*, Chapter III, from *A Philosophical View of Reform*, quoted here from *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, Wordsworth Poetry Library, first published in 1994 by Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire, U. K., reset with introduction and Notes in 2002, page 624. He also says in the second chapter of the same pamphlet that "For fourteen hours' of labour which they do perform, they receive – no matter in what nominal amount – the price of seven. They eat less bread, wear worse clothes, are more ignorant, immoral, miserable and

Shelley was not at all an ivory-tower litterateur but an outspoken critic against all kinds of social exploitations, who fought against the tax burden which crushes the backbone of the poor, argued for the total eradication of the National Debt, the abolition of sinecures and the standing army, and stood for reform of the legal system and granting all religion equal status in the eye of the law. Working classes are the suffering victims of an inequitable system, which will turn them into a menacing mob who rely into insurrection as their final weapon like what was seen in the French Terror, because “Men having been injured, desire to injure in return”,²⁸⁶ and the solution remains only in equality and justice for all. But he was optimistic enough to hope for a non-violent outcome resulting from the guidance of philosophers and writers, nevertheless, his fears of an uncontrollable catastrophe are visible in the illustration of the volcano at the end of *The Mask of Anarchy*. His political opinions were based not on narrow party interests, but on morality, and he kept his humanitarian and egalitarian beliefs intact throughout his life. At the same time, as Shelley was the proponent of practicability, he rejected the idea of universal suffrage and vote for women, because, any premature measures on “the difficult and unbending realities of actual life” will be too sweeping.²⁸⁷ Although, the *Prometheus Unbound* put forward

desperate. This then is the condition of the lowest and the largest class, from whose labour the whole materials of life are wrought, of which the others are only the receivers or the consumers”. *On the Sentiment of the Necessity of Change*, Chapter II, from *A Philosophical View of Reform*, quoted here from *Ibid*, page 614.

²⁸⁵ He says that “... not because active resistance is not justifiable when all other means shall have failed, but because in this instance temperance and courage would produce greater advantages than the most decisive victory”. *A Philosophical View of Reform*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Quoted here from *Ibid*, page 629. Shelley writes in the *Address to the Irish People*: “You know what is meant by the mob?”, “It is an assembly of people who without foresight or thought, collect themselves to disprove of by force any measure they dislike. An assembly like this can never do anything but harm, tumultuous proceedings must retard the period when thought and coolness will produce freedom and happiness, and that to the very people who make the mob”. Moreover, when the revolutionary armies seize power from the tyrant Othman in *The Revolt of Islam*, who was sitting in his palace only with his child, the mob yells at him for his blood. “Then was heard – ‘He who judged let him be brought / To judgment! blood for blood cries from the soil / On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!...”. But Laon beseeches the mob for mercy for the old king, because he is alone and powerless. In the preface to the same poem as well he writes about ‘slow and gradual’ change.

²⁸⁶ But Shelley exempts several people from this form of retribution. He continues: “it is a law from which many are exempt, and all in proportion to their virtue and cultivation. The savage is more vengeful than the civilized man; the ignorant and uneducated than the person of a refined and cultivated intellect; the generous and [...]”. See *Probable Means*, Chapter III, from *A Philosophical View of Reform*, quoted here from *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, Wordsworth Poetry Library, first published in 1994 by Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire, U. K., reset with introduction and Notes in 2002, page 634.

²⁸⁷ This stand of Shelley was severely criticized by several critics and a detailed discussion on this will be a bit discursive. But, as a moderate critic Leslie Stephen is worthy to be mentioned here. He says: “he had a terrible affinity for the race of crotchet-mongers, the people who believe that the world is to be saved out of hand by

the idea of a classless world as visualized later by Marx, but it will be attained by a change of heart; not by the full force of economic revolution. But his stand was indefensible, because he argued that politics should be kept in the hands of the 'high orders' of society, and this stand bordered on the opinion of the liberals of those days, and, he opposed the vote for all adults, and he limited it only to the tax payers. He believed that through this form of suffrage the unworthy person may ascend to power, and he will be "brutal and torpid and ferocious by ages of slavery".

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Shelley believes that "Power, like a desolating pestilence / Pollutes whatever it touches",²⁸⁹ and, he attacked not only the centres of power and authority, but rather, the tragic outcomes of highly centralized power, which include poverty, militarism, despotic laws, aristocracy, forced labour and accumulation of money and so on. Once he depicted the liberated humanity walking fearlessly like spirits: "And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked / One with the other even as spirits do, / None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear".²⁹⁰ He also believed that

vegetarianism, or female suffrage, or representation of minorities, the one-sided, one-ideaed, shrill-voiced and irrepressible revolutionists. I say nothing against these particular nostrums, and still less against their advocates. I believe that bores are often the very salt of the earth, though I confess that the undiluted salt has for me a disagreeable and acrid savour". *Godwin and Shelley*, 1879, Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, 1874 -79, 1904, Vol. 3, Page 377 – 406. But some critics took it only as an example of Shelley's moderate stand; Edward Dowden is one of them. He says: "The contrast between his dreams and visions as a poet, and his very moderate expectations as a practical reformer, is indeed remarkable". For proving this argument he quotes Shelly's earlier stand in the *Address to the Irish People* as an evidence to his moderate stand, which is "Before the restraints of government are lessened, it is fit that we should lessen the necessity of them". Then he quotes Shelley's stand on universal suffrage. Dowden wants to say that Shelley's prose writings are more pragmatic than his poetry. Moreover, "His poetry is often vaporous and unreal, although the man himself had a clear perception of reality". *Last Words on Shelley*, 1887, Edward Dowden, *Transcripts and Studies*, 1888, Page 93-111. But, in essence, Shelley was not at all against women suffrage, because of that, most of the later Feminist revolutionary and women emancipation movements got inspired by Shelley's writings. While describing Shelley's influence on later Feminist movements Paul Foot says that "Shelley influenced the women's movements all through the long sixty-year struggle for women's suffrage all over the world". *Red Shelley*, Paul Foot, Bookmarks Publication, London, 1984, page 157.

²⁸⁸ In 1817, Shelley wrote in his *Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote*: "I think that none but those who register their names as paying a certain small sum in direct taxes ought, at present, to send Members to Parliament. The consequence of the immediate extension of the elective franchise to very male adult, would be to place power in the hands of men who have been rendered brutal and torpid and ferocious by ages of slavery". Interestingly enough, Shelley's most devoted British biographer Edward Dowden tries to justify Shelley's stand, saying that: "Shelley's chief desire was that the liberal movement in English politics should be kept within constitutional lines, and should be unstained by blood-letting or violence". *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Edward Dowden, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1969, page 437.

²⁸⁹ *Queen Mab*, III, lines 176 – 77.

²⁹⁰ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Prometheus Unbound*, Act III, Scene IV, lines 131 – 33.

the ownership of property is the central part of freedom, as that is the key to tyranny, whereas most reformers and freethinkers of his time did not recognize or were not ready to fuse both together. But he does not mean that in a society founded on equality everyone must share everything they owned, but rather, he divided property into two different sets. Some property is right and proper, so that society has to support it; but some other is unjust and should be expropriated for the advantage of society. But, Paul Foot says that “Shelley’s line between the two was vague”.²⁹¹ And Foot further says that there is no wonder in this ambiguity, because, neither the idea of common ownership nor the democratic control of the means of production was blossomed into any political or social idea, even the word ‘socialism’ was not in use until fifteen years of Shelley’s death. Moreover, freedom is not limited to the freedom of thought and expression, and the freedom to choose their government, but rather, that must be capable of providing food, shelter, and warmth to everyone.²⁹²

Shelley was sympathetic towards the poor, as he says “I am the friend of the unfriended poor”,²⁹³ and he unleashed all-out attacks on poverty and the makers of it in his several prose and poetic writings, especially in the poem *Rosalind and Helen*. Poverty and the Starving mother were the central themes of this poem.²⁹⁴ He completely negated Thomas Malthus’s justification of poverty as it kept the population under control and also it is beneficial for all humanity, because if the poor got any richer it will end up in their longevity and over production of children, which will cause to overrun the world with people. Shelley says in his *Proposals for an Association*: “That the rich are still to glut, that the ambitious are still to plan, that the fools whom these knaves mould, are still to murder their brethren and call it glory, and that the poor are to pay with their

²⁹¹ Foot, Paul *Red Shelley*, Bookmarks Publication, London, 1984, Page 94.

²⁹² He introduces freedom after asking “What art thou, Freedom?” as “Thou art not, as impostors say, / A shadow soon to pass away, / A superstition, and a name / Echoing from the cave of Fame”. He moves on to describe the multifaceted aspects of liberty such as “For the labourer thou art bread”, “Thou art clothes, and fire, and food / For the trampled multitude”, “To the rich thou art a check, / When his foot is on the neck / Of his victim”, “Thou art Justice”, “Thou art Wisdom”, “Thou art Peace”, “Thou art Love” and so forth. See *The Mask of Anarchy*, lines 209 – 259.

²⁹³ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *On Leaving London for Wales*, penultimate verse, *The Esdaile Notebook*, ed. by K. N. Cameron, Faber and Faber, London, 1964, Page 55.

²⁹⁴ He says: “Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty / Among the fallen on evil days: / ‘Tis Crime and Fear and Infamy, / And houseless Want in frozen ways / Wandering ungarmented, and Pain, / And, worse than all, that inward stain / Foul self-contempt, which drowns in sneers / Youth’s starlight smile, ...” Lines 473 – 480. Moreover, when he talks about the Starving Mother he says that “A woman came up with a babe at her breast / Which was flaccid with toil and hunger; / She cried: ‘Give me food and give me rest - / We die if we wait much longer...’”.

blood, their labour, their happiness, and their innocence, for the crimes and mistakes which the hereditary monopolists or earth commit? Rare sophism”!²⁹⁵ He also rejected the arguments such as poverty is the part of divine or natural law, it is the fault of the poor, and the poor are feckless and scroungers and so forth. His poem *A Tale of Society as it is* depicts the story of an old woman, who waits seven years for her young son who was press ganged into war. When he comes back, both he and his mother get no job except some meagre charity.²⁹⁶ To mark out the disparities between the rich and the poor, over and over again Shelley uses the metaphor of hard working bees and unwinding drones who consume the lion’s share of honey.²⁹⁷ According to him “there is no real wealth but the labour of man” and accumulating wealth is “a power usurped by the few, to compel the many to labour for their benefit”²⁹⁸ and therefore, all merchants and bankers are “a set of pelting wretches”.²⁹⁹

Shelley’s ardent support for women emancipation and free love is evident in his entire oeuvre. For instance, his pamphlet of circa 1818 entitled *Discourse on the Manners of the Ancients Relative to the Subject of Love*, placed him at the forefront of male feminist thought. It was a severe criticism on Greek and Roman cultures in which women were downgraded in a way

²⁹⁵ Shelley, *Shelley’s Prose Works*, Vol. 1, ed. by Richard Herne Shepherd, The Pennsylvania State University Library, 1888, Page 265.

²⁹⁶ Shelley says: “And now cold Charity’s unwelcome dole / Was insufficient to support the pair; / And they would perish rather than would bear / The law’s stern slavery and the insolent stare / With which law loves rend the poor man’s soul, - / The bitter scorn the spirit-sinking noise / Of heartless mirth which women, men and boys / Wake in this scene of legal misery”. *A Tale of a Society as it is from facts 1811*, this earlier poem included in *The Esdaile Note Book*, lines 72 – 79, quoted here from *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Vol. 2, Ed., Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 2004, pages 36 – 37.

²⁹⁷ This is his shout of anger: “Those gilded flies / That, basking in the sunshine of a court, / Fatten on its corruption! – what are they? / The drones of the community; they feed / On the mechanic’s labour; the starved hind / For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield / Its unshared harvests; ...” *Queen Mab*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Book III, lines 106 – 112.

²⁹⁸ *Notes to Queen Mab*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley. And he says when he talks about the unjust property that it had “foundation in usurpation, or imposture, or violence, without which, by the nature of things, immense possession of gold or land could never have been accumulated”. Moreover, his harshest attack on social disparity continues: “The poor are set to labour, - for what? Not the food for which they famish: not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels: not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage; ... no; for the pride of power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasure of the hundredth part of society ... employments are lucrative in an inverse ration to their usefulness: the jeweler, the toyman, the actor gains fame and wealth by the exercise of his useless and ridiculous art; whilst the cultivation of the earth, he without whom society must cease to exist, struggles through contempt and penury, and perishes by that famine which but for his unceasing exertions would annihilate the rest of mankind”.

²⁹⁹ *A Philosophical View of Reform*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

“educated as slaves” and relegated to “inferiority” and they were coerced into sticking it out desperately. Utilizing radical and feminist ideas he turned the fantasy in *The Revolt of Islam* more dynamic, in which he says explicitly that “Never will peace and human nature meet / Till free and equal man and women meet”.³⁰⁰ His aforesaid poem *Rosalind and Helen* is overtly feminist, which deals with the issue of women empowerment, in addition to poverty. After their childhood friendship, when Rosalind and Helen meet once again, they tell their stories each other. Rosalind’s was the experience of a battered wife, who has been subjected to bullying and physical violence.³⁰¹ Sometimes sheer poverty railroad women into prostitution, which is a catastrophic situation, in which women are compelled to satisfy the lewd and lascivious gentlemen who are disgruntled in their married life, but unfortunately, the entire society places the blame solely on the women. Here Shelley is more aggressive: “Society declares war against her, pitiless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: ... She dies of long and lingering disease: yet *she* is in fault, *she* is the criminal, *she* the forward and untameable child, - and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron...!”³⁰²

Since marriage is repressive and authoritarian, Shelley argued for its abolition, whereby “the fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result”.³⁰³ Shelly further expanded this idea in another famous love poem *Epipsychidion* eight years after writing *Queen Mab*. Here Shelley mocks the marriage of convenience: “I never was attached to that great sect, / Whose doctrine is,

³⁰⁰ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto II, lines 994 – 95. In Canto VIII he says “Woman, as the bond-slave, dwells / Of man, a slave; and life is poisoned in its wells”. Lines 3314 – 15.

³⁰¹These are some lines from his heartfelt description of her sufferings: “He was a coward to the strong: / He was a tyrant to the weak, / On whom his vengeance he would wreak: / For scorn, whose arrows search the heart, / From many a stranger’s eye would dart, / And on his memory cling, and follow / His soul to its home so cold and hollow. / He was a tyrant to the weak, And we were such, alas the day! / Oft, when my little ones at play, / Were in youth’s natural lightness gay, / Of if they listened to some tale / Of travellers, or of fairy land, - / When the light from the wood-fire’s dying brand / Flashes on their faces – if they heard / Or thought they heard upon the stair / His footstep, the suspended word / Died on my lips: we all grew pale: / The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear / If it thought it heard its father near; / And my two wild boys would near my knee / Cling, cowed and cowering fearfully”. *Rosalind and Helen, A Modern Eclogue; with Other Poems*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley, Printed for C. and J. Ollier, London, 1819, Page 19.

³⁰² *Notes on Queen Mab*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

³⁰³ See *Notes on Queen Mab*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley. He further describes his argument “I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous: on the contrary, it appears, from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self-devotion... That which will result from the abolition of marriage will be natural and right; because choice and change will be exempted from restraint”.

that each one should select / Out of the crowd a mistress of a friend, / And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend / To cold oblivion”,³⁰⁴ and he attributes such a creed ridiculously to ‘Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece’, who urged ‘all living things to love each other’. To sum up, Shelley not only fighting for the dignity of women, but he wants to overthrow the social order which suppresses women in general. It will dawn upon anyone from the leading women agitators and revolutionaries of his major revolutionary poems that women are not only supporters of the revolution and beneficiaries of it, but rather they are the leaders of it.

Similarly, Shelley violently attacked religion, once he said religion is a “prolific fiend / Who peoplest earth with demons, Hell with men / And Heaven with slaves”.³⁰⁵ When he grew older from his puberty he came to know that many established radicals and liberals including his friend Leigh Hunt are deists while they oppose Christianity. In this context he wrote in 1814 his carefully argued pamphlet *A Refutation of Deism* with great alertness of the censor and blasphemy laws. It was written in a dialogue form between Theosophus and Eusebes during which Eusebes asks Theosophus whether he believe in any god. He believes in a supernatural god who created the universe, and for him that belief can be justified by reason. But Eusebes totally rejects any possibility of the existence of a god, and he further argues that if the existence of a creator behind the existence of these creatures is reasonable, then who is the creator of the creator, and the argument continues, at last Eusebes wins the argument. But, here as well, several times his criticism on God becomes more severe, for instance when he gushes about the virgin birth he says: “It seems less credible that the God whose immensity is uncircumscribed by space, should have committed adultery with a carpenter’s wife, than that some bold knaves or insane dupes had deceived the credulous multitude”.³⁰⁶

According to Shelley, the established religions are the means of exploitation by promoting superstitions, discouraging dissent, welcoming subservience, joining hands with tyranny, justifying war and the squire. He repeats over and over again the notion that the main function of religion is to buttress tyranny. He wrote in *The Revolt of Islam*: “The will of strength is right – this human state / Tyrants, that they may rule, with lies thus desolate”.³⁰⁷ Here he means by ‘The

³⁰⁴ *Epipsychidion*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, lines 149 – 153.

³⁰⁵ *Queen Mab*, Book VI, Percy Bysshe Shelley.

³⁰⁶ *A Refutation of Deism: In a Dialogue*, printed by Schulze and Dean, London, 1814, page 20.

³⁰⁷ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto VIII, lines 71 – 72.

will of strength is right' the only clear and consistent morality in all established religions. Addressing Shelley, once Byron said "You are a Protestant – you protest against all religions".³⁰⁸ Even though he separated the idea of art and morality, in the depiction of incestuous love he realized the imaginative burden of socio-political, stems from religious beliefs. Once he was compelled to edit and republish his poem *The Revolt of Islam*.³⁰⁹ Shelly replied when Trelawney asked him why he calls himself an atheist: "I took up the word, as a knight took up a gauntlet, in defiance of an injustice. The delusions of Christianity are fatal to genius and originality; they limit thought".³¹⁰

Shelley's Romantic Ideals

Love

Three different streams were intertwined in the concept of love in the European Romantic tradition, which are Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought, the persistent women worship among the top echelons of the populace and their literature in the Middle Ages, and finally the Christian divine love which liberates mankind from sins and bestow on them the blessings and grace. Based on these aspects, a host of romantic love poems overfilled the European Renaissance literature, among whom the famous Italian poet Francesco Petrarch (1304 – 1374) was the most prolific one who deeply influenced the English romantic writers. Many sonnet cycles and narrative poems on loved ones with its intricate plots emerged these days, and even in the dramas of Shakespeare several critics identified various features of Neo-Platonic elements.³¹¹ In nineteenth century, in the zenith of romanticism, Shelley was the biggest poet, who wrote widely on romantic love, whose imagination was always related to ideas not mere men or women or any

³⁰⁸ Medwin, Thomas, *Conversations of Lord Byron: Noted During a Residence with his Lordship in the Years 1821 and 1822*, a new edition, printed for Henry Colburn, London, 1824, page 91.

³⁰⁹ In one of his letter Shelley wrote: "Incest is, like many other incorrect things, a very poetical circumstance. It may be the excess of love or hate. It may be the defiance of everything for the sake of another, which clothes itself in the glory of the highest heroism; or it may be that cynical rage, which, confounding the good and bad in existing opinions, breaks through them for the purpose of rioting in selfishness and antipathy". See *Letters to Maria Gisborne*, November 16, 1819, *Letters*, ed., by F. L Jones, Oxford, 1964, Page 154.

³¹⁰ Trelawney, Edward, *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author*, New Universal edition, George Routledge and Son Ltd., London, and E. P. Dutton and Co., New York, 1878, Page 50.

