

THE QUESTION OF IQBAL'S
ROMANTICISM:
REVISITING G. R. MALIK'S
CONTRIBUTION

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ABSTRACT

Iqbal, the literary genius has immense power to speak to an age marred by various crises that fundamentally spring from haunting nihilism. Iqbal the mystic, the poet and the sage has world wide audience. Iqbal formulated a mystical philosophy that addresses certain concerns of the nihilistic age in an idiom that is not too alien to its ears, diagnosed decadence in the Western civilization and suggested turn East much before it became a rallying cry appropriated by counterculture poets, some influential writers and philosophers. Iqbal championed passion, vitality, individuality, freedom, faith in relationships and love in a milieu that still longs for retrieving them in a dehumanizing, deindividualizing homogenizing mass culture and the world safe for Capitalism where everything has been getting commoditised. Iqbal “appropriated” tradition for facing modernity and all its alienating and nihilistic undertones. The Romantics were fellow travellers in the path and many of Iqbal’s doctrines and views crisscrossed with them. Prof. G. R. Malik’s work is an attempt to make sense of this crisscrossing and that accounts for his choice of certain common themes rather than individual poets for comparative study in his work. The problem of heterogeneity in the Romantic camp is also there and is taken due note of Prof. G. R. Malik. He has deep and first hand acquaintance with and careful and dexterous handling of primary sources of Iqbal, especially literary and religious aspects of his thought and lucid style. He has opened up new vistas in approaching both Iqbal and the English Romantics. He has done substantial study which documents the relationship to Western literature without overlooking the points of difference between Iqbal and the English Romantics.

Iqbal is arguably the greatest Muslim philosopher and poet of the modern world. He has been hailed as the Sage of the East and deserves comparison with the greatest Western thinkers and poets. Despite a few thousand books devoted to his life and thought, many important aspects of his genius and epochal work and its relevance for the postmodern world seem to have been little explored. There are, for instance, hardly any comprehensive studies exploring his poetry. Iqbal, unlike Holderlin and Rilke, is still awaiting his Heidegger who could appropriate and present him for the post-Nietzschean world audience. Unlike Heidegger, he has received little attention from great philosophers and theologians of the world. Even the Muslim world has been largely ignoring him or just packaging his complex and enormously fecund and subtle mystical and metaphysical insights into some neat and clear formulations. Due attention to his existential and metaphysical thought has been overshadowed by overemphasis on his political thought. He has so far been written off by major histories of philosophy into margins of modern Muslim thought though his vast output was addressed to modern man as such and not to the Muslims only. In this rather despairing scenario, any attempt to present Iqbal to the modern academic world, especially literary and philosophical scholarship, in contemporary idiom is not just welcome but eagerly awaited. Given rarity of deeply engaging works on both Iqbal and the problems he sought to address in otherwise huge corpus of Iqbal studies, it is simply refreshing to see an important aspect of Iqbal illuminated by the foremost scholars in the field of Iqbal studies.

Iqbal is still largely unknown in the literary world of the West. The world of literary criticism has so far afforded to ignore him. We hardly find any anthologizing of his views or engagement with him by seminal thinkers in literary or poetry criticism. And the fault lies in those inheritors of Iqbal who haven't been able to translate or appropriate Iqbal in contemporary idiom. The task of contemporary relevance of Iqbal for international audience is made difficult due to a number of difficulties in Iqbalian corpus. Iqbal used such concepts as ego that have been thoroughly questioned from a lot of perspectives from Lacanian-Zizekian psychoanalysis to structuralist