³¹¹ The romantic love becomes the central theme from Shakespeare's earlier writings such as *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Love's Labours Lost* etc. to his *Twelfth Night*. The best among these writings are *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As you like it*, *Twelfth Night* etc.

other creatures. He turned philosophy into poetry; in a closer look an intellectual structure is discernible in almost all of his lyrical poems. He was infatuated with the philosophy of eighteenth century and he read voraciously Hume's essays and Lock's writings besides the ancient Greek philosophy.

In the zenith of imagination and emotion Shelley flies to his own imaginary world with ecstatic state of mind; which may be ephemeral but it confers on the poet immeasurable pleasure and freedom. He is definitely not enraptured all the time, on the contrary, sorrows and suspicion perennially haunt him and his experiences were violently eclipsed by imperfection, fright and sorrows: "We look before and after / And pine for what is not: / Our sincerest laughter / With some pain is fraught; / Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought".³¹² Nevertheless, he gets precious moments of happiness, unsullied experience of delight and ecstasy when his soul merges into the soul of his beloved. He talks about the need and logic of this union in a slightly facetious manner: "The fountains mingle with the river / And the rivers with the ocean, / The winds of heaven mix for ever / With a sweet emotion; / Nothing in the world is single; / All things by a law divine / In one spirit meet and mingle. / Why not I with thine?"³¹³ In the last part of *Epipsychidion* he talks about the same union "... we shall be one / Spirit within two frames, oh ! wherefore two ? / One passion in twin hearts, which grows and grew".³¹⁴

Even though Godwin and Rousseau formed Shelley's thoughts, only his reading of Plato could satiate both his intellectual and spiritual needs. His ideals of romantic love were basically indebted to Plato's writings, especially *The Symposium* and *Phaedrus* which contain plentiful descriptions of both beauty and love. Shelley even translated Plato's *Symposium* into English which was titled *The Banquet of Plato* which contains the depiction of love, with its earthly and divine variations.³¹⁵ Shelley's quest for eternal love and beauty and his misapprehension that

³¹² Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *To a Skylark*.

³¹³ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Love's Philosophy*.

³¹⁴ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Epipsychidion*, lines 573 – 75.

³¹⁵ A pupil of Socrates Apollodorus describes the Banquet which took place at the house of Agathon in Athens in which a number of debates came about on Love. During the discussion one of the guests Pausanias distinguishes the two deities of Love, those are: Pandemian Venus, the representative of the earthly sensual love and Uranian Venus, who represents the love of soul rather than body. Another guest Eryximachus argues that the Uranian love can be changed from 'the nature of the vicious' through the inspiration of the spirit into the level of the love of soul. The dramatist Aristophanes further argues that human being at first were round, strange creatures with four legs and four arms and two faces, and when they started war against gods they cut them in half and turned them into the current

both the love and beauty he sees and what his mind seeks are equal led him to several severe mistakes. Emilia may be one of it. This Italian Platonic poem *Epipsychidion* was the utmost expression of Platonic love in which his unattainable lover Emilia is not an ordinary human woman, but rather the soul of his soul, even the title in Greek means “concerning or about a little soul”. But, whatever transient it is, he experienced the romantic ecstatic love in Emilia, which he explains with the symbols of light, beauty and sweet fragrance and he invites this beauty which makes his life worthwhile to stay with him in a far off heavenly island. In the end, the poem moves from the symbols of corporeal union into the symbols of water, light and fire, from where it further moves on mental and philosophical experiences. But when he tries to talk about the loftiest and most delicate domains of love his feet slip and he swerve the path, even his winged words fall upon him like chains of lead.³¹⁶

For Shelley, love is not an ordinary feeling, but that is beyond the negotiations of earthly life, that is an endeavour or a quest to attain the immortality in which the boundaries of individual life disappears, and that is an exciting tremble of merging with the selfsame tempo of the beloved. Dichotomy vanishes here, and adoration, self-immolation, and self-realisation become very much alike.³¹⁷ He believed in universal extension of love, as he says: “This is love. This is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with everything which exists”.³¹⁸ And sometimes, he likens this world to the garden and its ideal beauty like that of the lady cannot die. According to him “For love, and beauty, and delight, / There is no death, nor change...”³¹⁹, but unfortunately we are like Plato’s the prisoners of the cave can ‘endure no light’ in darkness, heedless of the fact that “Heaven’s light forever shines, Earth’s shadows fly”.³²⁰ He

human shape as a punishment. From then on each half of everyone began to seek the other half ‘to heal the divided nature of man’ and this pursuit is called the Love.

³¹⁶ “One hope within two wills, one will beneath / Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death, / One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality, / And one annihilation. Woe is me! / The winged words on which my soul would pierce / Into the height of Love’s rare Universe, / Are chains of lead around its flight of fire. - / I spank, I sink, I tremble, I expire!” *Epipsychidion*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, lines 584 – 91.

³¹⁷ “I know / That love makes all things equal: I have heard / By mine own heart this joyous truth averred: / The spirit of the worm beneath the sod / In love and worship, blends itself with God”. *Epipsychidion*, Percy Bysshe Shelley, lines 125 – 29.

³¹⁸ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *On Love*.

³¹⁹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Sensitive Plant*.

³²⁰ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Adonais*.

believed everyone should aim love and whenever necessary it should be renewed by fresh incitements, but he could never understand why society suppresses the innate quest for love.

Shelley was in his Platonic roving from single to multiple and from multiple to everything, but when he further expanded the idea in his love affairs it became more elusive to the populace. He never received any “code of modern morals”, through marriage which confines one person for life to another. Love is not gold or clay to become smaller when it is divided, accordingly, he rejected the belief that love diminishes when it is shared with many others. Instead, he always kept the idea of love as a state of mind; not the action, which is almost independent of its object and to be cultivated for its own sake to get its ecstasy. But, even though Shelley applauded free love in the ecstatic union of Laon and Cythna, and in *Epipsychidion*, and in several other poems, his practical experiences were less divine on several occasions such as when he first eloped with Harriet, and when Hogg attempted to seduce her and so forth. Nevertheless, he was prepared later to share his wife Mary with his friend to prove that marriage is nothing but the union of body, but the union of free spirits is the central thing. But his search for ideal beauty and ideal love, and his search for perfection, superior and excellent, and his pursuit of the reality and the ideal beyond the shadows, continued throughout his life.³²¹

Several celestial maidens of ethereal beauty appear in his poems, who provide inspiration and guide him to ecstasy, and even though most of them are sheer imaginary figures, Jane Williams, the wife of his friend Edward Williams, was quite distinct from all of them with her more humanistic appearance. She is the “Best and brightest” and “Fairer far than this fair Day”, and after depicting a morning of an early spring in winter which kisses the forehead of the Earth, smiles upon the silent sea, bids the frozen streams to be free, and wakes to music all their fountains, he says to her: “Making the wintry world appear / like one on whom thou smilest, dear”.³²² He invites her into the faraway silent wilderness away from men and towns, “Where the soul need not repress / Its music lest it should not find / An echo in another’s mind”.³²³ Once

³²¹Once he wrote to Hogg: “The question is what do I love? It is almost unnecessary to answer. Do I love the person, the embodied identity, if I may be allowed the expression? No. I love what is superior, what is excellent, or what I conceive to be so”. *Letters from Percy Bysshe Shelley to Thomas Jefferson Hogg: with notes by W.M. Rossetti and H.Buxton Forman*, The University of California Library. This is quoted here from *Shelley the Man and the Poet*, Methuen & Co. London, 1910, page 25.

³²² Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *To Jane: The Invitation*, lines 19 – 20.

³²³ *Ibid*, lines 24 -26.

again he calls her to the magnificent landscape of “the wild wood and the plains”, where their union leads them to the ecstatic total unity of everything, as he says: “Where the earth and ocean meet, / And all things seem only one / In the universal sun”.³²⁴ Another poem on her titled *To Jane: The Recollection* deals with the same theme, but the transience of this romantic ecstasy drives him to despair: “Though thou art ever fair and kind, / The forests ever green, / Less off is peace in Shelley’s mind / Than calm in waters seen”.³²⁵ He also wrote the poem *With a Guitar – To Jane*, which’s characters such as Miranda, Ariel and Ferdinand are based on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, in which Jane is the princess Miranda and Shelley is her adorer and protector Ariel, but the prince Ferdinand also lays claim to her love. Ariel realizes his limitations, but he satisfies himself in his endeavours to gladden and serve her and he gifts her a guitar made by an artist which blares out the sweetest and holiest music solely for her. The last lines of the poem depict his ecstatic state of mind which drives him to a celestial world of eternity and oneness.³²⁶

The intense abiding love is always celestial and the poems depicting it were also always romantic ones. Recognizing emotions or its moods from the miscellany of mortal life and moving it apart and meticulously depicting it is a tremendous work. But Shelley moved further on from this vantage point and tinted it with political colours in his several poems. According to him, through the exercise of love, hope and patience one can liberate himself from the tyranny of history. In *Prometheus Unbound*, Asia pierces the veil that covers the source of power and oppression, and Demogorgon is compelled to admit that love is the only quality lacking in enslavement. Prometheus not only escapes from unremitting sufferings inflicted by Jupiter by ‘going out’ of his nature, but also he grew even further to be compassionate to his torturer. The magic of love begins to work at this point, and the blessed spirits appear to console him. In Shelley’s longer narrative poems and prose writings, erotic attachment is also the base for sociable feeling and political action. *The Revolt of Islam* goes beyond the narration of matters openly political in terms of desire between private individuals. Moreover, rather than presenting the institutional sponsorship of love as a concern for progressive politics this poem considers

³²⁴ Ibid, lines 67 – 69.

³²⁵ Shelley, Bysshe Percy, *To Jane: The Recollection*, lines 85 - 88.

³²⁶ “Though the sound overpowers, / Sing again, with your dear voice, / Revealing / A tone of some world far from ours / Where music, and moonlight and feeling / Are one”. *To Jane: The Keen Stars were Twinkling*, Percy Bysshe Shelley.

sexual experience as a hermeneutic device for comprehending how to orient oneself towards utopia and to a philosophically apprehended future, rather than just a pragmatic one.³²⁷

Nature

Several factors played vital roles in forming Shelley's concept of Nature and natural beauty such as the magnificent description of sublime and picturesque in the Gothic novels he read when he was a young boy, the spirit of the age, his reading of Rousseau and the Lake School poets, his travels through the picturesque scenery of natural beauty and so on. He had admired in England the splendid landscape of the Lakes, the magnificent scenery of Wales, and in Switzerland he was mesmerized by the true sublime and in Italy by flowers, trees and the gorgeous seaside. His enthralling description of the dreamland of spirits, furies and fauns, and other characters moving across seas and mountains in the icy rocks of Caucasus where Prometheus was chained and the awe-inspiring mountains near the cave of Demogorgon, take shape from his wanderings through Switzerland and the prepossessing views of Alps, and its fascinating glaciers and the geology of the region. His philosophical statement here is the denial of death and the declaration of the power of beauty to survive, even though change is unavoidable. While Shelley's poems such as *Ode to the West Wind* and *The Cloud* use natural phenomena in a romantic way to expose the poet's state of mind or his philosophical speculation, the dense verdant forests of *The Alastor* and the beautiful landscapes of *Prometheus Unbound*, the stunning description of the beauty of mountain in *Mont Blanc*, flowers, butterflies and dews in *The Sensitive Plant*, and the depiction of splendour and horror of the sea in *A Vision of the Sea* etc. are leaving ineffaceable rapture to readers' mind. 'Cloud' stands for the inevitable transformation and change, whether 'The West Wind' is destroyer or preserver, the poet must acquire its power to carry out his gift of prophecy. Mutability may be unavoidable, but death leads only to a new birth, similarly, analogous to the waking up of the earth in the spring, the dead thoughts of the poet must be revived by the wind of inspiration.

Based on Platonic thought, Shelly's poetry is chock block with dream-landscapes of symbolic features, and this landscape is fluid and moving and changing all the things. This natural world is alive with spirit or some animating principle, and therefore, his description of nature is not mere

³²⁷ Nersessian, Anahid, *Radical Love and Political Romance: Shelley after the Jacobin Novel*, E L H, Vol. 79, Number 1, spring 2012, published by Johns Hopkins University Press, page 115.

description, but pregnant with meaning. Not from frozen moments does he seek inspiration, but rather, from storm and wind, and the constant flying and sailing of his chariots and boats through the magic world may showcase either the restlessness of his spirit or Nature. While in *Ode to the West Wind* the poet seeks union with the tempest, in *Alastor* the solitude of the peripatetic poet is reflected in the loneliness of the countryside. Whereas several romantic writers celebrate colours, flowers, fruits etc. Shelley is infatuated with light and shadow, skies and weather etc., and his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* celebrates the beauty in the summer winds, rainbows, moonbeams, clouds, mountain mists and so forth. Some of his poems such as the *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Revolt of Islam* repeat over and over again the boats, the caverns, the sea, the river etc. which have Platonic or neo-Platonic connotations.

The countryside in the region of Keswick, in the Lake District, endowed Shelley in late 1811 with the creative trigger for the composition of his first major work of poetry, *Queen Mab*. In this poem, Past and Present formulate a panoramic picture of 'the great chain of Nature' that finally leads to a Future in which 'the habitable earth is full of bliss' and mankind attain full harmony with all its creatures, which is the essence of his version of Necessity. The fairy Queen is accompanied by the Spirit of Nature in a magic car is the symbol of undying force of 'Eternal Nature's law'. *Queen Mab* characterizes the roles of monarchs and conquerors in spreading chaos all over the world and making wars and enslaving their subjects. Finally, while Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, testifies the cruelty of God and His son; Nature, on the contrary, is the only impartial and just force. But later his views had been modified by his study of Plato, and therefore, instead of the soulless operations of Necessity, the millennium takes place through the force of love like what we see in *Prometheus Unbound*, even though Necessity plays its part in the person of Demogorgon. While the Christ in *Prometheus Unbound* is seen by Panthea 'with patient looks', the suffering Christ in *Queen Mab* looks on Ahasuerus with 'a smile of godlike malice'.

The Romantic idea of Noble Savage stands for the integrity of self and the conservation of one's primitive instincts and passions from the corrupt so-called civilization, through the constant connection with Nature. But, even though this idea is an attractive and powerful one, for writers committed to political ends it is a bit dangerous, because its logical conclusion is the withdrawal from the problems of real life and the denial of progress. But, Shelley in *Alastor* takes a bit

cautious stand; notwithstanding, he was enthralled by the idea of primitivism, and the poet in *Alastor* who is neither a hero nor a Poet of the poem, but the spirit who divinely animates the Poet's imagination, makes his home in wild country untouched by civilization among savage men with whom he obtains full harmony with all the creatures in Nature. Spending his entire life in solitude and searching for "strange truths in undiscovered lands"³²⁸ driven by the dream of spiritual beauty, he keeps "mute conference / With his still soul".³²⁹ He talks only to the dead past and to the primitive Arab maiden who is another form of a female Noble Savage. But exhausted and having searched in vain the poet realizes that introspection and solitude are not enough, because "those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted, perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit sudden makes itself felt".³³⁰

His poem *Mont Blanc* is a powerful description of picturesque natural landscape and an autobiographical experience of fear, awe and enlightenment blended with the scientific cognisance of the developing contemporary geology.³³¹ The opening section conjures up the relation between natural imagery and psychological exploration, and between the individual mind and external perceptions, turning the overlapping images of gorgeous Arve gorges to good account, as a channel for hidden influencing for exploring minds. Shelley tries to depict in his own direction the Romantic dialectic of beauty, terror and fear in the sublime image of glacial landscape, unlike Wordsworth's religion of Nature, he expresses a radical scepticism, a sense of uncertainty about existence, which extends to atheism. Contrary to the spiritual forces in Wordsworth's poetry Shelley follows the ideals of Nature in a French philosopher Baron D'Holbach, whose philosophy totally rejects the ideas of God, soul, spirits etc. According to him religion is born of ignorance and Nature is the only reliable source, through the knowledge of it and the control of it mankind can attain happiness. Rather than in a prior idea, Shelley discovered

³²⁸ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Alastor*, line 77.

³²⁹ *Ibid*, lines 223 -24.

³³⁰ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Preface to Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude*.

³³¹ Shelley's scientific approach is not limited only in *Mont Blanc*, but rather, that is apparent in all of his writings, because he knew that scientific knowledge and the scientific understanding of natural phenomena is an aid, not an impediment to imaginative perception. He wrote in his *Defence of Poetry* that "Poetry is that which comprehend all sciences, and that to which all science must be referred". At the same time, his contemporary, John Keats complains in his poem *Lamia* that a scientific understanding of the wonder of the rainbow diminishes its mystery and put it "in the dull catalogue of common things", See *Lamia*, Part II, line 233.

“power” in a present landscape, and while its visible properties, the transient ‘cloud shadows and sunbeams’ represent the spirit of Beauty, which only serves to point towards this Power.

Although Shelley affirms the existence of the Power as he claims that ‘the power is there’, he reiterates simultaneously that it is inaccessible to the human mind and it remains only where ‘none beholds’. He underscores the absolute remoteness of the power, which exists beyond all knowledge and sense in the dark, unpeopled, silent and secret place, as he says: “In the calm darkness of the moonless nights, / In the lone glare of day, the snows descend / Upon that mountain; none beholds them there”.³³² In the last lines also he simultaneously personifies the Power as ‘thou’ and places it beyond human apprehension, but he reveals that the Power he seeks has not so much to do with philosophical or political systems, but rather, with ‘the human mind’s imaginings’: “And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea, / If to the human mind’s imaginings / Silence and solitude were vacancy?”³³³ Even though the sceptic denies such a Power, Shelley’s search for the same is also perceptible in the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, and he fears to lose it.

The order of Nature is unchanging, which itself rejects the monarchs, and he saw it principally as occasions and vehicles for doctrinal and metaphysical speculation. In sum, he combines Noble Savage with atheism.

³³² Shelley, Percy Bysshe *Mont Blanc*, lines 130 – 32. See also the following lines till 144, which were abandoned here only because it may be a bit discursive.

³³³ *Ibid*, lines 142 -44.

Chapter V

Romance and Revolution in the Writings of Khalīl Muṭrān and Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Comparison

The Backdrop of the European Romantic Encounters with Islam

As a result of several centuries of isolation, decay and staticism etc., the Islamic society had reached to a nadir by the eighteenth century, which encompasses almost every area of their life. The endeavours of earlier Arab thinkers, litterateurs and philosophers to develop science, philosophy, arts, literature, geography, even religious subjects such as theology, jurisprudence and hermeneutics were totally played out. In its place, on the one side, pedantic views of religiosity evolved in a society satisfied with small blessings of God, and totally unconcerned with the burgeoning expansion of Europe. And on the other side, copious anarchic local regimes emerged, which were often irresponsible to the central Ottoman Empire in Istanbul. Turkey herself received several humiliating defeats at the hands of some European countries, once which were subjects or fearful neighbours. Similary, several distant Arab provinces of the Middle East and other parts were not under direct control of the Empire, and even she was not aware of the dramatic shifts undergoing in the world's power structures. Intellectually, while Europe was rapidly advancing in the realms of science, mechanical arts, literature, philosophy, political theory etc., the Arabs and Turks were engaging in traditional rhymed prose writing and commenting on commentaries. Politically, while Europe - scientifically and technologically much advanced - was vigorously engaging in fortifying nation-state system and germinating national loyalty and integrity in the minds of the people, the Ottoman Empire was still defending its lands with archaic weaponry and was gradually disintegrating. And the empire was destined to witness silently its own disintegration in its European provinces and began to lose its fiscal and nominal control over the Arab provinces too. Besides, the emergence of the Wahhabi movement and the impudent declaration of independence by the Egyptian and Syrian rulers, miscarriage of justice, blatant corruption, growing distrust among the Arab provinces were the principal reasons behind the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

At the same time, in the same century, the Arab people felt certain smugness towards Europeans due to the legacy of their glorious past while Europe was in the darkest age, which led them to consider the Europeans as barbarians or backward boors and had nothing of worth to offer. But when the French army of Napoleon intruded unexpectedly into the most important centre of Arab provinces, namely, Egypt, in 1798 (Expe'dition d'Egypte), without warning or preparation, that

was not just a humiliating defeat to the Mamlūk defenders,³³⁴ but rather, that tore their centuries long complacency apart. Whereas growing sentiment against the European invasion of a Muslim land was arousing on the one side, through the constant contact between these two cultures, new images of one another gradually evolved on the other. Even though defences and misjudgements hindered the motion, the Arab development westward had also been in a remarkable speed. Traditional Arab societies underwent profound transformations during the time period of little more than a century and half, from traditional to modern in techniques, social and political institutions and so on. This process was neither unique only to the Arabs nor imply total transplantation of Western cultures, but only to say, the incentives for certain changes in the Arab world have their origins in the West. But its outcome was quite widespread, such as the implementation of new machines, system of education, intellectual thinking, and introduction of new ideas such as nationalism, constitutional government and so forth.

But the invasion led to several political consequences. Because, Napoleon was whipped up by a desire to resist British ambitions and interests in the region, which were already affirmed with the Treaty of Paris in 1763 also the acquisition of Indian territories. The British have only a meagre presence in the Levant or in the Mediterranean since they were utilizing the water route in the region of Cape of Good Hope to make their way to India. This invasion compelled Britain to bear the brunt of taking a more active diplomatic and military role in the region, coagulating the relation of European power balances and Eastern trade. Needless to say, the invasion into the Ottoman protectorate interrupted the erstwhile good relation between the French and the Turks; nevertheless, Napoleon spared no effort to show affinity with the Turkish Sultan and to make the impression that he is a protector of Sultan's interest against Mamlūks. Moreover, his appeasing policies in Egypt included assuring them even the rule of *Sharia* law, "which can alone ensure the well-being of men".³³⁵ However, in September of the same year (1798) Sultan Selim forged alliance with the British and Russians and removed pro-French ministers from his council and confiscated French commercial property around the empire.

³³⁴ A military caste who reigned Egypt in favour of the Ottoman Empire from the thirteenth century until 1811.

³³⁵ Juan Cole says derisively that "Bonaparte, isolated from France by the British blockade and faced with a hostile population and endemic Bedouin and town revolts, adopted the Qur'an as his shield and the promotion of the Muslim clerics as his program. The French Jacobins, who had taken over Notre Dame for the celebration of a cult of Reason and had invaded and subdued the Vatican, were now creating Egypt as the world's first modern Islamic Republic". See *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007, page 130.

This is not to say that his expedition was merely a political conquest and did not have any Enlightenment and Revolutionary rhetoric, especially when he considers the French Republic as a continuation of the ancient Roman and Greek civilisations. But rather, his army was accompanied by a veritable section of scholars, fully prepared to carry out a detailed examination of this foreign culture, whether or not it was a means of wielding coercive power on Egypt as a strategy of European colonialism or as a part of specific anxieties inherent in the Western society or as a means for individual members of French society to identify themselves as opposed to an equally well identified other.³³⁶ Julie Kalman says that “The initial work of Napoleon’s intellectual army gained momentum following his campaign, and, through the first half of the nineteenth century, the great scholar of the Orient Silvestre de Sacy—who was to train a generation of Orientalists—led the charge of academics, writers, artists, and adventurers who served as mediators for those in France, interpreting and packaging the Orient for French consumption”.³³⁷

But to grasp the most central Enlightenment-inflected source for Romantic orientalism, we have to reverse a bit from Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt into one of the major encouragement of it; who was the French ethnographer and political thinker Constantin Volney (1757 – 1820). Volney travelled widely throughout the Arab world and wrote several books such as *Travels through Syria and Egypt* in 1787, and *The Ruins of Empires* (1791 in France, 1792 in England), the latter of which was a foundational primer for British reformers. Volney declared that Mahomet’s laws are the most “wretched” of any religion, which hinder revolutionary progress as those are quintessentially tyrannical, and he further says that “the convulsions of the governments, and the ignorance of the people, in that quarter of the globe, originate more or less immediately in the Koran, and its morality.”³³⁸ Since his *Travels* is his empirical appraisal of Egyptian strength and weakness and his enlightened republic envisages the downfall of all Muslim regimes, Napoleon banked on Volney’s researches on Islamic civilisation to organize his invasion of Egypt, even

³³⁶ For further details on this debate see (1) Said, Edward w., *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, 2001. (2) Dobie, Madeleine, *Foreign Bodies: Gender, Language and Culture in French Orientalism*, Stanford University Press, California, 2001. (3) Schueller, Malini Johar, *U.S. Orientalism: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790 – 1890*, University of Michigan Press, 1998.

³³⁷ Kalman, Julie, *Sensuality, Depravity and Ritual Murder: The Damascus Blood Libel and Jews in France*, *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Spring/Summer 2007, Indiana University Press, pages 37 - 38.

³³⁸ M. C – F Volney, *Travels through Egypt and Syria, in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785*, translated from the French, Vol. 1, published by John Tiebout, New York, 1798, page 237.

though Napoleon willingly embraced numerous aspects of Islam when he was in Egypt. Edward Said says that “Volney’s assessment was both shrewd and hard to fault since it was clear to Napoleon, as it would be to anyone who read Volney, that his *Voyage* and the *Considerations* were effective texts to be used by any European wishing to win in the Orient”.³³⁹ According to Makdisi *The Ruins of Empires* “may almost be thought of as handbooks for imperial conquest”.³⁴⁰ The book uses Eastern tyranny to symbolize political suppression in general, which starts with a narrator travelling through the Ottoman domains, and all he witnesses in Egypt and Syria is tyranny and wretchedness. The Genius appears in front of him and explains all world religions are tools of crafty politicians and the Ottoman Empire is also destined to follow the fate of other fallen empires in Egypt, Persia, China and so forth.

But when we focus specifically on British Romantic encounters with the Orient, especially with Islam, Edward Said’s eponymous book *Orientalism* – even though he talks not only about British Orientalism - has been exclusively portrayed Western literary engagement with Islam in terms of coercive power, involves in strategies of European colonialism and the exploitation of the Middle East. Utilizing Foucault’s concepts of discourse in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Discipline and Punishment*, Edward Said manifests the link between knowledge and power, to criticize the Western tendency to depict their concept of the Orient as a humanistic one and to obfuscate the ruling imperative of colonial powers in it, Said argues that European concept of the Orient was the dissemination and elaboration of information and belief which they constituted themselves, rather than being constituted by the Orient, and even they produce the Orient “politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period”.³⁴¹ Defining the term Orientalism in three related ways such as (a) as an academic discipline, (b) as a style of thought, (c) as a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient, Said gives emphasis to the third form as “something more historically and materially defined than either of the other two”, and he devotes his assiduous attention towards it, by which he reiterate “Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority

³³⁹ Said, Edward w., *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, 2001, page 81.

³⁴⁰ Makdisi, Saree, *William Blake and the Impossible History of the 1790s*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2003, page 206.

³⁴¹ Said, Edward w., *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, 2001, page 3.

over the Orient”.³⁴² Moreover, he argues that European culture obtained “strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self”,³⁴³ and he establishes his argument after a long discussion that modern Orientalist theory and praxis should not be understood “as a sudden access of objective knowledge about the Orient, but as a set of structures inherited from the past, secularized, redisposed, and re-formed by such disciplines as philology, which in turn were naturalized, modernized, and laicized substitutes for (or versions of) Christian supernaturalism”.³⁴⁴

Martha Pike Conant, in her 1908 study, entitled *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* categorizes the important varieties of oriental tales which gained in immense popularity in the period before 1790, into four by type, such as imaginative, moralistic, philosophic and Satiric and she calls these tales an episode in the development of British Romanticism.³⁴⁵ She further argues that amplified first-hand knowledge of the East and copious translations of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit literary texts initiated by Sir William Jones radically differentiated the orientalist literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’ from those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’. But, according to Edward Said, the range of representation of the Orient in the West expanded enormously after the last third of the eighteenth century and after William Jones, Anquetil-Duperron and after Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 the West came to know the Orient more scientifically, so as to live there with more authority and discipline than theretofore. The techniques of the West attained expanded scope and greater refinement to receive the Orient and the newborn science for viewing the linguistic Orient was a whole web of related scientific interests. He continues: “William Beckford, Byron, Goethe, and Hugo restructured the Orient by their art and made it colours, lights, and people visible through their images, rhythms, and motifs. At most, the “real” Orient provoked a writer to his vision; it very rarely guided it”.³⁴⁶

Focusing upon anxieties and instabilities in the Romantic discourse of the Orient rather than its positivities and totalities, Nigel Leask rejects Said’s denomination of Orientalism as a ‘closed

³⁴² Ibid, page 3.

³⁴³ Ibid, page 3.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, page 122.

³⁴⁵ Conant, Martha Pike, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century*, The Columbia University Press, New York, 1908.

³⁴⁶ Said, Edward w., *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, 2001, page 22.

system', because, neither anxieties of empire in the writings of British Romantic writers, according to him, can "be laid on any such procrustean bed", nor the cultural imaginary of British Romantic writings be hermitically sealed so simply "from the practical effects, the resistances, and accommodations of the colonial encounter".³⁴⁷ But, whereas he approbates the fact that in the British Romantic literature, the representation of oriental 'Other' was usually a monological construct, he showcases as well the variations of internal and external pressures which determine and undermine such representations. The anxieties about the 'Other', which British Romantic writers consciously or unconsciously articulated in their writings, do not persuade Leask to argue that they neither demonstrate any plan to subvert the imperialist project nor sought simply to endorse it. While Robert Southey was an explicit supporter of imperialism, Byron opposed it at least nominally and even Shelley perceived that the British imperialism plays a form of revolutionary politics to carry out universal enlightenment. Nigel Leask says that "Byron reduces the imperialist Self to a level with its oriental Other; but in so doing he in effect perpetuates the prejudice of the East/West binary opposition whilst attacking the ideology of empire which it empowers".³⁴⁸

Jerome McGann's *The Romantic Ideology* of 1983 was a groundbreaking study, since it precipitated a return to political and historical readings of the Romantic period with its class and gender ramifications, which was earlier generally considered as a literary and aesthetic movement. The French Revolution, Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, Greek revolt against Turkish domination, the impeachment of Warren Hastings, who was the Governor of Bengal, the loss of American colonies, the campaign to abolish the slave-trade, the procurement of new colonies in African and in the Mediterranean, the shift of intense imperial concentration from the western to the eastern hemispheres, the dramatic escalation in the exercise of state power as a reaction to the revolutionary situation within Britain itself etc. were some of the very significant political developments in this period, which marked a shift in the paradigms and policies of imperial power and in the outlook of the intellectuals and general public alike. The period witnessed the interaction between literary orientalism and the administrative or political practices of imperialism, which exemplified due to the greater British involvement in Indian administration, such as William Pitt's East India Company Act of 1784, and the 'worthy' resolutions followed

³⁴⁷ Leask, Nigel, *British Romantic Writers and the East*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1992, page 2.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid*, page 4.

by the impeachment of the first Governor General of India, Warren Hastings, who was accused of misconduct and corruption during his time in Calcutta, and the British involvement in the post-invasion era Egypt etc. “Indeed, the Romantic period is a watershed in colonial history, witnessing a move from a protectionist colonial system, based upon mercantilist economic principles, to a free-trade empire with a political and moral agenda, proverbially described, after Kipling's poem, as 'the white man's burden’”.³⁴⁹

Internally, not in consequence of a single cataclysmic event, but rather, several decades of gradual changes, deeply influenced by the culture of modernization in the context of the aforementioned political events in the Romantic period, Britain went through considerable changes, which also played sterling roles in bringing about the British social formation. Economically, since the period marked a significant shift from the pre-eminence of trade and commerce towards the pre-eminence of industrial production, it was a shift towards a properly modern mode of capitalism, even though it was only in an embryonic form. Since the overall cultural changes of the time such as in attitudes, relations, perspectives, knowledges, and practices were contingent on the political and economic transitions of the period, Makdisi says that “Modernization must be understood from the very beginning as an overall cultural development, and not merely as a socio-economic process from which we might only in a secondary sense abstract either a free-floating or a superstructural notion of cultural ‘‘modernity’’.³⁵⁰ Romanticism appeared alongside the emergence of modernization and it mounted the initial considerable opposition to the culture of modernization as well, including imperialism, from the early onset, even though its endeavours were largely doomed to failure. For Makdisi, modern capitalism and imperialism – and even modernization too – were global processes, not specifically British or European phenomena, and for the proper understanding of the British romantic developments we have to understand other developments such as in India, in the Arab world, in Africa and elsewhere in the world including the current developments of our own time. Even the fountainhead of the present day globalization Makdisi maps out in the cultural politics of imperial modernization in the same Romantic period.

³⁴⁹ *Romanticism and Colonialism: texts, contexts, issues*, Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson, in *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writings and Empire, 1780 – 1830*, ed. by Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson, Cambridge University Press, New York, and London, first published in 1998, digitally published in 2005, page 3.

³⁵⁰ Makdisi, Saree, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1998, page 4.

But the question still remains unanswered; how Islam came to one of the focal points of Romantic writings? Humberto Garcia's groundbreaking study on radical Protestant accounts of Islamic republicanism, - in which the Prophet of Islam restored constitutional rule³⁵¹ - depicts the political imagination of various eighteenth-century and Romantic-era writers, who have tended to look askance at the democratic principles of Georgian Britain, its overseas empires, and revolutionary France. By the eighteenth century, many Christian deists, nonconformists and Unitarians gave preference to Mahometanism over the dogmatic Christianity, which was codified in the Anglican Church and state. Deists such as Thomas Morgan, Peter Annet and Matthew Tindal variously utilized Islamic dogmatic monotheistic belief or *Tawhīd* to criticize the scriptural basis of revelation, apostolic succession, liturgical practices, the incarnation, the Trinity, miracles, original sin etc. Similarly, seeing as the Corporation Act of 1662 and the Test Act of 1673 still remained in effect after the Toleration Act of 1689, many nonconformists were excluded from citizenship, and the Anglican state interdicted Unitarians, Catholics, Quakers and antitrinitarians from holding public office, being given preferment, teaching in schools, suing or using any bill in the course of law, becoming guardians, executors, or administrators, and gaining degrees from Oxford and Cambridge etc. The heretical beliefs of the Unitarians were further penalized by the Blasphemy Act of 1698, and they were widely considered as supporters of French Jacobinism. The Birmingham riots of 1791 showcase the utmost degree of anti-Unitarian sentiment, in which a "Church and King" mob set fire to two Unitarian chapels and numerous houses belonging to prominent Unitarians. In 1792, their petitions to remove legal disabilities were denied in Parliament, but later in 1813, that was approbated with the enactment of the Trinity Act.

In this context, instead of revealed religion and scriptural authority, deism evinced avid interest in natural religion and pursued detailed explorations in several primitive monotheisms such as Arian, Ebonite, Jewish and Islamic to devise republican-democratic models to fight against these inequalities. To challenge Christo-centric history and politics, deists managed to write a book in comparativist study from the perusal of scriptures alongside profane history, which was entitled

³⁵¹ In 1982, Norman O. Brown wrote an essay entitled *The Prophetic Tradition*, which blazed a trail and brought about a paradigm shift in the study of Islamic republicanism, in which Brown put forward the argument that the Prophet's seventh-century mission was the first "Protestant Reformation" to convalesce a Mosaic prophetic revelation, viz. Islam stands for returning to the original Mosaic theocratic or theopolitical idea. Brown, Norman O., *The prophetic Tradition*, in *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 21, No. 3, published by Boston University, U.S.A., 1982, pages 367 – 386.

Historica monotheistica and that served radical dissenters well in their fight against exclusionist Anglican establishment. Garcia says that “For many English nonconformists, Islam offers a renovated constitutional idiom for reclaiming political subjectivity and national identity, reworking the universal ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity into a new vocabulary for redefining the power struggle among state sovereignty, church authority, and the people”.³⁵² Moreover, Islamic republicanism has already started with Henry Stubbe’s *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* (c. 1671), which was a subversive work that exposes Mahomet as an astute legislator who reinstated primitive Christianity’s republican order. Christian deists regularly used Islamic tolerance as a beating stick against these inequalities throughout these periods.³⁵³

At the same time, in contrast to Judaism and other monotheisms, Islam presented theologically the longest and greatest threat to the Christian narrative of redemption on the one side, and politically in the form of socio-economic and military supremacy of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires on the other. For instance, Robert Wilkinson E. Bakler’s map *Eslam or the Countries Which Have Professed the Faith of Mahomet* (1804, 1817), would have taught English Protestants about the speedy expansion of “Mahometan Sovereignities” in Afro-Eurasia and India, since diverse caliphates and sultanates were invading western European countries from the late seventh to the early nineteenth century. Since the map showcased the successful spread of an opponent prophetic faith, which can blot out Christianity’s centrality in the world affairs, orthodox Christianity was exposed to the imminent danger of total annihilation; the same orthodox Christianity already sees itself as the final political theology capable of superseding all previous revelations.³⁵⁴ Analogous to this map, several literary and academic works plays pivotal roles in perpetuating this fear. According to Said “The European encounter with the Orient, and especially with Islam, strengthened this system of representing the Orient and, as has been suggested by Henri Pirenne, turned Islam into the very epitome of an outsider against which the whole of European civilisation from the Middle Ages on was founded”.³⁵⁵ Besides, the

³⁵² Garcia, Humberto, *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670 – 1840*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, U.S.A., 2012, page 11.

³⁵³ Ibid, pages 5 - 6.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, pages 6 – 7.

³⁵⁵ Said, Edward w., *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, 2001, page 70.

Romantic-era was bristling with Anglo-Islamic encounters in Ottoman Europe, India and elsewhere in the Muslim world, which conditioned positive and negative perceptions of Islam.

In this context, Islam and Mahometan figure played pivotal roles as a major medium for imagining cultural transmission and transformation. On the one hand, orthodox Anglicans resorted into the Mahometan Christian bogymen to justify and rationalize the exclusion of the aforesaid dissenting Christian groups, and they easily construe a pro-Mahometan epic as a conspiracy against the British establishment inspired by French Jacobinism. On the other, radical dissenters utilized this figure to challenge Anglican national hegemony, which fully cracked down on revolutionary fervour inside Britain by 1790s, and strengthened missionary and imperialist zeal abroad.³⁵⁶ Garcia says that “From the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century, Islamic republicanism captivated the radical Anglo-Protestant imagination and redefined reformed orthodoxy in England, North America, and the transatlantic world, only to be silenced by the anti-Islamic sentiments that gripped Victorian culture after the 1857 Indian Mutiny”.³⁵⁷ Even though Coleridge celebrated Mahometanism in the beginning, he eschewed it later. In 1840, Thomas Carlyle called attention of the people to Prophet Mahomet and introduced him as a national icon worthy of hero worship. He put his name into the group of great leaders such as Luther, Cromwell, and Napoleon, and depicted him as a pioneer republican in modern Britain. Southey’s protagonist Thalaba is almost the Prophet, and his defeat of the evil sorcerers manifest his fascination with early Islam’s power to create revolutionary movements, and its intrinsic propensity for liberation and emancipation by toppling empires.³⁵⁸ In a self-portrait sketch, one of the great British Romantic poets William Blake renamed himself “Mahomet”, and depicted

³⁵⁶ Accepting these historical facts, Einboden delineates the immediate reason for widespread romantic depiction of Mahomet is Napoleon’s Egyptian invasion. He says that “Fascinated by Napoleon’s forceful incursion into Egypt, invading Alexandria exactly a year earlier – in July 1798 – Romantic poets reveled in both Revolutionary and Oriental themes, picturing the Prophet’s career as an ambivalent allegory for Napoleon’s conquests”. Einboden, Jeffrey, *Islam and Romanticism: Muslim Currents from Goethe to Emerson*, Oneworld publication, London, 2014, page 81.