and other brands of post-humanistic thought currents and Derridean deconstruction. Iqbal's use of theological jargon has also made communication difficult in an age that considers itself post-theological. In a world that is willy nilly secular and sceptical about onto-theological gloss or language and increasingly cautious about any philosophical discourse that builds explicitly upon certain seemingly dangerous political notions that Iqbal seemingly invoked or evoked, it is not easy to bat for a thinker like Iqbal without a reinterpretative or even reconstructive endeavour on the part of Iqbal scholars or critics. However, Iqbal the literary genius has immense power to speak to an age marred by various crises that fundamentally spring from haunting nihilism (even violence from fundamentalism has been understood in the backdrop of pathologies of nihilism and reactions to them). If Holderlin and Rilke and Rumi have a worldwide audience, if Gibran, Hesse, Borges and many other mystically inclined authors are still popular, why can't Iqbal the mystic, the poet, the sage have world wide audience? There is an enormous scope for Iqbal who batted for Rumi almost a century back, an Iqbal who read Nietzsche in mystical terms well before his importance in the postmodern thought came to be explored along this line, an Iqbal who formulated a mystical philosophy that addresses certain concerns of the nihilistic age in an idiom that is not too alien to its ears, an Iqbal who diagnosed decadence in the Western civilization and suggested turn East much before it became a rallying cry appropriated by counterculture poets, some influential writers and philosophers, an Iqbal who championed passion, vitality, individuality, freedom, faith in relationships and love in a milieu that still longs for retrieving them in a dehumanizing, deindividuating homogenizing mass culture and the world safe for Capitalism where everything has been getting commoditised. Prof. G. R. Malik asks this vital question and seeks to rescue him from indifference of academia, especially English literary criticism's almost total disregard of him. He seeks, by his comparative study of Iqbal and English Romantics, to argue for the important place that Iqbal deserves in modern studies on Romanticism. He has hardly any predecessors in this regard to build his thesis and has approached primary sources with a masterly command. He has given us a bagful of theses to consider and on the whole he succeeds in showing why Iqbal counts in the debate on Romanticism and this has wider implications in a world that is still half romantic in some of its commitments and encountering Islam and its leading thinkers like Iqbal for better grasp of contemporary situation, at least, from a political point of view. Any interpretation or appropriation of Iqbal needs to consider his

adaptation of tradition and his situating himself in the emerging responses to loss of tradition. His engagement with English Romantics may best be seen in light of his methodological and philosophical commitment to the Islamic religious and Indo-Persian literary tradition rather than in light of Romanticism and its immediate background of Enlightenment and French Revolution. Iqbal found some echoes of his own deeply felt perceptions in the Romantics and was never swayed by them though he could, in his catholic genius, assimilate the best of their haunting melodies of soul in exile seeking company in the ruins of modernity. Romantics themselves were at heart medieval in sensibility, nostalgic about dying relationships, peasant simplicity, freedom of spirit and imagination, beauty and splendour of nature. They couldn't accept key claims of modernity and its attendant secularization though they were converts to its promises of freedom and liberty and justice. Modernity had succeeded in weaning most of them away from traditional founts of transcendence but they sought to evade corrosive nihilism in its wake by rediscovering albeit in some demythologized and impoverished form the Platonic realm of eternity, inspiration, love and imagination. Iqbal though a devotee of tradition couldn't afford disengagement with the emerging worldview that overturned almost everything traditional. He "appropriated" tradition for facing modernity and all its alienating and nihilistic undertones. The Romantics were fellow travellers in the path. And many of Iqbal's doctrines and views crisscrossed with them. Prof. G. R. Malik's work is an attempt to make sense of this crisscrossing and that accounts for his choice of certain common themes rather than individual poets for comparative study in this work. Of course the problem of heterogeneity in the Romantic camp is there and is taken due note of Prof. G. R. Malik has the distinction of being one of Kashmir's most influential, widely known and respected Iqbal scholars or more precisely Iqbalists. Thanks to his deep and first hand acquaintance with and careful and dexterous handling of primary sources of Iqbal, especially literary and religious aspects of his thought and lucid style, Prof. G. R. Malik has carved a special niche for himself in Iqbal criticism.

Prof. G. R. Malik is a man of strong convictions as Iqbal was. For him Iqbal is not just a literary figure but man with a mission, an inspired genius who was gifted with deep and subtle perception of contemporary malaise and tackled it with the resources of Islamic, Indo-Persian and Western cultures but guiding spirit was fundamentally Islamic. Iqbal seems for him an authentic expression of the artistic and spiritual doctrine he himself upholds and deploys

it for critiquing the Romantics. He seems to approvingly refer to Iqbalian position in any attempt of comparison, at least in the book under discussion.

According to Prof. G. R. Malik “Iqbal was essentially a Romantic both as a thinker and as a poet”.¹ “In his thinking on aesthetics and its epistemological foundations, Iqbal belongs to the Romantic tradition”.² Prof. G. R. Malik links Iqbal to romanticism on many important points. These include, among others, his idea of self, individualism, imagination, aesthetic, revolutionary politics and choice of imagery. He links Iqbal’s adherence to the idea of religion as a personal discovery to his romanticism. He connects Iqbal with Blake in his use or better assimilation of scriptural imagery. He seconds the Romantic’s rejection of mimetic theory of art. One can hardly put a finger on any of the scores of statements made while comparing and contrasting Iqbal with Blake, Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth and Keats. Remarkably Prof. G. R. Malik seems to be more adept in pointing out contrasts between Iqbal and others than in seeking to show similarities. It is admitted fact that for less careful scholars business of pointing out similarities has been quite fashionable.