³⁵⁷ Garcia, Humberto, *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670 – 1840*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, U.S.A., 2012, page 13. Moreover, Garcia further says that “From Stubbe to Reid, Mahometanism was a useful bricolage medium for a diverse group of writers from various political and religious backgrounds. John Toland, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Edmund Burke, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Percy Shelley variously understood Mahometanism to provide both a model and an idiom for the definition of political liberty”. See Ibid, page 10.

³⁵⁸ *Coleridge’s Sequel to Thalaba and Robert Southey’s Prequel to Christabel*, in *Coleridge, Romanticism and the Orient: Cultural Negotiations*, ed. by David Vallins, Kaz Oishi and Seamus Perry, published by Bloomsbury, London, 2013, pages 55 – 70.

him not simply as a “Poetic Genius” latent in all religions, but rather, he finds his reincarnation in an English poet. Contrary to the traditional Western stereotypes like a turban-wearing, dark-skinned despot, Mahomet; the Blakean poet, was a romantic hero fighting against empire. (More discussion on the romantic depiction of Mahomet is yet to come in this chapter)



William Blake, *Mahomet*, 1819–1825. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of F. B. Vanderhoef, Jr.

Romantic Writers' Encounters with Islam

At the end of January 1800, Weimar theatre debuted a new play entitled *Mahomet: Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen* which means *Mahomet: A Tragedy in Five Acts*, written by Goethe. The play was neither original nor new; instead, it was a German translation of a French play written by Voltaire, entitled *Le Fanatisme, ou Mahomet le Prophete*, which means *Fanaticism, or Mahomet the Prophet*, which was initially staged in 1741, and the play adapted Islamic history to ridicule

religious hypocrisy and fanaticism in European hierarchy. He translated the play because in the autumn of 1799, Schiller regularly consulted Goethe to consider translating Voltaire's *Mahomet*, and when Goethe completed the translation Schiller wrote a dedicatory poem to him titled *An Goethe, al ser den Mahomet von Voltaire auf dir Bühne brachte* which means *To Goethe, on his Staging of Voltaire's Mahomet*. But when he translated the play from French into German, Goethe altered the play's very title by dropping religious 'fanaticism' and he merely refers to the prophet's name: Mahomet. In the 1770s, while he was in his early twenties, Goethe wrote his own play, *Mahomet*, which associates his prophetic protagonist with natural power and sublime beauty, not with religious imposture like in his later German rendition. Later he transformed it into poetry, and published in 1774, with the title *Mahomet-Gesang* i.e. *Song to Mahomet*, which is the most powerful testament of his romantic appreciation of the prophet. Contrary to its Islamic identity, the poem's settings and stanzas strike a chord in European art, and the stereotypical desert and harems vanish, and the prophet protagonist associates with a familiar European environment, rather than a far-off orient.

Goethe learned Arabic under the prominent Orientalist and theologian G. E. G. Paulus (d. 1851), not only for approaching Muslim sources without mediation and avoiding the necessity of reading Western renditions, but rather, "In no [other] language, perhaps, is spirit, word and script so primordially bound together".³⁵⁹ He was also fascinated by Persian language and literature, especially after reading Joseph Hammer's translation of Ḥāfiz's poems. In 1819, Goethe published his collection of poems *West-Eastern Divan* offering a unique fusion of East and West, with two distinct titles i.e. on the right-hand page the German title reads: *West-östlicher Divan von Goethe* (The West-Eastern Poetry Collection of Goethe) and on the left-hand page the Arabic title is *Al-Dīwan al-Sharq Li-l Mu'llif al-'Gharbī* (The Eastern Poetry Collection of the Western Author).³⁶⁰ The collection comprises twelve Books and more than two hundred distinct poems, each of which has two titles, one in Persian and the other in German. Dialogue between

³⁵⁹ These lines are from Goethe's own letter to his friend Christian Heinrich Schlosser, which was written on 23rd January, 1815. Quoted here from *Islam and Romanticism*, Jeffrey Einboden, Oneworld Publication, London, 2014, page 61.

³⁶⁰ During his trenchant criticism of European orientalist thinkers, Edward Said held out German Orient, especially Goethe, as an example of someone who was capable of bypassing anti-orientalist prejudice. Said talks about the difference of German Orient from Anglo-French versions of it, and he refers to Goethe's aforesaid book among Friedrich Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*. See Said, Edward w., *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, India, 2001, page 19.

different figures across mythologies, scriptures and histories, adhering to their own diverse cultures and commitments, Goethe's collection illustrates an ample cast of characters such as Persian poets, Qur'ānic patriarchs, and even sometimes the prophet of Islam himself.

In 1799, Coleridge and Southey decided to write a grand collaborative oriental Miltonic epic on the prophet of Islam Mohammed's life, which was provisionally titled *The Flight and Return of Mohammad*, but Coleridge jotted down only the opening invocation of it, even though the idea was that the former would write the first book and the latter the second, and so on. Interestingly enough, this collaborate literary endeavour just started after the return of Coleridge from Germany after comprehending German literary atmosphere deeply influenced by Goethe's views, he was also influenced by biblical criticism, Orientalism and German philosophy etc. This poem was not contingent only on the same material Southey was using for writing *Thalaba*, namely, George Sale's translation of the Koran (1734) and D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1697). The fourteen-line epigraph was written in 1799, opening with the celebration of the flight and return of Mohammed, and portrays him as a Protestant revolutionary, who was the "Warrior of Mecca" and "crush'd the blasphemous Rites of the Pagan / And idolatrous Christians. – For veiling the Gospel of Jesus".³⁶¹ The poem's opening is as follows: "Utter the song, O my Soul! The flight and return of Mohammed, / Prophet and Priest, who scatter'd abroad both Evil and Blessing, / Huge wasteful Empires founded and hallow'd slow Persecution, / Soul-withering".³⁶²

Even though these lines were written by Coleridge, Tim Fulford argues that all these ideas were a typical Southey agenda rather than a Coleridgean one, because "the empire-building power of religion, the self-righteous relish for religious violence, the destruction of idolatry by an austere monotheist in the grip of his own vision had featured in Southey's first epic *Joan of Arc* (1796) and in the joint work *The Fall of Robespierre*. But 'Mohammed' also bore a certain similarity the first part of 'Kubla Khan' – in which an Eastern potentate also founds a civilisation by force of

³⁶¹ Beer, John, *Coleridge's Play of Mind*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2010, page 27. Moreover, Garcia argues that Coleridge's depiction of the prophet as an "enthusiast Warrior" divulges a just social equality in the time when the English dissenters became disenchanted with the French Revolution, mainly after Napoleon's imperialist ambitions became apparent after his Egyptian invasion. Here, as the new republican prophet, Mahomet replaces Napoleon and in Southey's *Kubla Khan* also the revolutionary prophet ambivalently points forward to the vision of egalitarian Christ. Garcia, Humberto, *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670 – 1840*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, U.S.A., 2012, pages 2 - 4.

³⁶² *Ibid*, page 27.

arms”.³⁶³ As decided earlier, Southey started writing the second book in a very promising, dramatic and suspenseful manner, describing the events pertaining to the Prophet’s flight from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622. Even though the Quraysh encircled his home at night, the Prophet escaped laying his cousin Ali in his bed, and on the way to Medina, he hid in a cave with some of his close disciples. After discovering the deception they attempted to search for his hiding place, and “through Mecca they scatter the tidings: / ‘He has fled, has discover’d our plans, has eluded our vengeance. / ‘Saw ye the steps of his flight? where lurks he, the lying blasphemer? / Now to the chase, to the chase! seize now the bow & the quiver; / Now with the swords & the spear, - ye stubborn of Mecca! pursue him, - / Seek him now to the North & the South, to the sunset & the sunrise, / Follow, follow the Chosen one’s flight! They rush from the city / Over the plain they pursue him, pursue him with cries & with curses – / Sounds that rug o’er the plain, & rung in the echoing mountain; / And Mecca received in her streets the din of their clamorous uproar”.³⁶⁴ Analogous to his Joan of Arc, who believed his own inspiration, whereas others are not, Southey raises doubt about whether Mohammed himself believed his own claims, even though he argues himself he was chosen by God. Similarly, Southey celebrates Ali’s radical iconoclastic mission and highlights Mohammed’s lack of courage, because his views on the Prophet were inspired by the writings of the eighteenth-century deists, all of whom consider the prophets of history as flawed humans. Islam has also incurred institutionalisation due to state corruption; nevertheless, he praises the pristine simplicity of Islamic iconoclasm. Anyway, after a hundred and nine lines, in January 1800 he also abandoned this poetic venture.

After giving up his plan to write *Mohammad*, Southey gravitated forth to write *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), an epic in Romantic Orientalism, which showcases his shift from religious history to mythic fantasy. Francis Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review* severely criticized him as he is one of the leaders of a newfangled poetic school: Romanticism. This literary work is inspired not by any direct Islamic figure, but it is indebted to Robert Heron’s English rendition of a French fiction of 1792, entitled *Arabian Tales, or A Continuation of the Arabian Nights Entertainments*. During the Abbasid Caliphate of Harūn-al-Rashīd, a race of pagan magicians resided in a place under the sea called “Domdaniel”, who seek to escape their predicted defeat at

³⁶³ Coleridge’s *Sequel to Thalaba and Robert Southey’s Prequel to Christabel*, in *Coleridge, Romanticism and the Orient: Cultural Negotiations*, ed. by David Vallins, Kaz Oishi and Seamus Perry, published by Bloomsbury, London, 2013, page 57.

³⁶⁴ Southey, Robert, *Mohammed II*, lines 19 – 28, quoted here from *Ibid*, page 58.

the hand of a conquering hero of God. The young Muslim Thalaba's family has been massacred, and his mother died while they were crossing the desert. He lives in pastoral simplicity as he was adopted by the patriarch Moath, and he acquired a demonic ring from the dead body of the magician Abdaldar, and after consulting the powers of that ring he learns about his preordained mission to destroy the Domdaniel. Overcoming various temptations, trials and setbacks, Thalaba stands firm to his mission and his absolute faith in God's will. Thalaba goes with his father's sword in hand to execute the true prophetic doctrine of Abraham, Moses and Christ through obliterating the idol-worshipping foes of his religion, and carrying out the mission of fighting with fantastic characters, defeating a cohort of evil magicians (the priesthood) and protecting maidens. Southey uses several Qur'ānic names such as "the Prophet Houd", "the Garden of Irem", "Al-Araf" (a limbo between Heaven and Hell), "the Fruit of Zaccoum", etc, and he appends an explanatory note about the fruit, and he also uses characters from Muslim literary culture such as a celestial bird "the Simourg" which resides on mount "Kaf". But when we reach in the final episode of the poem, dawn upon us that Thalaba is "the Prophet of God", a closely analogous figure to 'Mohammed' who was dropped by Southey and Coleridge earlier.³⁶⁵ Finally, when the protagonist suicidally strikes at "the Idol's heart", both the "Dom Daniel" den and the protagonist himself destroyed, and moreover, even though "all were crushed", Thalaba enters into the Paradise and reunites with his lost beloved Oneiza, who has been recreated as a "Hourri".

Walter Savage Landor's *Gabir* exerted deep influence on Southey, and his *Thalaba* owes its poetic inspiration to it, and even Landor came out in material support of his *The Curse of Kehama*, which was published in 1810 and earned him the denomination of British poet laureate in 1813. Landor published *Gabir* anonymously in 1798, comprising seven short books in epic style and substance, inspired by a thirteenth-century Arabic Romance from Egypt. An English translation of Murtada ibn al-Khafif's (lived in Cairo between 1154/55 and 1237) book was published in 1672, entitled *The Egyptian History*, which contains a section on this romance, but Landor got this story from Clara Reeve's collection *Progress of Romance* (1785), which's last section contains a readaption of Murtada's romance. Gabir was an ancient prince of Spain (the

³⁶⁵ Garcia argues that Southey redrafted the unrealized oriental epic on the flight and return of Mohammad in the narrative of *Thalaba*, not simply because he refuses to accept the Prophet, as many critics and biographers have argued, but rather, he wants to bring about what Coleridge's "Mahomet" failed to attain: perfecting an allegorical narration of Islamic republicanism that effectively distances itself from, yet supplements, the Napoleonic principles of the Egyptian campaign. Humberto Garcia, *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670 – 1840*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, U.S.A., 2012, page 173.

King of Gades) who fell in love with his opponent, the Queen of Egypt, Charoba, and is deceived by the witchcraft of her nurse, Dalica, and her sister, Mythyr, dying after putting on a poisoned robe on his wedding banquet. In book 6 of the poem Gebir's brother Tamar, who is a poor shepherd, fell in love with an Egyptian nymph and she takes him over Europe in a magical flight. When they reached over the island of Corsica, the birth place of Napoleon, the nymph prophetically predicts the fall of all tyrannical monarchs, including Gabir and Charoba. But Landor's political stance was ambivalent here, because he was initially a sympathiser of the French revolution, and his poem Gabir praises Napoleon ('a mortal man above all mortal praise'), and condemns George III.³⁶⁶ In 1820, Landor wrote a series of fantasy conversation between factual figures, which reconstruct real history through fictional exchange, titled *Imaginary Conversations*. In 1824, in his second series titled *Dialogue of Sovereigns and Statesmen*, he singled out specifically Islamic subjects, dramatizing a conversation between "Mahomet and Serguis" (Dialogue 17), a satirical squib mocking Muslim identities, and "Soliman and Mufti" (Dialogue 14), which addresses Qur'ān and its translation i.e. when Soliman talks about the need of translating the Qur'ān into the languages of all nations, the court's orthodox Mufti resists it with a host of reasons, and after more arguments the Sultan suspends the order to widely translate the Qur'ān.

Similar to Southey, some other Romantic writers are also influenced by Arabian tales, namely *A Thousand and One Nights*, and even sometimes their heroes liken themselves to the Arabian heroes. For instance, when referring to his outstanding achievement, such as attaining the summit of his desires and touting all the "wisest men since the creation of the world" by his scientific advance, Mary Shelley's Romantic hero Frankenstein says comparing himself to the Arabian hero: "I was like the Arabian who had been buried with the dead, and found a passage to life aided only by one glimmering, and seemingly ineffectual light".³⁶⁷ Here, Mary Shelley identifies her European protagonist Frankenstein too closely with the Arabian protagonist Sinbad, who had been interred alive and escaped from his own wife's tomb. Similarly, in the fifth chapter of the novel, the Monster suddenly runs off from the scene, leaving Frankenstein bereft, but

³⁶⁶ While talks about Landor's inability to produce a sustained anti-colonial rhetoric in his poem Gabir, Nigel Leask further adds: "The poem indicted British imperialism whilst obliquely praising the American colonialists and the Napoleonic intervention of Egypt". See *British Romantic Writers and the East*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1992, page 26.

³⁶⁷ Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft, *Frankenstein*, Complete text, Commentary & Glossary, edited by Dr. Stephen C. Behrendt, CLIFFSCOMPLETE, published by Hungry Minds, New York, 2001, page 54.

Frankenstein's childhood friend Clerval – the most Romantic of Mary Shelley's protagonists - arrives thereafter, with whose arrival the story receives a new momentum. Clerval becomes his confidant and joins with him at the University of Ingolstadt, and he tries to transfer his attention into more foreign interests. During his recalling, while he juxtaposing between himself and his friend Clerval, Frankenstein himself says: "The Persian, Arabic and Sanscrit [sic] languages engaged his attention, and I was easily induced to enter on the same studies".³⁶⁸ Here, he senses relief from his recent trauma and terror when he turns towards the oriental language and literature, and in the concluding sentences of this sixth chapter an Eastern atmosphere once again becomes apparent when Clerval fashions stories for Frankenstein "in imitation of the Persian and Arabic writers".³⁶⁹

Analogous to several British Romantic poems such as Shelley's *Alastor*, an Arab maiden appears also in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* named Safie, who suddenly appears in chapter 13 altering the direction of the novel and sustaining its drama, even though she makes a brief appearance. After a male character, Clerval, who romantically craves for the East, Safie, who is herself hails from the East, appears in the country cottage of the impoverished and despondent De Lacey family, which comprises a blind father, a son Felix and a daughter Agatha, into whom Safie easily assimilates. By listening voyeuristically to Safie's study, the Monster discovers not only the use of language, but also literary culture, and from Volney's *Ruins of Empire* he acquires "a cursory knowledge of history" as well. Now he is able to read and make sense of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Plutarch's *Lives* and Goethe's *Werther* etc. all of which connote the only path to civilisation. Here, Safie's oriental Islamic-Christian background merits substantive attention, because even her personal genealogy reported as follows: "Safie related that her mother was a Christian Arab, seized and made a slave by the Turks; recommended by her beauty, she had won the heart of the father of Safie, who married her. The young girl spoke in high and enthusiastic terms of her mother, who, born in freedom, spurned the bondage to which she was now reduced. She instructed her daughter in the tenets of her religion and taught her aspire to higher powers of intellect and an independence of spirit forbidden to the female followers of Mahomet".³⁷⁰ Safie's father was a wealthy Turkish merchant and her mother was a

³⁶⁸ Ibid, page 70.

³⁶⁹ Ibid, page 72.

³⁷⁰ Ibid, page 121.

Christian Arab, who was taken into servitude by the Turks and then was married by Safie's father. Unlike her Turkish father, her Christian Arab mother was a wise and discerning woman, who instilled in her daughter in conjunction with her Christian religious tenets, a love for learning and independence of spirit which was forbidden to all Muslim women. For this reason, she speaks "in high and enthusiastic terms of her mother". The name 'Safie' means in Arabic "pure" or "clear", and even though we are not sure whether that was given intentionally or not, she underwent purification and cleansing under her mother's tutelage. At the same time, when Mary Shelley shifting the focus onto the Muslim identity and evoking an Islamic sympathy in the beginning of this 14th chapter, by depicting Safie's father as a European victim, her treatment of Islam becoming more nuanced. Because Safie's father was targeted and thrown into prison in Paris due to "his religion and wealth rather than the crime alleged against him".³⁷¹

But in the case of Lord Byron, who was the most iconic poet of the second generation British Romanticism, his encounters with Islam was not imaginative, but rather, that was originating from direct experiences, conversations with Muslims, and wearing Ottoman dresses, since he was wandering through several actual Muslim lands at will. He set forth his journey towards the East in 1809, after which he published each of his *Turkish Tales*, which include *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), and *The Siege of Corinth* (1816). In the East he directed his authorial attention mainly towards women. His first tale *Giaour* takes up the adventure of a bondswoman named Leila, who was the enslaved concubine of the Turkish "Hassan" and later killed by him for her love affair with Giaour. Referring to her celestial beauty, Byron refuses to accept that her body is made of clay: "Yea, Soul, and should our prophet say / That form was nought but breathing clay, / By Alla! I would answer nay".³⁷² In *The Bride of Abydos*, the heroine Zuleikha sits in her lone chamber "Near these, with emerald rays beset, / (How could she thus that gem forget?), / Her mother's sainted amulet, / Whereon engraved the Koorsee text / Could smooth this life and win the next".³⁷³ Later her lover Selim enters and he praises the beauty of her voice by likening it to "the Muezzin's strain from Mecca's wall". Subsequently, the descriptions of her sudden tragic death is quite distressing,

³⁷¹ Ibid, page 120.

³⁷² Byron, Lord, *The Giaour*, lines 480 – 82.

³⁷³ Lord Byron, *The Bride of Abydos*, lines 67 – 71. Here the Koorsee text stand for Āyat al-Kursī, which is a Qur'ānic verse referring to the 'Throne of God' in the second chapter, verse number 255, and Muslim believers attach particular importance to this verse.

because even her handmaids weep at the gate and the silent slaves with folded arms are looking blue, against the backdrop of the sounds of “Wu-wulleh” and the Koran-chanting. These are only some examples and a detailed discussion will be a bit discursive.

Shelley’s Romantic Encounters with Islam

Shelley’s encounters with Islam starts as early as the age of seventeen when he wrote the poem which was included in the *Esdaile Notebook*, entitled *Henry and Louisa* in 1809. The poem deals with the issue of the British invasion of Egypt in 1807,³⁷⁴ which was an unstable territory of the Ottoman Empire. Besides Egypt, the British Empire had been expanding steadily in the East for decades. The poem decries devastating war and its religious justification, by depicting its truly destructive worthlessness, even though in the first part of the poem one of the title character Louisa sorrowfully but courageously sends Henry off to war by patriotically supporting it. The second part portrays a battleground in Egypt and propounds the terrible disasters of war, in which Egypt is a victim and Britain is a self-interested aggressor. While the disastrous war goes on, Louisa searches for her beloved on the shores of Egypt. The narrator utilizes these scenes and Louisa’s discussion with a soldier to portray the calamitous scenes of carnages and pillages to pillory Britain’s entire war efforts. Finally when she finds the dying Hendry she commits suicide.

Shelley’s poem *Zeinab and Kathema* was possibly written in June 1811, dovetailing incidents from Gothic and oriental romance as a virulent attack against British imperialist depredation abroad. The story is taking place in an idyllic Kashmir village, which was influenced by William Jones’s *Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations* and James Lawrence’s *Empire of the Nairs*. But the major direct influence was Miss Owenson’s novel *The Missionary*, which was also taking place in Kashmir but its heroine Luxima is a Hindu Brahmin girl. The story of *Zeinab and Kathema* depicts the sufferings of a Kashmiri couple, (Shelley writes as Cashmire) inflicted by the unjust British imperial ethos. The poem starts with the picturing of the woebegone protagonist

³⁷⁴ Several writers and historians argue that the subject of this poem is the British invasion of Egypt in 1807 and Kenneth Neill Cameron proffers evidences for his argument in his detailed discussion on it. See *The Esdaile Notebook*, ed. Kenneth Neill Cameron, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1963, page 261.

Kathema,³⁷⁵ whose sweetheart Zeinab³⁷⁶ is a Kashmiri damsel, who was kidnapped by British plunderers and carried to England, where she compelled to live a life of prostitute. Kathema approaches some British sailors to take him into Britain, but they robbed him of all of his belongings and led him into the dismal situation which his beloved is already placed in. Finally *Kathema* discovers Zeinab's body swings on an English gibbet, with full of worms and blue unnatural lights.

His unfinished prose piece dedicated to *The Moral Teaching of Jesus Christ*, talks about the similarities and differences between the two great religious founders; Messiah and Muhammad. Shelley says: "The preachers of the Christian religion urge the morality of Jesus Christ as being itself miraculous and stamped with the impression of divinity. Mahomet advanced the same pretensions respecting the composition of the Koran and, if we consider the number of his followers, with greater success".³⁷⁷ Even though Shelley discovers here an interreligious commonality, he credits Christianity with persuading more followers, whereas the mission of Mahomet advanced with greater success. He raises doubts as to Islam's authenticity by making an allusion to the Prophet's "pretensions" about "the Koran" and its "composition", albeit he seems to admire the prophet by being astonished in his ability to attract a higher number of followers than gossellers.

The Assassins: A Fragment of a Romance was Shelley's unfinished oriental tale of 1814, which was written when Shelley and Mary were travelling in Switzerland along with Jane Clairmont, and Mary edited and transcribed it. Shelley combines the historical account of the Jewish diaspora formed subsequent to General Titu's pillage of Jerusalem in AD 70 with an oriental story about an early antitrinitarian Christian community. This primitive Jewish-Christian people - their principles were essentially Greek - were named as the Assassins after the below-mentioned radical Islamic group, and this Jewish-Christian community abandoned the orthodox Jewish people and established an egalitarian commune in the solitudes of Lebanon after abandoning Jerusalem just before the aforesaid pillage. But the historical Assassins were Nizari Ismailais, a

³⁷⁵ "Upon the lonely beach Kathema lay / Against his folded arm his heart beat fast. / Through gathering tears the Sun's departing ray / In coldness o'er his shuddering spirit past". Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Zeinab and Kathema*, lines 1 – 4.

³⁷⁶ One of the main female characters in Robert Southey's oriental Romantic epic *Thalaba the Destroyer* is also a Zeinab, who appears in the epic as the young Arab warrior Thalaba's widowed mother.

³⁷⁷ Quoted here from the book of Jeffrey Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism, Muslim Currents from Goethe to Emerson*, Oneworld publication, London, 2014, page 135.

mystical branch of Ismailian Shi'ite Islam in eleventh century,³⁷⁸ who established an ideal society in Bethzatanai, a mountainous valley in Lebanon. The Islamic commune acknowledges only the laws of God and practices equal labour and mutual love and did not have even magistrates and priests. This 'Happy Valley' of the Assassins is devoid of human habitation and the corrupted past, from where they have fled, instead, its past is an idealized antiquity. "For ages had this fertile valley lain concealed from the adventurous search of man among mountains of everlasting snow",³⁷⁹ and heaps of monumental marble and splinters of columns were strewn beside the lake and also visible beneath the transparent waves. They studied astrology and magic and were hell-bent on sabotaging orthodox Sunni rule to establish an egalitarian social order. They propagated a Gnostic-dualistic creed which foregrounds the Imam, who is the Prophet Muhammad's inheritor and the "Perfect man" or Holy Spirit, capable of liberating the spirit from a decadent world corrupted by the quarrel of good and evil. Instead of strict adherence to Qur'anic law, their ultimate religious obligation was knowledge/gnosis of true Imam and they reread the Qur'an as an allegorical text holding esoteric truths.

In these works Shelley makes almost a pro-Muslim/Islamic stand, as victims in *Henry and Louisa*, and *Zeinab and Kathema*, and a moderate stand in *The Moral Teaching of Jesus Christ* and he celebrates radical Islamism in *The Assassins*. But in his last two major works such as *The Revolt of Islam* (1817) and *Hellas* (1821) Islam turns out to be an assailant tyrannical faith in the form of Ottoman Empire. Before entering to a detailed discussion on these works, it will be appropriate to give a single glance to the political reason(s) which led him to make this stand. Garcia is of the opinion that by the time Shelley begins writing *The Revolt* he had deserted the celebration of radical, romantic, noninstitutional, egalitarian and pristine doctrines of Shi'ite Islam in *The Assassins* to confront the institutional tyrannical mode of Turkish Islam which

³⁷⁸ During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, wild stories were fabricated by the European crusaders about an extremist radical Shi'ite group led by the "Old Man of the Mountain", who was notorious for conducting secret conspiracies and assassinations. Some Sunni polemicists also promulgated these stories as anti-Shi'ite propaganda, but these stories had spread far and wide through western Orientalist stereotypes, which also remained unquestioned even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mary Shelley writes in her preface to the 1840 edition of Percy Bysshe Shelley's complete works: "The Assassins were known in the eleventh century as a horde of Mahometans living among the recesses of Lebanon, - ruled over by the Old Man of the Mountain; under whose direction various murders were committed on the Crusaders, which caused the name of the people who perpetrated them to be adopted in all European languages, to designate the crime which gave them notoriety". See *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. by Mary Shelley, vol. 1, Edward Moxon, London, 1840, page XI.

³⁷⁹ *Shelley on Love: An Anthology*, ed. by Richard Holms, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1980, page 53.

stands at the expense of Muslim reformist movements in Egypt and Arabia. Since radical romantic egalitarian Islamism drained of any positive political association this time, Shelley thinks that this faith need to be reformed or colonized by the progressive prophets of the West.³⁸⁰ Under the rule of Muhammad Ali (1769 – 1849) Egypt was going through extensive changes towards modernity (see footnote no. 3 in chapter 1) almost rejecting Turkish dictums, and in Arabia the Wahhabi movement was also challenging the Turkish domination, even though that was defeated temporally by the Turkish Sultan Mahmud II. Therefore, in his *A Philosophical View of Reform* (1819 – 1820) Shelley eulogizes both Egyptian ruler and the Wahhabi movement. He says that “In Syria and Arabia the spirit of human intellect has roused a sect of people called Wahabees, who maintain the Unity of God, and the equality of man, and their enthusiasm must go on ‘conquering and to conquer’ even if it must be repressed in its present shape. Egypt having but a nominal dependence upon Constantinople is under the government of the Ottoman Bey, a person of enlightened views who is introducing European literature and arts, and is thus beginning that change which Time, the great innovator, will accomplish in that degraded country; [and] by the same means its sublime enduring monuments may excite lofty emotions in the hearts of the posterity of those who now contemplate them without admiration”.³⁸¹

Now let’s start with *The Revolt of Islam*, which will be a misleading title for the readers in the current context of the conquest of the Middle East by the American multinational capitalism and the rampant terrorist activities to withstand them. The ‘revolt against Islam’ will be a more suitable interpretation of the title, in which Islam represents either one of ‘despotic’ religions or the Ottoman Empire as Shelley intends assault on the Turkish Sultan. Then, in this poem ‘Islam’ stands for any religion that buttresses political exploitation, ergo the “Iberian” priest so perceptible in Istanbul.³⁸² A letter of Byron to Shelley testifies to the common apprehension of Shelley’s portrayal of Islam. Addressing his friend Shelley, Byron wrote: “Sale, the translator of

³⁸⁰Garcia, Humberto, *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670 – 1840*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, U.S.A., 2012, page 207.

³⁸¹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *A Philosophical View of Reform*, Quoted here from *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, Wordsworth Poetry Library, first published in 1994 by Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire, U. K., reset with Introduction and Notes 2002, page 604.

³⁸² Leask further says that “Shelley’s use of the word ‘Islam’ in *The Revolt of Islam*, a poem which makes a point of eschewing the cultural and topographical detail of much contemporary orientalism in order to free the narrative for a more universalist reading, might as well refer to *any* people east of the Mediterranean”. Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1992, page 72.

the Koran, was suspected of being an Islamite, but a very different one from you, Shiloh".³⁸³ Byron affectionately nicknamed Shelley as "Shiloh" and "suspected of being an Islamite", because Shelley's longest poem *The Revolt of Islam* had appeared just a few years previously, in which he celebrated the doctrines of atheism and free love.³⁸⁴ Here, Byron makes a witty comparison between Shelley's 'Islamic' sympathy and George Sale, the venerated British scholar of Islam who translated the Qur'ān, because both are inverse in their identity. The 'Islam' arises in Shelley's poem is totally different from the 'Islam' broached in Sale's earnest academic studies.

In this long poem Shelley critiques domestic nationalism utilizing oriental romance and he articulates the lessons of the French Revolution. Parliamentary reform in Britain was a topic of great concern Shelley utilized as an opportunity to create a literary work which retain liberty, equality and fraternity in Britain after the defeat of Napoleon. The poem connotes colonial empire of the Turks must cave in for the sake of human progress, political and sexual freedom, nonviolence etc. Nevertheless, as Turhan argues that the style and structure of the poem exploits associations in a general way which can have implications for many of his concerns such as the French Revolution, the English suppression of the Irish people, and the growth of England into a global empire etc., even though "Shelley did not extend such universal, free, liberated lifestyle to the Turks, the natives of India, and other "backward" Asian lands".³⁸⁵ The scenes are taking place in Constantinople and modern Greece, and for the tale being "illustrative" Shelley carefully resorts to the most recognizable and characteristically negative images of the Turkish Empire. Shelley was not the only poet utilizes these images but several other British poets did the same, and the most common bad images were: Turk's maltreatment of minority, their inferior commercial practices and their misogynist attitude towards women. Since the Ottoman Empire was generally considered to be despotic and illegitimate, this anti-Turkish liberal agitprop was safe; besides, the Empire was verging on its natural collapse. Through the perennial focus on these hackneyed images, which are undesirable to the emerging British Empire, the conservative writers tried to proffer the positive nature of British imperialism on the one hand, and the liberals

³⁸³ Medwin, Thomas, *Conversations of Lord Byron: Noted During a Residence with his Lordship in the Years 1821 and 1822*, a new edition, printed for Henry Colburn, London, 1824, page 91.

³⁸⁴ Holmes, Richard, *Shelley: the Pursuit*, E. P. Dutton, New York, 1975, page 689.

³⁸⁵ Turhan, Filiz, *The Other Empire: British Romantic Writings about the Ottoman Empire*, Routledge, Now York & London, 2003, page 83.

utilized the images of the decrepit Ottoman Empire to criticize the British quests for imperial desires on the other.

As mentioned previously, following the Egyptian invasion of Napoleon, the Turkish Sultan cut diplomatic relations with France and established ties with the British and Russians, even though that remained ambivalent during this period. But the British Empire was taking generally a pro-Turkish stand by avoiding a strategic alliance with the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali and adroitly shunning from supporting the Greek cause. In this context, Shelley's main political purpose in *The Revolt of Islam* was to denounce the British and European policies abroad, especially, to criticize the British efforts to strengthen its diplomatic relations with the Turks to maintain its imperialist aspirations in the Near East, rather than merely attacking Islam to modernize the Orient by dint of Western secular humanism. But this implicit comparison of the Ottoman Empire to Britain provoked indignation among the British literary circles as what happened as a result of Shelley's *The Revolt*, viz. the *Quarterly Review* angrily responded to the epic, which wrote: "The laws and government on which Mr. Shelley's reasoning proceeds, are the Turkish, administered by a lawless despot; his religion is the Mohammaedan, maintained by servile hypocrites; and his scene for their joint operation Greece, the land full beyond all others of recollections of former glory and independence, now covered with shame and sunk in slavery. We are Englishmen, Christians, free, and independent; we ask Mr. Shelley how his case applies to *us*? or what *we* learn from it to the prejudice of our own institutions?"³⁸⁶

However, after the Peterloo massacre of 1819, reformists had almost faded their hope for peaceful change, and that registers in the evolution of Shelley's poem from *Revolt of Islam* to *Hellas*, whereas the first of which depicts peaceful crowds laying despotic government with the power of "words" ("great is the strength / Of words", *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto IV, lines 156 – 7), the second poem requires more incendiary energies to secure political liberty. In other words, Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud argues that "The two poems manage the fiery figuration of Eastern rage differently: Whereas the *Revolt* channels popular fervour through its heroic poet-legislator, the later works finds no embodiment principle of "representation" to avert the state's insurrectionary

³⁸⁶ *The Quarterly Review*, Vol. XXI, January & April, John Murray, London, 1819, Page 466.

conflagration”.³⁸⁷ The thematic difference between these two poems were not only the mode of intervening Greek revolution, but also the disillusionment with the erosion of the so-called juridical virtue of the British civic freedom, which was pitted against the Turkish military despotism. Because, earlier Jeremy Bentham’s writings such as *Traités de législation civile et pénale* (1802), *Book of Fallacies* (1824), and *Draught of a New Plan for the Organisation of the Judicial Establishment in France* (1790) etc. depicted the obsolete condition of Turkish people, and which further moved on to malign the Turkish people.³⁸⁸ Shelley read his *Traités* in 1814, among other writings, and he delivered his Orientalist argument in his long poem *The Revolt of Islam* (1818) for popular representation in Britain.

In *Hellas*, embodying Islam in the form of the Ottoman Turks, Shelley says that “Islam must fall”, because, it is the “enemies of domestic happiness”. But, whereas Shelley polarizes the Empire on the basis of religion, associating Islam with tyranny and error, he associates Christianity or the British Empire with eternity and civilisation. In this sentence Christianity is almost a synonym of civilisation: “The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilization”.³⁸⁹ In *A Philosophical View of Reform* he talks about the imminent cave-in of the Turkish Empire, after which the deserts of Asia Minor and Greece “will be colonized by the overflowing population of countries less enslaved and debased”.³⁹⁰ Because, the collapse of the Turks will create a political vacuum in Asia Minor, Eastern Europe and in the Near East, on that occasion the warring European imperial nations, which are “less enslaved and debased”, will come to the fore to fill the vacuum. This may pose curious paradox since he was heretofore writing prolifically against colonial invasions. In the same way Lord Byron, who was also hailed as a liberator of Greece, says in his notes to *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* that Greece might be better off as a British colony rather than a Russian one: “The Greeks will never be independent, they will never be

³⁸⁷ Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud, *Radical Orientalism: Rights, Reform, and Romanticism*, Cambridge University Press, U. K., 2015, page 21.

³⁸⁸ For instance, Bentham says in his *Book of Fallacies* that “There is no freedom of the press, no power to complain, in Turkey; yet of all countries it is that in which revolts and revolutions are the most frequent and the most violent”. The *Book of Fallacies* from *Unfinished Papers*, published by John and H. L. Hunt, London, 1824, page 165. And in his *Draught for a New Plan* he says that “In Turkey, no public; no press; no news-papers no National Assembly; no municipal or administrative bodies; no popular elections”. See Chapter II, page 11.

³⁸⁹ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Preface to Hellas*, The Shelley Society, London, 1886, page X.

³⁹⁰ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *A Philosophical View of Reform*.

sovereigns as heretofore, and God forbid they ever should! but they may be subjects without being slaves. Our colonies are not independent, but they are free and industrious, and such may Greece be hereafter”.³⁹¹

Similarly, throughout *Hellas*, Shelley depicts so many Muslim characters in a fiercely hostile manner, which is capable of substantiating the Western essentialism of the East, highlighting the Muslim ‘sensualism’ combining decadent sexuality with intoxication. The very opening of the drama presents the following introduction: “SCENE: A Terrace on the Seraglio. Mahmud (sleeping), an Indian slave sitting beside his Couch. Chorus of Greek Captive Women. We strew these opiate flowers / On the restless pillow.- / They were stript from Orient bowers”.³⁹² This is taking place in a Turkish seraglio, where an Indian slave is sitting beside the sultan’s couch together with a number of Greek captive women. Here, the emphasis on ethnicity and captivity of the slaves and a single Muslim lascivious sultan sexually exploiting them etc. are marking out - apart from Shelley’s commitment to the Greek cause - the occidental anti-Islamic sentiment.³⁹³ Shelley enlarges on to relate Turkish militarism and their malpractices with Islam when the drama further moves forward near to the middle of it, and even he says “the sins of Islam” are to blame for the material decline of the Turks. A succession of messengers turns up in the palace of Sultan Mahmud and predicts his armies forthcoming downfall, and the third messenger further puts forward a surprising evidence for his prophecy: “A Dervise, learned in the Koran, preaches / That it is written how the sins of Islam / Must raise up a destroyer even now”.³⁹⁴ The destruction of Islam is predicted in the preaching of a Sufi ‘Dervise’, who deduce the evidence for his prognostication from the Turks’ own holy book, the Koran.

³⁹¹ *The Works of Lord Byron, including the Suppressed Poems*, complete in one volume, published by A and W Galignani, Paris, 1828, page 92.

³⁹² Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Hellas*, from the opening lines until the third line.

³⁹³ See some more examples of the depiction of Muslim cruelty: “Impale the remnant of the Greeks! Despoil! /Violate! Make their flesh cheaper than dust” (ll. 949–50); “bring torches, sharpen those red stakes, /These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners/Than Greeks. Kill! Plunder! Burn! Let none remain” (ll. 970–72); “Oh keep holy/This jubilee of unrevenged blood! / Kill! Crush! Despoil! Let not a Greek escape!” (ll. 1019–21). “Mahmud: Go ! bid them pay themselves / With Christian blood ! Are there no Grecian virgins / Whose shrieks, and spasms, and tears, they may enjoy? / No infidel children to impale on spears ? / No hoary priests after the patriarch / Who bent the curse against the country’s heart, / Which clove his own at last? Go ! bid them kill: / Blood is the seed of gold”. *Hellas*, 241 – 8)

³⁹⁴ *Ibid*, lines 595 – 597.