Prof. G. R. Malik puts first things first (Iqbal’s faith and philosophy) and never lets formalist dogma or other text centric approaches to affect the context or clearly intended meaning (clear, revolutionary philosophical message). But Prof. G. R. Malik is able to link the question to the First Principles invoked in Iqbal and settling it in such a decisive manner in few sentences. He thus giving his verdict: “The purpose of Art is development and purification of spiritual self.”

Prof. G. R. Malik is a brilliant Iqbal commentator and brings all his skills and scholarship to analyze and situate Iqbal in larger literary tradition that he inherited. As an illustration of Prof. G. R. Malik’s Iqbal exegesis I refer to his brief notes on Iqbal’s poem *Tanha’i* that echoes some familiar themes in literature, especially later Romantically informed German poetry. The theme of loneliness, Prof. G. R. Malik notes, is associated with what he calls the “syndrome of mystery, wonder, anguish, and paradoxically, near ecstasy.” It has been, “at once a liability and an asset.” Then he proceeds to comment upon the poem and masterfully appropriates three literary traditions – Persian (little known Abu Talib Kalim), English (Shakespeare, Coleridge) and Urdu (Ghalib, and Faiz) to explain the point. He observes in connection with this point: “Generally, however, it has turned out to be an asset, primarily because one of the greatest triumphs of creative literature is to

convert a liability into an asset.” His concluding comments on concluding verse of the poem “A simile quivered upon his lips but He said nothing” deserve to be quoted in full to show his insight as comparatist.

The world of art can proudly boast of two mind baffling smiles – the smile on the lips of Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* and the smile of the Creator in Iqbal’s poem *Tanhai*. But the simile that plays on God’s lips is far more enigmatic, far more ironic, and far more meaningful than the smile of *Mona Lisa*. Does it mean that the Creator is baffled by the riddles of his own creation? This question, like the question arising from the poem’s concluding line, must remain unanswered:

If I fly ahead by a hair- breadth hence,
The dazzle of illumination will consume my wings.³

Although perhaps Buddha’s legendary smile too needed to be mentioned here it is one of the scores of passages that we find in Prof. G. R. Malik’s work that illuminate certain facets of Iqbal with such power, grace and beauty that we can assert that he is an asset in Iqbal studies. literary critics, especially critics of Romanticism, can’t afford to.

In Prof. G. R. Malik’s reading, Iqbal shares least with Keats whose idea of self effacing and negative capability are largely incompatible with Iqbalian philosophy. I think love and centrality of beauty in both Keats and Iqbal would require us qualify this point. And we need to remember the artistic and moral virtue (as we can connect it with detachment) of negative capability applies to giants of literary world like Shakespeare. I think Iqbal had his share of gift of negative capability and in fact Prof. G. R. Malik also notes the point elsewhere. I think another important point in Keats regarding our world as a vale of soul making captures the essence of Iqbal’s own project of self development. Keats “dissolution” of the self in the Other, in Beauty and attempt to transform all experience into soul creation or education isn’t perhaps inexpressible in Iqbalian terminology of love and self development.

Prof. G. R. Malik asserts that Iqbal and Blake differ in the sense that the former is a subjective idealist who doesn’t consider the external world to be a reality and abandons responsibility of artist in his prophetic works. Iqbal and Wordsworth share certain tinge of realism regarding external world. Iqbal has mostly in common with Blake without having read him in much depth or detail. “Blake rejects Plato’s theory of knowledge as recollection and art as imitation. For him both are recreation. Plato according to him, worshipped the muses which are the daughters of memory rather

than of imagination. Blake's muses are the daughters of imagination which for him is divine, infinite and eternal. A work of art is, for him, an imaginative reordering or recreation of sense-experiences".⁴ "From the mimetic point of view the mind was essentially a passive recipient of the external impressions."⁵ "The epistemological foundations of the expressive theory of art are entirely different from those of the mimetic theory."⁶ "The mimetic aesthetic was based on a mechanical concept of mind which was modelled on Newton's science of mechanics."⁷ "The idea that poetry is not the result of craft but of inspiration was not a new idea" He brings in Socrates idea of possession of poets to support ancient roots of the idea.