But Shelley's unpublished prologue to *Hellas* is fairly sympathetic to real Islam, which concerns the next world; not the worldly politics, which is a conversation taking place in the Heavens between spiritual speakers. Even though this is primarily a dispute between 'Christ' and 'Satan', wrangling 'sons of God' over the future fate of Greece are also appear in this dramatic debate. After Christ's climatic reprimand of Satan and silencing him by a critique of his devilish pride, finally Mahomet enters proclaiming the unity of "the most high God" and cursing those who "divide and multiply" his divinity. Shelley says in Mahomet's words: "Mahomet...Haste thou and fill the waning crescent / With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow / Of Christian night rolled back upon the West, / When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph / From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow".³⁹⁵ Shelley's stance on Islam is deeply ambivalent here, because Mahomet simultaneously rebukes the Christian creed and wishes the "Word / of God" (the sacred writings of the Christian religion) to rise to triumph, and similarly, Mahomet heralds the victory of his religion by saying: "the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph", whereas the "Christian night rolled back upon the West". Nonetheless, in this last published poem of Shelley (his unfinished poem *The Triumph of Life* is the last one), Mahomet; the Prophet of Islam, enters to the scene after Christ's own conclusion and upholds the claim of triumph.

Moreover, on November 8, 1820, while Shelley was in the native region of Romance, namely, Italy, wrote to his friend Thomas Love Peacock: "A schoolfellow of mine from India is staying with me, and we are beginning Arabic together",³⁹⁶ and he wrote to his several friends for the same, and he wrote to Claire Clairmount, who was in Florence seeking to obtain for him an Arabic grammar and dictionary, and even any Arabic book, either printed or manuscript. Medwin says that "We seldom read new works of fiction, but made an exception in favour of *Antar*, which we borrowed from Byron, and found greatly interesting. This Jack-the-Giant-Killer romance, abounds with vivid and picturesque, but overcharged descriptions of the scenery and manners of the tribes of the Desert, and his "Lines from the Arabic" were almost a translation from a translation in that Oriental fiction. *Antar* is a straw that floated for a moment on the stream, and has been engulfed – forgotten. It is an oblivious world".³⁹⁷ *Antar* is a pre-Islamic

³⁹⁵ Ibid, lines 169 – 173.

³⁹⁶ Shelley, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, page 245, quoted here from Jeffrey Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism, Muslim Currents from Goethe to Emerson*, Oneworld publication, London, 2014, page 137.

³⁹⁷ Medwin, Thomas, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. II, Thomas Cautley Newby, London, 1847, page 178.

period tribal war hero and the author of one of the most famous seven poems (Sab‘al-Mu‘allaqāt) of that time, but here Medwin means the work of Terrick Hamilton, published in 1819-20 and titled *Antar: A Bedouen Romance*. Inspired by this oriental Romance Shelley wrote a brief poem *Lines from the Arabic*, but when it was published soon after his death which was titled *From the Arabic, an Imitation*.

But some of Shelley’s poetic writings on the Turks showcase not only his flawed impression of Muslim piety and flawed depiction of Muslim belief, but his approximation of Arabic language was also corrupt. In his lyrical drama *Hellas*, during a talk between Ottoman Sultan Mahmud and his vizier Hassan, the vizier lionizes Muslim conquest, and fuses his militant motives with Muslim commitments to vindicate his corrupt cause. Vizier’s prolonged talk starts by saying: “The lamp of our domination still rides high; / One God is God – Mahomet is his prophet. / Four hundred thousand Moslems from the limits / Of utmost Asia, irresistibly / Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco’s cry”.³⁹⁸ The vizier proudly proclaims that the Islamic belief or *Shahāda* (There is no god but God and Mahomet is his prophet) is the “lamp of our domination” and the “irresistible” banner of their “Throng”. And the vizier goes on to celebrate their victory with more vivid and violent detail: “Samos is drunk with blood; – the Greek has paid / Brief victory with swift loss and long despair. / The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far, / When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah! / Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind, / Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock / Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm / So were the lost Greeks on the Danube’s day!”³⁹⁹ Here, once again the Muslim belief is a war-cry, and when he reports its “fierce shout” Shelley erroneously citing the Islamic creed as “Allah-illa-Allah” instead of *lā ilāha illa ‘llāh*.

Romance and Revolution in the Writings of Khalīl Muṭrān and Percy Bysshe Shelley: How to Compare?

As stated in the first chapter, the modernisation of Arabic literature was deeply influenced by European literature, and the Romantic genre in Arabic literature was also directly coming from its European homeland. Literary and cultural developments in any part of the world was not

³⁹⁸ Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Hellas; A Lyrical Drama*, lines 273 – 277.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid*, lines 287 – 294.

flicking out at all in response to a sudden occurrence or phenomenon, but rather, multilateral negotiations between literary and cultural traditions playing decisive roles in the emergence of any newfangled literary genre. Hence, singling out some specific aspects or making light of something else are not appropriate for comparison, especially when these are pertaining to two major literary traditions, namely, European and Arabic. Reducing the area of comparison to only its lingual radius without considering the politico-social backdrops of its origin, context, and nature will not consummate the actual objectives of comparison. Given this background, it is necessary to cognize as a prerequisite for a comparison between the two, as it is perceptible in this chapter from the outset, to comprehend the European Romantic encounters with the orient, especially with the Muslim world.

Similarly, we cannot ignore the fact that the possibilities of comparison between two cultures or literature are a matter of debate among current academic circles. When a comparativist doing his study in an area of research he/she may puzzle out a very valuable result, at the same time, it is an undeniable fact that a number of comparative studies end up producing essentialist distinctions among diverse cultures and societies throughout the world and a glutinous flood of academic studies showcase it, which cause irreparable harms rather than benefits. It is no wonder that the endeavour to compare separate geo-national, ethnic, cultural, lingual and religious units under the mould of an academic discipline, there is a strong possibility that it will deter the connected flow of ideas across civilisations. The noted historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam anticipates the possibilities of turning Area Studies rapidly into parochialism, so that he put forward the concept of “connected histories” rather than “comparative histories”.⁴⁰⁰ Even Comparative Literature has been looking to renovate itself since 1992 as a result of the increasing importance of multiculturalism and cultural studies. Diasporas, labour migrations, demographic shifts, process of cultural circulation due - to a large extent - to the movements of global capital and media, and due to some other reasons, the current Comparative Literature searching for new multicultural comparative studies.⁴⁰¹ Even though this thesis is not coming under the discipline of Comparative Literature and only using comparative methods, the

⁴⁰⁰ Subrahmanyam, Sanjay, *Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia*, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, Special Issue: The Eurasian Context of the Early Modern History of Mainland South East Asia, 1400 – 1880, Published by Cambridge University Press, 1997, pages 742 and 745.

⁴⁰¹For further details on this discussion see Spivak, Gayatri Chakrovarty, *Death of a Discipline*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003.

aforementioned concerns should not be ignored. For moving forward in conjunction with this global approach in this thesis more emphasis and importance have been given for connecting social and political realities with each other rather than comparing some verses with something else. Furthermore, a detailed discussion on the romantic and revolutionary ideals of Kalīl Muṭrān and Percy Bysshe Shelley has already taken place in the third and fourth chapters respectively in this thesis. Repeating the already discussed matters once again will not only be discursive but also trite.

However, deliberately eschewing comparisons between the two poets in the arenas of romance and revolution is also not suitable, because the purpose of this study was comparison as stated from the outset. But the aforementioned facts deter the thesis from engaging in a traditional form of comparison, so that this study taking slightly some another form, which is to connect the two rather than to compare in conventional ways. Definitely the comparison between the two poets in the realms of romance and revolution shares certain similarities and dissimilarities as it is perceptible in any comparison between divergent poetic genres and traditions, whether it is due to the influences of regional, religious, social, cultural, lingual, ethnic, gender related, political or whatsoever. Correspondingly, considerable emphasis has been given in this chapter on detailed discussion on European Romantic encounters with Islam and the Muslim world, and lesser emphasis on the dimensions and implications of Arab Romanticism is due not to lesser importance of it, but rather, a detailed discussion on Arab Romantic writings with its social and political involvements has already taken place in the first and third chapters of this thesis, which were even though not total transplantation of European Romanticism, at least to accept its origin was in the West.

A Comparison in Romance

Now, it is about time the chapter ventured into the comparison between the two poets in the areas of romance and revolution. To start with romance, as a British Romanticist, Shelley's Romantic ideals naturally emanate from its major three European sources, which were Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought, the elitists' women worship and the selfsame literature in the Middle Ages, and finally the Christian divine love. His Romantic ideals of love chiefly took form from Plato's writings, such as *The Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, which include copious descriptions of both beauty and love. But, unlike several other Romanticists, Shelley's romance was always bristling

with ideas, rather than human beings and he turned philosophy into poetry with intellectual criss-cross. Apart from Greek philosophy, Lock's writings, Hume's essays and Rousseau's Romantic individual self were his inspirations and he derived his political ideals from Godwin. Therefore, his romance was a hodgepodge of these elements, and some of his Romantic writings have some political implications too. At the same time, we cannot fathom out any philosophical implication or influence in the Romantic writings of Kalīl Muṭrān, but even though he was the first Romantic poet in Arabic literature, he did not fully fall under the spell of European Romanticism; instead, he followed several conventional Arabic poetic ethos in his writings.

Shelley fell in love with Harriet Westbrook when he was only nineteen in 1811 and Harriet was only sixteen and they eloped into Ireland and settled there for the time being. Both Shelley and Harriet participated there in Catholic emancipation movement and other political activities, distributing pamphlets and making the people aware of their political rights. But due to several reasons as discussed in the fourth chapter, their relation ended in utter failure and he eloped once again in 1814 with another girl, who was Mary, the daughter of the famous British political philosopher William Godwin and the feminist ideologue Mary Wollstonecraft. At the same time Kalīl Muṭrān's personal life was totally different, because, in his semiautobiographical poem *Hikāyat 'Ashiqaini* was a melancholic expression of his lost love. Some stories refer to his early romance with a beautiful girl with whom he fell in love at the first sight when they met in a garden. But some weeks later she unexpectedly passed away and this incident inflicted irreparable damage to his poetic heart after which he decided not to marry at all. Even though the reliability of this story is suspicious, as discussed in the third chapter, the deep melancholic feelings and despondency may showcase its authenticity. If this was not realistic, then that portrays the naivety and originality of his imaginary romantic melancholy which dominated almost all of his later romantic writings. *Wardat Mātāt* is also deals with the same theme, in which he likens the premature death of his beloved to the early death of a rose, which was in its youth, excited and elevated by the greetings of the earth and lullabies of breezes and dances of butterflies. But now these are lamenting for her.

But, throughout his life Shelley was searching for an ideal woman and when he saw Mary, who was educated and interested in literature (*Frankenstein* is her famous novel), he found out his ideal love in her. But till when? Even though this relation did not ended up in divorce or in

another elopement, he could not fully keep in with her, but rather, he was searching for some brand-new romantic experience. When his romantic explorations further prolonged he turned up in some imaginary romantic coves, where he realized that love is not an ordinary feeling, but rather, love transcends the negotiations of earthly life towards attaining immortality, and transgressing the boundaries of individual life that tries to merge with the rhythms of the heart of the beloved. Separation vanishes here, adoration leads to self-realisation and to self-immolation. Fully engrossed in imagination and emotion, Shelley succeeds to his own ecstasy and seeks solace in his romantic fantasy world, in which his soul converges in the soul of his beloved, which provides him with incessant happiness and freedom. He arrives in this ecstatic union in *Epipsychidion* after the aforesaid experiences with carnal loves; however, this was also transient and ended up in deep sorrows and despair. This deep dejection may be due to his erroneous embodiment of eternal love and beauty in Emilia, whom he takes into account as the soul of his soul. But even though this experience of love was ephemeral, he arrived in the utmost degree of platonic love, which he compares to the symbols of light, sweet fragrance and beauty, and he invites her to reside with him in the eternal abode of love in a far-flung heavenly island. Finally the poem moves from the symbols of bodily union into the symbols of light, water and fire, from where that further moves forward to the mental and philosophical experiences. Here he is incapable of making any solid comparison to eternal love.

At the same time, from the outset Muṭrān's Romantic writings were melancholic and he was gradually growing towards a fully-fledged Romantic melancholy until he firmly latched on it. After *Hikāyat 'Ashiqaini* he came out with another poem *'Itāb*, in which enormous waves of melancholy leads him into a conversation with a far distant bird. He requests the bird to teach him its songs to sing in his solitariness and asks the bird to lend him its wings to fly in the horizons of the vast sky to escape from his home which strangles him. He bumbles his desire in the ears of the bird, which is his longing for flying along with it to flee from the world of feud, hatred, deceives etc. to the world of love, affection, pleasure and commitment. Sometimes unbearable sorrows engulf Shelley, and perennial suspicion, fright and imperfection recurrently follow him. Analogous to Muṭrān Shelley is also talking to a far-off skylark in his famous poem *To a Skylark* and he pines for attaining the same power to fly high in the sky and he asks the bird to teach him the secret of its happiness. But, since Shelley's skylark is a highly idealized bird, he depicts it in a bit philosophical way, because Shelley's skylark represents idealism, inspiration,

aspiration, happiness etc. and even his attempts to figure out the skylark through natural phenomena go awry.

From childhood Muṭrān was infirm, besides, sorrows haunted him incessantly and he survived an attempt on his life from the Ottomans. Once he was subjected to a serious illness, which inflicted on him both mental and physical anguishes. At the behest of his doctor he was staying in a coastal shore, during which he penned two most melancholic Romantic poems, which were *al-Asad al-Bāki* and *al-Masā'*. As discussed in the third chapter, *Al-Masā'* is his most beautiful Romantic melancholic expression, in which he portrays his intense Romantic agony against the backdrop of an evening and his personal sorrows becoming the sorrows of Nature. But Shelley was not subjected to this much of sorrows and melancholy, instead, from his early life he led off his Platonic wandering from single to multiple and from multiple to everything, and he was not ready not only to jack it in, but rather, he further expanded it into his love affairs in a more elusive manner. He neither approbated any code of moral conduct nor confined himself in the restricted boundaries of marriage system. His love never leeches onto a single person like that of Muṭrān, instead, since he believed love is not gold or clay to be diminished when it shares with several people, he was in perennial search of ideal woman. Love is not the action, but a state of mind, and independent of its object, for the sake of getting ecstasy one can cultivate it for his/her own. Since marriage is the union of body; not soul, he rejected institutionalized marriage system and gave more importance to the union of free spirits. Even he was prepared later to share his wife Mary Wollstonecraft with his friends to show that marriage is nothing but the union of body.

After his conversation with a bird, in *Mushākāt Baini Wa Baina al-Najm* Muṭrān shares his sorrows with a remote star, and it is his intimate storyteller friend, because both are sleepless. He murmurs to the star about his sorrows and sufferings and he feels comfort in it and he request to the star to keep him in this celestial passion. Muṭrān also wrote some romantic narrative poems like *Finjān Khahwa*, which deals with the tragic love story of a princess, who loved her father's bodyguard. Once in a dark night while both of them were whispering to each other the king stumbled upon them and ordered to poison him in a cup of coffee. The brave lover was not hesitant to take it, because he believes in original love without considering its consequences. The incentive to his poem *Fī Tashyi'i Janāzat* was a sudden incident, viz. he saw unexpectedly a

funeral procession, and he got to know that, that was of a youth who committed suicide due to love failure. So that he wrote this poem in the form of a heartbreaking romantic elegy. *Al-Janīn al-Shahīd* was Muṭrān's another Romantic narrative epic, which exceeds three hundred verses. This tragic story talks about an unfortunate poor maiden, whose poverty compelled her to work in pub in Cairo, where she fell in love with a young man who impregnated this poor girl and throw her away. *Al-Twiḡlāni* and *Gharāmu Twiḡlaini* are also two of his poems on tragic love stories.

Whereas Muṭrān was travelling from tragedy to tragedy in his writings with full of sorrows and melancholy, Shelley was searching for new experiences of ecstatic love. In his incessant quest for it, besides Emilia, some other celestial maidens of ethereal beauty also infatuated him, in whom he finds out inspiration and a path to ecstasy, but in some of the cases these figures were mere imaginary ones. Shelley approaches Jane Williams, who was the wife of his friend Edward Williams, with more humanistic appearance, and she was the queen of his imaginary world and he tried to seek solace in her during his constant platonic roving. She is more beautiful than the morning of an early spring in winter, so that he says that she is the "Best and brightest" and "Fairer far than this fair Day", and this winter morning is not an ordinary one, but rather, that kisses the forehead of the Earth, grins cheerfully upon the silent sea, enjoins the frozen streams to be free. Shelley invites Jane also to the distant, silent, and unsullied wilderness away from men and towns, "where the soul need not repress" and the music of the soul will not reverberate in another's soul. That far-off land will give them the heavenly experience due to the union of their souls, thus which lead to the total unity of everything. But his another poem *To Jane: The Recollection* whereas deals with the same theme, fell into despair due to the ephemerality of this romantic ecstasy. Jane is the princess Miranda in the poem *With a Guitar – To Jane* and Shelley is her adorer Ariel, the prince Ferdinand also tries to marry her, but realizing his limitations Ariel is satisfied with his own efforts to please her and gives her an astonishing guitar which blares out the sweetest music.

In Shelley's several poems he is not ready to impose on himself any kind of voluntary self restriction to restrict his romantic love only into the imaginary world. Instead, coming out of it he deals with political issues in his romantic writings, since he believes that the exercise of love, hope and patience is capable of liberating someone from the tyranny of history. In *Prometheus*

Unbound love is tinged with political colour and Prometheus attains freedom only when he grew out of his nature even to treat his torturer compassionately. In *The Revolt of Islam* love is moving beyond its private terrain and deals with political suppression of the Turks through the lovers Laon and Cythna. But in the romantic writings of Muṭrān we cannot find out any political theme or political interference, but he deals with several social issues. Definitely he wrote a host of political revolutionary poems, but those were not mixing with romantic themes, except some tragic stories, and the discussion on it is yet to come.

Description of Natural Beauty

Shelley received impetus to formulate his concepts of Nature and its beauty from Gothic novels, from the writings of Rousseau and the Lake School poets, and from his frequent travels through magnificent landscapes. The splendid landscapes of England, especially the Lakes, and the magnificent scenes of Wales and Switzerland, and the awe-inspiring seashores and flowers of Italy etc. were the most important among them. In Shelley's several poems spirits, furies and fauns mooning about across seas and mountains like that of Alps and icy rocks of Caucasus. Shelley utilized natural phenomena in a highly romantic way to describe his state of mind or to depict his philosophical views of the world in *Ode to the West Wind* and *The Cloud*. The mountainous landscapes of *Prometheus Unbound*, the thick virgin verdant forest of *The Alastor*, the majestic massive mountains in *Mont Blank*, flowers, dews and butterflies in *The Sensitive Plant*, grandeur and horror of the sea in *A Vision of the Sea* and so on are the excellent and fitting descriptions of natural beauty. But for Muṭrān, since nature is neither inanimate nor insensible, he finds out love in all natural phenomena and organisms, and these all elements form a coherent whole. Nature is dynamic, vibrant, and sentient and that can weep due to sorrows and rejoice due to happiness. But this unified entity does not deter them from maintaining its distinguishing individual characteristics such as winds regularly inhale, the moon not only expressing love but also expressing hate by enlarging and reducing itself, and the earth conserves seeds in its womb. In Arabic literature Muṭrān introduced at first the depiction of natural beauty in a fully romantic way with powerful feeling. In his poem *Badr wa badr* natural elements and organisms share his feelings towards his beloved, and he see his feelings in Nature. In *al-Masa'* also Nature reflects his sorrows, the retreating daylight in the evening with its turning colour into red, and the red clouds of twilight, and the silhouetting darkness into the earth are the utmost symbols of extreme

sorrows. *Sā'at Ya'is* is also a romantic melancholic poem, in which the extreme despondency led him to think about suicide in an unfortunate moment, but he tries to seek solace in Nature – in the natural beauty of 'Ain Shams - from the haunting remembrance of his beloved and from the deceitful insincere world of corruption.

Shelley's concept of Nature is also bordering sometimes on the similar stand, but with some variations. In several poems his natural landscape is dream-landscape of symbolic features, which is fluid, moving, and changing continuously. His natural world is also alive with spirits or some animating principles, which gave his descriptions indefinable meaning. Nature may not share his feelings like that of Muṭrān, but he also rejects frozen moments, and goes on to seek inspiration from storm and wind, and from regular flying and sailing through the magic world in his chariots and boats. He seeks union with the tempest in *Ode to the West Wind*, and the solitude of the wandering poet is reflected in the seclusion of the countryside in *Alastor*. He generally celebrates light, skies, shadow and weather and so on, and his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* depicts the beauty in the summer winds, sunlight in the noon, rainbows, mountain mists, and clouds and so on. The recurring images of boats, caverns, the sea, the river etc. in *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Revolt of Islam* have Platonic or neo-Platonic connotations. Taking direct inspiration from the Lake District of Keswick, Shelley wrote the poem *Queen Mab* in 1811, in which he connects Past, Present, and Future with the great chain of nature. Here not only Shelley attains harmony with Nature, but all human being are attaining it, which was the core of his version of Necessity. The Spirit of Nature accompanies the fairy Queen in the poem, which underscores the Nature's eternal law.

Apart from melancholy, Muṭrān depicts some gleeful scenes in Nature like the joy of living and inanimate things in *Shurūq Shams Fi Misr* when the sun rises in the morning. When the frightening curtains of inky darkness moves on, the universe awakens from the indolent slumber into more energetic joyful life. He also wrote several Romantic pastoral poems, which magnificently describe the bucolic countryside of both Lebanon and Egypt, the Egyptian farmers, sunrise in the farming land, the tilling, sowing, and harvest of the poor innocent Egyptian farmers and their songs of these occasions etc. Even though he spent comparatively a short span of time in the Lebanon, its historical monuments and scenic beauty also deeply influenced his romantic writings on Nature. Since the Lebanon is crammed with basins, ravines,

gigantic mountains, the remnants of the Phoenician, Roman, and Islamic monuments, which include Baalbek fort, Anjar, Byblos etc., Muṭrān's several poems depicted these natural beauty and monuments. His poem *Qal'at Baalbek* is not only the depiction of the fort, but that regurgitates his childhood experiences with his beloved, the deserted columns and immortal structures of the fort and the gardens in its vicinity once again evoke in him Romantic agony and melancholy. *Hal Tadhkurīn* is also illustrates his bygone fantastic childhood days in his native village named Zahla with his female cousin Najla Saba'a. Another poem is titled *Zahla*, which also deals with the same theme, but moreover, the place Zahla is not only his birthplace, but rather, the place of his soul.

Shelley also celebrated the Romantic concept of Noble Savage, which gives importance to the integrity of self and sticking to one's primitive natural instincts and passions against the corrupt modern civilisation. Since this Romantic idea was the withdrawal from reality and deterring progress, Shelley took a cautious stand in his writings. For example, *Alastor* celebrates primitivism, because the poet in *Alastor* settles among savage people in a wild countryside untouched by civilization and in full harmony with nature, but the poet is neither a hero nor a Poet of the poem. Finally, he feds up with his solitude and introspection as discussed in the fourth chapter. But Shelley's most powerful natural description is *Mont Blanc*, which is also an autobiographical experience of fear and enlightenment mixing with scientific cognisance. In this psychological exploration of Romantic sublime against the backdrop of Arve gorges, he depicts beauty, terror, fear etc. But he does not reach in Wordsworth's religion of Nature, instead, by expressing scepticism and uncertainty Shelley moves towards atheism.

A Comparison in Revolutionary Ideals

The time of Shelley's childhood witnessed turbulent political tensions such as the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution, Napoleon's ascension to the throne of France, and his incessant victories and invasions inside and outside Europe including the invasion of Egypt in 1798. But his first Romantic revolutionary poem was written in 1809 when he was only seventeen, against the British invasion of Egypt in 1807, which deals with a tragic love affair. He wrote *Queen Mab* in 1812 when he was only twenty, which envisages the overthrow of tyranny and suppression, but before writing this long poem he was already ousted from Oxford and from his home, and eloped with Harriet to Ireland. In accordance with the changing political atmosphere, heated

discussions were also breaking out all over Europe on democracy and freedom. Shelley came forward with his pamphlets and poems to make the people aware about their rights and to promote political freedom and liberalism, first of which was *An Address to the Irish People* (1812). In the same year on Valentine's Day he wrote a letter in poetic form to Elizabeth Hitchener entitled *To the Republicans of North America*, in which he compares the Mexico's new bursting liberty to the outbreak of Mount Cotopaxi. He also wrote another pamphlet on Ireland in the same year and his *Declaration of Rights* was comparatively a mild article, but his Irish servant was arrested when he distributed the pamphlet. In 1811 he severely criticized Robert Southey for his conservative reactionary political stands, and Coleridge and Wordsworth were also two other poets who were subjected to Shelley's criticism for the same reasons. He inveighed against Wordsworth in his *To Wordsworth* (1816) and three years later his *Peter Bell the Third* (1819) was once again attacking him, but now both politically and literally. But Keats did not agree with Shelley's political interference, because that will swerve the poet from the path of poetry.

Muṭrān was also born into an elite Christian family in the Lebanon and got education from elite institutions, but he was not more politically and socially aware and active like Shelley. But, when he was a student he also wrote some poems against the domination of the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in an attempt on his life and then he escaped into France. When he was in France he supported the Turkish revolutionary group named 'Young Turks' against the authoritarian Turkish Sultan and he wrote also some poems against the British invasion of Egypt, which was in 1882. Shelley wrote two major poems against the Ottoman suppression of the Greek people such as *The Revolt of Islam* and *Hellas* and he wrote *Henry and Louisa* against the British invasion of Egypt in 1807. Amazingly, both the poet utilized the story of Egyptian Pharaohs to inveigh against suppressive authoritarian rulers, whereas Shelley wrote *Ozymandias* Muṭrān wrote *Al-ahrām*. But Muṭrān could not stay in France any longer, and he migrated into Egypt and settled there, during which he was getting to be milder in his stands on both political and social issues than his Lebanese and French days. Even his stand was almost neutral in the debates of committed and non-committed literature (*Adab al-Multazim* and *Ghayr Multazim*), because sometimes he wrote personal emotional poems without any political implications and some other times if he writes something which were in more cautious and implicit ways. Whether or not he

made this stand as he was an émigré in Egypt⁴⁰² or due to his innate modesty in contrast to Shelley, calling him a full-fledged radical romanticist will not be true. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that a host of his poems were explicit political and social interferences, but in contrast to several of his contemporaries, who were more harsh critics of injustice, social exploitations, oppressions etc. than Muṭrān, anyone can say he was not similar to Shelley. Even he approached the emotional issue of Arab nationalism and the exploitation of Western colonialism in almost a moderate way through the viewpoint of a Christian secular modernist and he celebrated the secular, liberal and democratic ideals based on the Arab paradigms of the pre-Islamic period. Based on this moderate stand, he criticizes the Arab apathy and carelessness in his poem *Yaqdat al-Arab*.

In his political pamphlets and poems Shelley placed a bit more emphasis on the issues of England rather than on the rest of the world, since England was witnessing several turbulent political protests and related developments. Nevertheless, he wrote prolifically about almost all of the major contemporary world issues. Most of his important political pamphlets and poems surfaced on the heels of some major political incidents in England and abroad as discussed in the fourth chapter. Even though Shelley severely criticized political suppression and tyranny, - dethronement of the tyrant is a common Shelleyan vision - he was a supporter of nonviolence and passive resistance, and he took moderate stands in his political revolutionary writings, adhering to his commitment for the radical programmes of contemporary affairs and approaching them in a wider theoretical way. *A Philosophical View of Reform* (1819) was the manifesto of his political philosophy, which discussed about Reform, and the historical struggle of humanity for the sake of attaining liberty. He marked out England was on the verge of cave-in due to the tyranny of plutocracy, and Reform can only rescue the country from it, and the pamphlet put forward the concept of equality in possession and nonviolence at the same time. He fought against the tax burden, National Debt, sinecures and the standing army, and he passionately argued for equality and justice for all. He propounded the idea of a classless world through the change of heart, not through bloody revolution, and apart from the centres of power he attacked the tragic consequences of highly centralized power, which produces poverty, aristocracy, despotic laws, militarism, accumulation of money in the hands of a few people etc.

⁴⁰² Because the political and religious contexts of Egypt were different from its neighboring countries and several Egyptian poets were compelled to support the Ottoman Turks. See the third chapter.

Muṭrān also did not keep mum against injustice, inequality, political suppression and brutality of tyranny, but he made a bit cautious stand in Egypt. It will dawn upon us that Muṭrān's political and social reformist ideals neither originate from any philosophical point of view nor provide the people with any theoretical framework. Even his personal and didactic literary writings do not share philosophical implications. Several times he resorted into allegorical poetry to divulge his rage against suppression, exploitation, apathy of the people and even the tyrannical Ottoman Sultan. When Sultan Abdul Hamid II brutally killed Midhat Pasha on fake charges, who was his minister, statesman, liberal reformer and the designer of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876, he wrote the poem *Maqtal Bazarjamhar*, in which he compares this killing to the killing of Bozorgmehr; who was a Sasanian minister and nobleman, who was also killed by the ruler of that Empire, who was famously known with the designation *Chosro*. According to Muṭrān the Persian general public are blameworthy, because their submissiveness, ignorance, and their unbecoming admiration and praise of the tyrant encouraged him for more suppression. But Bozorgmehr's daughter fought against this suppression, so that Muṭrān describe her as a shining example of brave ladies who set themselves models for womenfolk worldwide. In this poem also he indirectly attacks the Ottoman Sultan.

Even though Muṭrān was a moderate revolutionary, utilizing historical themes sometimes he depicted in his poems the importance of freedom, and the need of taking arms to retake it from the oppressors. He supports taking revenge against those who vilify the sanctity of human life with modest amounts of retaliations. For this purpose he utilized the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, in which the Frederick William III of Prussia was defeated by Napoleon in a war which took place in Jena-Auerstedt. But in 1871 Germany retook all their invaded land and further moved into the capital of France. Utilizing this theme he wrote some poems against the Ottoman Turks and their cracking down on the Middle East, and since the lines were quoted in the third chapter in will be abandoned here. He celebrated the legendary freedom fight of the Montenegrins against the domination of the Ottoman Empire in his poem *Fatāt al-Jabal al-Aswad*, in which women, children, old men etc. took arms to fight against them. This poem is talking about the valour of a Montenegrin maiden, who fought in disguise, and when she was captured by the Turks the Turkish military commander ordered to kill her, then she removed her disguise and he order to release her.

The Ottoman domination, Napoleon's invasions, mischievous deeds and brutalities of Britain inside and outside Britain were the most important political themes. Apart from these, he wrote about almost all of his contemporary issues like in *Rosalind and Helen* he condemned poverty and the unequal social systems which create poverty. And he was not ready to approve poverty is the part of divine or natural law, and he rejected the argument that it is the fault of the poor, and the propagandas such as the poor are feckless, scroungers etc. In the case of women emancipation his pamphlet *Discourse on the Manners of the Ancients Relative to the Subject of Love* (circa 1818), is very important and that placed him at the vanguard of male feminist thought. The poems such as *Rosalind and Helen*, *The Revolt of Islam* etc. also upheld women emancipation. He rejected marriage system as oppressive and authoritarian; especially the institutionalized marriage system and he mocked the marriage of convenience in *Epipsychidion*. He also carried out all-out attacks against religion, and his pamphlets such as *The Necessity of Atheism* and *A Refutation of Deism* showcase his strong anti-religious sentiment. Religious beliefs are only the means of exploitation, which encourage superstitions and discourage dissents, justify war and suppression by joining hands with tyranny.

The constitution drafted by Midhat Pasha was in effect in Turkey only two years, but due to the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 the king was compelled to re-enact the constitution with more power to the elected Chamber of Deputies. Since the new constitution gives more freedom and equal rights to all the citizens, Muṭrān celebrated it in his poem *Tahiyyat al-Hurriyat*, which was discussed in the third chapter. He was already a supporter of 'The Young Turks' and their revolutionary ideals, and when they overthrown the Turkish Sultan in the first anniversary of the constitutional reform, Muṭrān was in an ecstatic mood to celebrate it with his poems. He criticized the British suppression of Egypt in a bit unenthusiastic manner, or not as ferocious as against the Turks, and we cannot find out his any significant poetical reference to either the Urabi revolt (1879-1882) or the countrywide revolution of 1919, so that the ardent supporters of Egyptian nationalism did not attach any more value for his criticisms. He utilized the Anglo-Boer wars to inveigh against the British and he penned at least three poems in this regard such as *al-Twiflat al-Buwairiyya*, *Harb Gayr 'Ādila Walā Muta'adila* and *Fi Isti'nāfi Harb Jā'irah*. His another poem *Shaykh Athīna* is also implicitly talking about the political suppression of Egypt focusing on negating social injustice, foreign domination etc. and that compares the contemporary condition of Egypt to the condition of ancient Athens under the suppression of the

Roman Empire. According to him, the root causes of the collapse of Athens were the lackadaisical approach and the luxurious lifestyle of the youth, the fright of war etc. His poem *Al-Sūr al-Kabir fi-l-ssīn* depicts a sleepless merciful king in China who thinks about how to secure his people from foreign attack. The poet in the palace disagrees with his decision to build a huge wall to protect them, because that will make the people lazy and inactive.

Apart from the cruelty of tyranny, his narrative poem *Al-Iqāb* depicts sexual morality and the bravery of a woman through the story of a lascivious king who tries to rape one of his woman subjects but she denied and killed by him. In 1909, when Sir Eldon Gorst enforced stringent regulations to curtail the freedom of the press, which sparked widespread protests in Egypt, and Muṭrān surfaced with his most outspoken criticism of all time titled *Muqāta‘a*, which was mentioned in the third chapter. Accordingly, the Egyptian Prime Minister threatened him ousting from Egypt to intimidate him, but Muṭrān retorted with another forthright poem titled *Tahdīd bi al-Nafi*. But, even though Muṭrān was a harsh critic of the Ottoman Empire, he did not see with delight the defeat of the Turks and the subsequent European invasion of its territories, but rather, he surfaced with his long epic narrative poem titled *Nayrūn*, which deals with the story of the brutal Roman emperor Nero, who ruled the empire from 54 to 68 A.D and tortured the Christian minorities and finally committed suicide. Muṭrān indirectly connects and likens the pathetic condition of the Arab people to that of the Romans and lambasts them for their inactivity and laziness which lead to the foreign invasion. On September 29, 1911, when Italy went to war with Libya to conquer the country, Mutran jotted down the poem *‘Ithāb wa Isthisrāh Li Ma‘ūnati Tarābals*.

He also wrote some poems praising Egyptian nationalist revolutionary leaders among whom the most prominent was Mustafā Kāmil, the establisher of the news paper *Al-Liwā’* and the founder of the National Party. Mutran wrote an elegy when he died in February 1908 praising his nationalist sentiment, educational commitments and women emancipation endeavours. Mutran himself wrote several poems promoting women education and empowerment, and his poems such as *Wafā’* and *al-Twiflāni* castigate the marriage of convenience and institutionalized marriage system, which give more importance to worldly matters rather than love. Both the poems are tragic love stories, which ended up in utter failure due to social and economic inequality. These comparisons between the two poets in the realm of revolutionary ideals divulge

the poetical and political standpoints with its similarities and dissimilarities between them, even though not in a detailed manner.

Conclusion

The long journey of Romance from the medieval period to the Romanticism of the eighteenth-century was teemed with more diverse developments rather than similarities. Even though the root of *romance* derives from the Latin adverb '*romanice*', which means "in the Roman manner", French translations of Latin literary works were being called later as *romantic*. Then, the most popular type of French poems were being called romantic, which gradually moved into other languages. These medieval romances, which were written in one of the romance languages such as Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, Catalan, Provençal etc. continued to exist as a prevailing literary genre throughout the medieval periods dealing with the search for lost loved ones, immortality, earthly paradise, treasures and so on. Most of them were lengthy narrative verse romances with almost the same characters in loose series of incidents on biographical threads and end happily as rule, and stirred up some revolutionary ideals against earlier religious tradition and feudalism as discussed in the second chapter. Since the French language was the normal language of the ruling elites in England, the widely circulated romances in Britain until the middle of the thirteenth-century were French romances. Slowly French lost its supremacy due to the gradual emergence of English into the language of polite society and the emergence of English romances near about 1250 A.D., during which the French romances had passed its prime.

During the fifteenth-century, this literary tradition of chivalric and occasionally fantastic storytelling turned out to be an established literary style of verse, but in England this concentrated more on prose genre. This genre of adventure and experience was depicting events and actions most of the time in fanciful or exaggerated ways utilizing Arthurian and classical heroes. But in the early seventeenth-century Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605–1615) ridiculed the style of romance and its ambitions for an idealized and meaningful life, and romance started to be unfashionable when the neoclassical thought gained more aesthetic dominance. Later, in the second half of the eighteenth-century romance restored to an enhanced position and lost many of its negative connotations mainly due to the efforts of the German cultural theorists and the ascendance of Gothicism. Enlightenment modernity, Industrial Revolution, American and French Revolutions etc. brought about drastic changes in the living conditions and outlooks of the general public, so that Romanticist could not be an over-sensitive dreamer, but heroic genius encountering with painful realities of life. Romanticists also have to square up to the Enlightenment philosophers and their Newtonian natural philosophy, because

they turned man into a humanoid or a soulless thinking machine by giving more importance to reason and intellectualism. When modernity corroborated socio-economic inequality, Romanticists celebrated the nostalgia for either real or mythic glorious pre-capitalist past or the 'lost paradise', and they tried to win it back either through the struggle to recreate its ideal values or through retreating into uncorrupted imaginary localities. The cruelties of bourgeois liberalism and the characteristics of urban industrial society such as economic egoism, utilitarianism, materialism, soulless individualism etc. were also some of the main objects of Romanticists' attack. Much as Romanticists attacked the bourgeois class and their mentalities, ironically the same bourgeois class and their mentalities had produced the generation of Romanticists.

Since Romanticists did not stick to any rules or regulations, they were the hodgepodge of all varieties of people including liberals, conservatives, revolutionaries, reactionaries, deists, and atheists and so forth. But, there emphatically were some similarities which unite them in certain ways, and some certain ideas and attitudes which persuade them to reject the vital concepts and poetic practices of earlier period. The Celebration of uncorrupted individuality and solitariness against the corrupt social organism, harrowing sorrows due to the downfall from paradise, imaginary journeys to the supernatural and mysterious worlds, the celebration of medieval eras and the fictitious and chivalric stories of kings of that time, emphasis on unbridled spontaneous feelings and dynamic and creative power of imagination, replacing God with Nature, perking up the language of the common people etc. were some of the very significant characteristics of this 'Movement'. In Germany the emergence of Romanticism was hinged on the search for national identity, because except the German language as a unifying factor, they neither had unified Germany nor any contemporary artistic tradition or cultural centre to which they could anticipate for inspiration. German thinkers and writers have every intention of fighting back French forms of Neo-Classism and Enlightenment, and in their political subservience to France, which was further strengthened later by Napoleon's invasion in 1806, the German nationalists looked back to the Renaissance and to the Middle Ages for inspiration and they fathomed out the culturally rich Roman Empire as their glorious past for celebration. If they support the Enlightenment claims for a "universal" language of reason, which was not limited to the implications of nationality, it will overshadow the campaign for German nationalism. The Romantic celebration of particular and local fitted into this specific German context. Apart from this political aspect, philosophical and theoretical aspects were also there in German Romanticism, which had marked

off it from other European Romanticisms. German philosophers like Herder etc. linked the glorious German past into tribal, folkloric, and Gothic traditions and Herder's "storm of history" celebrated the plurality of artistic forms and that turned out to the nationalist-romantic *Sturm und Drang* movement. Goethe's romantic hero Werther, Schiller's Romantic idea of the 'Joy', which can express the *emotional solidarity* with others and unite men and women, Schelling's Romantic idea of *creative intuition*, Schlegel brothers' satisfactory definitions of the *romantisch* in literature, Hölderlin admiration of ancient Greek culture and adoption of the classical forms in his poetry such as elegy and ode etc. were some of the most important theoretical and philosophical aspects of German Romanticism.