Interestingly Iqbal has most in common with Blake whose influence through direct or indirect textual evidence is least as Prof. G. R. Malik points out. With Blake Iqbal shares a lot (however, this needs reading both Blake and Iqbal in light of Tradition and streak of individualist mysticism that most fundamentally shares them. With Byron hardly anything except revolutionary tone or political subtext of his work. Byron is easy to label as satanic and thus underscore key divergence from the "saintly" Iqbal. This doesn't however imply that Iqbal also perceived him like this and one notes a significant place in Iqbal's pantheon in *Javid Nama* for Byron. As a prophet of revolution and love Iqbal has more reasons to admire than censure him. Prof. G. R. Malik notes, it is between Keats and Iqbal that there are least resemblances and key divergences on some issues including the view of self and negative capability. Early Shelley's atheism and later Shelley's pantheism are hardly of any significance for Iqbal to take note of but his celebration of life of imagination, rebellion against industrialist values and suffocating social conventions and strange fascination for his reading of Prometheus do fascinate him. Besides Iqbal's translation of one his poems that Prof. G. R. Malik has spotted for the first time, Iqbal has little in common except some aspects of Romantic aesthetics with Coleridge. This leaves Wordsworth who helped Iqbal escape atheism in his early life and who had vast projects and assumed responsibilities of what has been called a sage in difficult times to call back the English world to the abandoned territories though in less religious and more mystical a tone. The original idea of working on Iqbal and Wordsworth that Prof. G. R. Malik undertook on the suggestion of famous Urdu and Iqbal critic Prof. A. A. Suroor seems to have been well conceived though the author has succeeded in justifying inclusion of other major figures in Romanticism as well. However I feel that this original idea could have fructified in a path breaking study and hope that Prof. G. R. Malik finds time to revisit it

and give us a definitive work that would help carve a permanent space for Iqbal in Romantic Criticism as understood and taught across the globe. Both Iqbal and Wordsworth took almost similar ambitious projects that require no less than sages to complete. Wordsworth sought to wean away the emerging world from its worship of instrumental rationality and technological culture and restore to love its territory and virgin nature its symbolic significance. Wordsworth like Holderlin was Heidegger of poetry who had, like Iqbal as *Daanayi raaz*, a life saving message to deliver to the world getting destroyed by what Heidegger called the oblivion of being. And it is only renewed faith in love, in radical innocence that is sensitive to epiphanies of Being, that could save the “God abandoned” man. Iqbal was a more profound thinker but Wordsworth was assisted by a philosopher of great calibre, Coleridge and did succeed in impacting on the literary if not political or social life of his people.

Prof. G. R. Malik's arguments for bringing in Iqbal is premised on more or less Iqbalian reading of the picture of the modern episteme broadly painted. He appropriates English Romantics and Iqbal in some sweeping but insightful strokes. The insightful comparative studies by Prof. G. R. Malik on Iqbal with English Romantics would deserve special attention from the literary world. The book that discusses Iqbal vis-à-vis internationally known group of poets and for an international audience and published more than two decades back should already have generated some ripples – I think it has – though one can guess reasons for rather lukewarm reception in the literary world, especially scholarship on English Romanticism. Although I feel Iqbal would be better appreciated vis-a-vis German Romantics because these have been better received and appropriated by seminal philosophers like Heidegger, the case for a definitive study on English Romantics vis-a-vis Iqbal by formidable Iqbal scholars has been long overdue. Despite certain arguments to the contrary that write off English Romantics as literary and religious heresy or point out heterogeneity in the Romantic camp itself, there is a case for situating Iqbal and English Romantics with respect to one another for the obvious reasons like similar problems they address, poetic mode they use, philosophical, mystical and religious resources they appropriate and shared sense of mission to intervene in “destitute times.”

Romanticism has been an influential reaction against dominant Cartesian mechanistic rationalistic episteme. It has been able to secure, at least for art if not for religion or mysticism, a space that had been highly compromised with the emergence of modern