According to the majority of scholars the standard starting date of Romanticism was from the publication of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's *The Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 and ends with the death of Lord Byron in 1824, but some scholars consider the starting from the French Revolution of 1789. Whether the Romantic revival was the effect of the French revolution or the cause of it, the French Revolution was in the central point of Romantic discourse. Apart from that, the German influence, the revivals of the ballads and Elizabethans etc. were some of the key factors hint at the change toward Romanticism. Several pamphlets and publications depicted Thomson, Gray, Cowper, Burns, Collins, Chatterton etc. as the predecessor of Romanticism, Percy and the Wartons as the beginners, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey as founders, Byron, Shelley and Keats as supplements of it. The pamphlet war between the liberal thinker Richard Price and conservative Edmund Burke introduced in Britain several new political and ideological vocabularies. Political and philosophical concepts of Thomas Paine, William Godwin, and Mary Wollstonecraft etc. deeply influenced intellectuals, general public and Romantic poets alike in Britain, among whom Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Byron were most prominent. Romantic period was a turbulent period of conflicts with revolutionary and reactionary arguments, Napoleon's many years of total war and the subsequent bankruptcy of Europe, heated debates for political reformation, the English failure to chase the French in revolution etc. In this context, connecting Man and Nature, giving more emphasis to feeling and imagination, rejecting Enlightenment modernity, talking about change, diversity, growth, imperfection, the unconscious etc., Romanticism secured its foothold in Britain as well.

But in France, Romanticism turned up relatively late. In 1813, Simonde de Sismondi and Madame de Staël have put out two influential books separately, apart from the French translation of August Wilhelm Schlegel's *Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art*, and all these three books sparked off intense debate in France. When Benjamin Constant published the novel *Adolphe* in 1816, he was blamed for supporting Romantic genre, which was considered in France a very inferior one. But the novelist Stendhal (Henry Beyle) was the first Francophone who has dared to call himself a Romanticist in 1818, and he wrote a pioneering pamphlet entitled *Racine and Shakespeare* (1823), which clearly defined Romanticism as a genuinely modern means of expression. In this context, anyone can trace politically inclined version of French Romanticism back to two ways. At first, when Romanticism was in search of the Republic and fighting the corrupt regime, until 1820 Romanticism appeared in France in the style of Neo-Classicism, which was copied from ancient Rome and can stand for primitive ideal of virtue and express noble simplicity against the corrupt French regime. Earlier American rebels also adopted Neo-Classic style to communicate their revolutionary ideals. The second phase was that, after Waterloo the French Romanticism restored from the crushing conformism of Restoration, and fought against political suppression and opportunism of the 1820s under the leadership of Victor Hugo.

Influenced by European literature, by the end of the nineteenth century Arabic literature was moving towards modernizing tendencies by the tension between form and content and rejecting the blind imitation of conventional classicism, and showing slight inclinations towards Romantic sentiments etc. The traditional Arabic Qasīda (ode), which was ostentatious in outward feature, attaching more importance to poetic unity, using high diction and polished rhetoric, focusing on traditional values and themes etc., could not anymore hold firmly on its conventional themes, forms and values. The first Arab poet who leaned towards Romantic inclinations was Khalīl Muṭrān (1872 – 1949), who depicted personal experiences, intensity of feeling, leaning towards lyricism, more poignant subjectivity, Romantic feeling for Nature, nostalgic feeling for homeland and childhood in his writings. His poetic writings became lyrical due to the European influence and he advocated social justice, freedom, and other liberal ideas through several allegorical narrative poems with foreign titles such as Napoleon, Nero, Chosroes etc. Mainly Muṭrān followed three European Romantic themes such as the overflow of emotion (wijdāi), Romantic feeling towards Nature, narrative poems based on historical or mythic events. But

using archaic and difficult vocabularies, maintaining high diction, lack of spontaneity and Romantic unconsciousness etc. were deterred him from getting to be a full scale Romanticist. Since Egypt was the focal point of literary debates in the Arab world, the contributions of the Dīwan group of poets, especially their individual philosophy of life or focusing more on the self, were also significant to promote Romantic ideals there. But their failure was that they got bogged down with form, style, and diction etc. of classical poetry and they could not come forward with good examples of their own poetry.

The Lebanon and Mahjar were also the epicenters of literary changes those days, and in Mahjar that was under the auspices of Gibrān, Nu‘ayma and Abu Maḍī, and their Romanticism managed to express Romantic concepts in a more acceptable way. They enjoyed the liberal atmosphere and liberty overseas, but due to the sense of exile, nostalgia for homeland, lack of belongings etc. they idealized their homeland, differentiated between materialistic and spiritual views of the West and East, and they united for literary activities and established their own magazines. Since the North Mahjar Romanticists were modern educated Christians and influenced by the latter-day American Romanticism and transcendentalism, they were more anti-traditionalists even than their South Mahjar compatriots, who were more interested in their national issues and proud of their Arab culture. The North Mahjar Romanticism had more constructive attitudes and positive expression of life and searched for better life, but later whereas only Raihāni firmly stuck to his social and political commitments and pan-Arab ideals, most of the North Mahjar Romanticists, including Gibran, took a more generalized stand and sought solace in the primitive life or in the life in the Forest. With an astonishing speed this Romantic currents spread all over the Arab world overshadowing the cultural and territorial boundaries, but ironically, when a number of Romantic poets in the Arab world, especially in Egypt, rose to fame by the end of the third decade of the twentieth-century, more than a century had passed since its ideological predecessor had almost tapered off in Europe by the death of Byron in 1824.

The Arab Romanticism did not have any philosophical dimension except for Gibran, and could not develop its own indigenous ideas or thoughts, and was not associated with any political upheaval like French Revolution and was not fighting against any intellectualism or reasoning like Enlightenment. But that celebrated Nature against the chaotic and mechanical city life and that was only associated with the increasing cultural and social conditions and disparities. Since

it simply happened, it was considered one of the simplest Romanticism in the history of any poetry. Similarly, even though both Romanticism and nationalism did not follow the same course in the emergence and operation, Arab nationalism owes much to the early and later variants of Romanticism, because both of them (nationalism and romanticism) had to encounter with the realities of life and the discrepancies between ideals and realities. In the middle of the twentieth century when poets were compelled to think about extrication from the chaotic political situation, they thought the Romantic genre would pale beside the seriousness of their literary interference. Moreover, since the politico-ideological criticism has already labeled Romanticism as escapism, ivory-tower, immature, childish or primitive, coping with dreams and reveries etc., Arab intellectuals opted for political philosophies, rather than Romantic ideals, to lam into the strengthened colonial interferences in the Middle East after the World War II, and the displacement of the Palestinians, rampant corruption and political suppressions, and restricted women freedom and so forth. In this context, Arab Romanticism spirited away rejected by intellectuals and poets alike.

Standing against the backdrop of these historical realities, this thesis focused its attention on the comparison between both Shelley's and Muṭrān's Romantic and revolutionary writings. But, since literary and cultural developments everywhere were deeply contingent on the negotiations between different languages, cultures and civilizations, only the analysis of the socio-political background of the origin, context and nature of this specific genre in both literature will work efficiently towards licking this thesis into shape. Reducing the area of comparison into the lingual or cultural boundaries, choosing some specific aspects of it and neglecting something else would not be appropriate to keep pace with global approach. Similarly, comparative studies are capable of proffering valuable results, at the same time, which can also produce essentialist distinctions among different cultures and societies. And this mode of research is also capable of deterring the connected flow of ideas across civilizations, so that this thesis gave more focus on connecting these all elements each other, rather than lingering over comparing it in conventional ways.

As it is necessary to understand the course and context of Shelley's and other Romanticists' encounters with Islam and Arab world to discuss about Shelley's Romantic and revolutionary ideals and comparing it with that of Muṭrān, a bit more attention of this thesis was riveted on

connecting these aspects with each other. Napoleon's desire to resist British ambitions in the region led him to invade Egypt in 1798, which resulted in not only as a humiliating defeat for the Ottoman Turks, but that also tore the centuries long complacency of Muslims apart. Whereas the invasion interrupted the good relation between the French and the Turks on the one hand, on the other that compelled Britain to play more active diplomatic and military roles in the region. But to keep on top of the Turkish Sultan Napoleon declared he was the protector of the Sultan's interest, nonetheless, in September of the same year the Turkish Sultan forged alliance with the British and the Russians, which exerted profound effects in the revolutionary writings of Shelley, because, this alliance kept Britain at bay from the Turkish suppression of Greek by keeping mum. But the first and the most central Enlightenment-inflated Romantic oriental writings were the French political thinker Volney's *Travels through Syria and Egypt* (1787) and *The Ruins of Empires* (1791-92), both of which turned out to be another encouragement for the invasion, because, those were his empirical assessment of Egyptian strength and weakness and envisage the downfall of all Muslim regimes. The Romantic period was turbulent with political upheavals due to the chaotic situations in Europe and its colonial ambitions outside as discussed in the final chapter, which were also important to get the hang of the implications of British Romantic responses towards imperialism and to dawn us upon its revolutionary ideals.

Seeing as they looked askance at the democratic principles of Britain, its overseas empires, and revolutionary France, a number of Romantic-era writers celebrated Islamic republicanism or Mahometanism to depict their political imagination, because in Islamic republicanism the Prophet restored the constitutional rule. Both the Corporation Act (1662) and the Test Act (1673) were still remaining in effect even after the Toleration Act (1689), so that many nonconformists were barred from citizenship, and the Anglican state proscribed Unitarians, Catholics, Quakers and antitrinitarians from working in public offices, teaching in schools, being given preferment, becoming guardians, executors, or administrators, and even gaining degrees from Oxford and Cambridge and so forth. The Blasphemy Act of 1698 further penalized the heretical beliefs of the Unitarians and they were also generally considered as supporters of French Jacobinism. The Birmingham anti-Unitarian riots of 1791 divulged the utmost degree of revulsion against them in Britain. In this context Christian deism pitted natural religion and several other monotheisms against Anglican Church and state to devise republican-democratic models by which they can fight against these inequalities. And many Christian deists, nonconformists and Unitarians opted

for Mahometanism to inveigh against the dogmatic Christianity and its believes such as apostolic succession, the incarnation, original sin, the Trinity, miracles, the scriptural basis of revelation etc. Many nonconformists fathomed out in Islam a renovated constitutional idiom by which they can reclaim political subjectivity, national identity, and they can redefine universal ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality into a new vocabulary to describe the power struggle among church authority, state sovereignty and the general public. Furthermore, Henry Stubbe has already celebrated Islamic republicanism in his book *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* (c. 1671), which depicted Mahomet as a wise legislator who reinstated primitive Christianity's republican order. And Christian deists regularly utilized Islamic tolerance as a beating stick against these rampant inequalities throughout these periods.

At the same time, the same Mahometanism provoked counterblasts from orthodox Anglicans, because, contrary to Judaism and other monotheisms, Islam posed theologically the biggest and longest threat to the Christian account of redemption. Politically the Ottoman Empire, the Safavid dynasty and the Mughal Empire were presenting threats to the economic and military supremacy of Europe. And a number of literary and academic works including E. Bakler's map managed to sow the seeds of fear and perpetuating it about the imminent total annihilation of Christianity by Islamic invasion. Besides, the Romantic-era was full of Anglo-Islamic encounters in Ottoman Europe, in British India and elsewhere in the Muslim world, which produced positive and negative perceptions of Islam. In this context, the orthodox Anglicans could justify and rationalize the exclusion of the dissenting Christian groups by resorting into the Mahometan Christian bogymen and they could easily portray a pro-Mahometan epic as a plot against the British establishment inspired by French Jacobinism. But radical Anglo-Protestant imagination was utilizing Islamic republicanism and Mahometan figure from the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century to challenge Anglican national hegemony, which fully suppressed the revolutionary fervor inside Britain by 1790s and enforced missionary and imperialist zeal abroad. This radicalism also redefined reformed orthodoxy not only in England, but also in North America, and in the transatlantic world, but that was silenced by the anti-Islamic sentiments which gripped Victorian culture after the Indian Mutiny of 1857. This was the political context of the celebration and criticism of Mahometanism in England, which's implications also considered in this thesis to analyze Shelley's encounters with the Muslim world.

Shelley's Romantic encounters with the Muslim world started in his early age of seventeen when he wrote the poem *Henry and Louisa* in 1809 against the British invasion of Egypt in 1807. Another poem *Zeinab and Kathema* (1811) was another depiction of Muslims as victims, which attacks the British colonial brutality on a Kashmiri couple. His unfinished prose piece *The Moral Teaching of Jesus Christ* compares Messiah with Muhammad in an almost neutral way. His unfinished oriental tale *The Assassins: A Fragment of a Romance* (1814) celebrated radical Islamism. But Islam became an assailant tyrannical faith in his last two major works such as *The Revolt of Islam* (1817) and *Hellas* (1821), in both of which Islam represents the Ottoman Empire. Because that time radical egalitarian Islamism lost all of its positive political association, and in Egypt and Arabia both Muhammad Ali and Wahhabi movement respectively advocate political liberation from the Turks – Egypt was heading towards modernity too - , so that Shelley thought that this faith should be reformed or colonized by European modernity. But the scope of *The Revolt of Islam* was not limited to the Turks, but rather, that encompasses the French Revolution, the British suppression of Ireland, the development of Britain into a global empire, the lack of internal political reform in Britain etc. But, unlike the peaceful overthrow of despotism in *The Revolt* his poem *Hellas* talks about the need of more incendiary energies to topple the Ottoman Empire, because Shelley, like several other reformists, lost their hope for peaceful transition of power and peaceful political reform inside Britain after the Peterloo massacre of 1819. These all literary works are pertaining to Shelley's revolutionary ideals, but since the first focus of this thesis was given to the comparison of romantic concepts of both these poets, this thesis preferred to rivet the attention at first on romance.

As major European sources of romance were Platonic and neo-platonic thought, the elitists' women worship in the Middle Ages, and the Christian divine love, Shelley's Romantic concepts were also deriving from the same sources. But he managed to interweave his Romantic concepts with ideas and philosophical thoughts and even sometimes tinged it with political colors. His first love with Harriet and later with Mary Wollstonecraft were his experiences of carnal loves, and he further continued his search for ideal love and ideal woman, in which he sometimes experienced the immortality of love, which can transcend the boundaries of personal and worldly limitations even towards self-immolation. He seeks solace in his romantic fantasy world and attains ecstasy and freedom by fully engrossing in imagination and emotion, as we see in his *Epipsychidion*, even though that ended up in despair and deep sorrows. His infatuation with Jane

Williams, which was the theme of his several poems, not only kisses his sorrows away, but rather, that propelled him into his romantic roving through the distant, silent, and unsullied wilderness, into where he invites her to reside with him. Similarly, he did not approved the institutionalized marriage system or the marriage of convenience since that is only the union of body; not soul, and to divulge it he was ready even to share his wife with his friends. His concepts of Nature and natural beauty derived from Gothic novels, from Rousseau and the British Lake School poets, and from his frequent travels through scenic landscapes. Rejecting frozen moments, sometimes he sought inspiration from storm and wind, celebrated Noble Savage, solitude, light, skies, shadows and weather and so forth.

At the same time, Kalīl Muṭrān's Romantic writings did not have any philosophical implications or influence, or any theoretical or ideological affiliation etc., but rather, that was almost fully melancholic, which sometimes even led him to converse with a far-off bird or a star. He sobs out his sorrows and sufferings to the bird and star and he requests to these midnight storyteller companions to take him into the celestial world from this nether world of deceits, sorrows, disbelief, avarice, feud etc. Whether Nature shares his romantic melancholy or he shares it with Nature, the depiction of gloomy evening (Al-Masā‘) was a fantastic depiction of Romantic sorrows. Whereas in some of his poems natural elements and organisms share his feelings towards his beloved, some of his other poems are the depictions of gleeful pastoral life of the Lebanon and Egypt. Apart from the scenic beauty of Lebanese landscapes, the historical monuments, and adjacent gardens evoke his childhood memories with his beloved. Some of his narrative romantic poems depict tragic love stories, most of which are pertaining to the poor or helpless people. When a youth committed suicide due to the failure of his love affair, he realized the originality and depth of his love and he wrote another romantic melancholic poem on that regard.

Shelley was just born when the Reign of Terror occurred in France, and when Napoleon ascended into power in 1804 Shelley was just 12, and when Britain invaded Egypt in 1807 he was just 15, and when he wrote his first Romantic revolutionary poem against this invasion *Henry and Louisa* in 1809 he was just 17. When he wrote his first undeniably important poem with radical content entitled *Queen Mab* in 1812 he was just 20, and was already expelled from Oxford, estranged from his father, and married to Harriet. After his elopement to Ireland he

campaigns there for the liberation of Ireland and wrote political pamphlets, and he severely criticized his contemporary poets for their conservative reactionary political stands. He worked away at most of the contemporary world issues including political reform in Britain, and almost all of his poems and pamphlets followed some major political incidents inside and outside Britain. However, he was the supporter of passive resistance and non-violence and sticking to his wider theoretical way he took moderate stands in his revolutionary writings. He negated tax burden, National Debt, sinecures, the standing army, centralized power, and he propounded the idea of a classless world through the change of heart not through bloody revolution. He also wrote widely against the Ottoman suppression of Greece, poverty, religions, suppression of women, institutionalized marriage system and so on.

Muṭrān was also a revolutionary when he was young and wrote some poems against the ottoman suppression of the Levant, and he escaped to France due to an attempt on his life, where he supported the ‘Young Turks’. But when he migrated to Egypt he was almost put off his revolutionary fervor to a large extent, even though that did not bar him from writing prolifically on numerous political and social issues inside and outside Egypt. He wrote with moderate fervor about Arab nationalism, and attacked European colonial aggression of Arab lands and Arab apathy toward it in a moderate way based on his secular modernism which he derived from Arab paradigms of pre-Islamic period. Even though his political and social poetic writings were not derived from any philosophical standpoint or any theoretical framework, he attacked injustice, inequality, brutality of tyranny and political suppression, sometimes utilizing allegorical poems and some other times otherwise, but almost in implicit ways. Analogous to Shelley he wrote widely against the Ottoman Empire and his tyrannical rule including when the Sultan unjustly killed his minister Midhat Pasha, and he wrote against the British suppression of Egypt, muzzling the press, poverty, sexual exploitation, the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911, supporting Egyptian nationalist leaders, inciting nationalist feelings, women emancipation and so forth. In sum, all these similarities and dissimilarities in the realms of both romance and revolution of both the poets are deeply connected to their social, cultural and political contexts, without analyzing these all factors, conventional forms of comparisons will end up in nothing, but only corroborating essentialist prejudices.

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بحث جامعي قدم إلى جامعة جوهريال نهر نيو دلهي لنيل شهادة الدكتوراه

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