scientific-technological culture premised on instrumental rationality or reign of quantity that wrote off the Sacred and its trails everywhere from the cosmos and life. Romanticism has been a blanket term that has accommodated Platonic philosophical, NeoPlatonic mystical, Christian mystical theological, new appropriations of the mystical or sacred and such things that naturally attracted many thinkers repelled by desacralizing secularizing episteme that was recording its triumphs to convert the world into an industrial resource and wasteland of spirit. Key religious figures that reacted against the disappearance of the spiritual ambience that characterized the Middle Ages had often something “romantic” about them or so they could be characterized. Many important great Romantic writers consciously or unconsciously took the roles of poet seers or poet prophets, were serious students of theology and the Bible and took inspiration from it as Iqbal took from the Quran. They responded to the Biblical narrative and tried to improve upon Milton. Romanticism sought somewhat this worldly face of Tradition as Iqbal did and restore the supernatural element that had previously been taken for granted and for this it didn't appeal to any abstract beyond but to the living blooming mystery around that\ nature exhibited and presented it as a theophany that anyone could appreciate. It fought the implicit nihilism concealed in Modernity. Some elements of Romanticism have been echoed or appropriated in many major thinkers and poets of the twentieth century. Given all these points Iqbal's appropriation of if not debt to the Romantics can't be ignored. But does this debt to the Romantics significantly colour or influence Iqbal's own evolution as a poet and a thinker? Prof. G. R. Malik says yes but doesn't argue the case in great detail. He is content with noting some resemblance between the them, is able to bring in numerous suggestive if not conclusive pieces of evidence of influence, notes some divergences as well and concludes on a note that as visionary or mystic poets one could trace to the same wells of the Spirit many points of convergence in orientation, in sensibility and in some other modes. One can easily grant the conclusion and appreciate the labour put in drawing many parallels and few dissenting notes but one would strongly feel the need for further substantiation (probably the third edition would seek to fill the gaps) of key theses stated in the introduction regarding taking Iqbal as an extension of the Romantics.

Prof. G. R. Malik has attempted to substantiate some new theses including the foundational claim that Iqbal can be understood as an extension of (anti) tradition of Romanticism and categorically states

his most important thesis regarding the idea of self in Iqbal as having antecedents in the English Romantics. This thesis is quite provocative and would require a much bigger volume and far more comprehensive work and review of both the Romantics and Iqbal than has been presented in a rather smaller and more or less introductory work. I wonder if the author intends to take the provocative work forward to call for almost a new reading of Iqbal. It would also call for revisiting the debt Iqbal owed to other sources, Islamic, Persian and Indian while formulating his idea of self. Iqbal's debt to the Romantics, especially in his earlier life, is well known. So is his interest in teaching Romantic literature at one point in his life. A wealth of correspondences between Iqbal and English Romantics are provided but the case for proving the formative influence on key ideas is far from conclusively argued. Perhaps the author intends others to carry forward the work he has begun. This task of ideological or literary marriage of Iqbal and English Romantics will have to note rather significant ideological distances from most if not all the Romantics is well known to Iqbal scholars. Individualist in metaphysics who interpreted even God as an individual and never wavered regarding cognitive claims of transcendentalist mysticism despite his "naturalist" and "rationalist" seeming methodology, theist in theology, dualist (like Ramanuja and Sirhindhi) in mystical theology, follower of Law and respectful of Form of religion, Iqbal distances himself in some important respects from all Romantics who have been of all hues from atheistic to pantheistic immanentist or diest to Unitarian. In aesthetics he is no admirer of aestheticism or who would deify art or substitute religion by art but one who subordinates art to life, even power and judges it or limits its scope from his philosophical and theological standpoint while as in Romantics we find in art almost a substitute for religion and often the only valid portal to transcendence. Iqbal's primary sources and the thrust of Indo-Islamic tradition that he consciously inherited and sought to carry forward are in fundamental disagreement with the Romantics on the twin issues of subjectivism and privileging of will over intelligence. There is convergence in arguments against Romanticism from great Catholic philosophers like Maritain and perennialist traditionalist thinkers. In fact the greatest of modern philosophers from Heidegger to Levinas would fault Romanticism on philosophical and ethical grounds. The traditional position of which Islamic thought is a version with its recognition of objectivity of intelligence and salvation by right use of intellect and an epistemology that is clearly distinguishable from epistemology of most of the Romantics and upholding more or less classical "bias"

can't be made compatible with Romanticism and if Iqbal is self avowedly in the former camp, he can't a priori be an extension of the Romantic tradition.

Romanticism is too heterogeneous a group of writers to allow us to use the expression the Romantic with very precise meaning. And even if we agree on some characterization of romanticism, a couple of points will be there that tradition centric culture has reservations against. Romanticism is a new movement that arose in a particular context and primarily as a reaction and shared certain assumptions of the new movement of which Enlightenment was an expression. What is of perennial value in Romanticism is an appropriation of classical religious, mystical and philosophical heritage and this appropriation comes at the cost of certain distortion of that heritage and has contributed to certain pathological developments in later political and literary domains in the history of the West.

Iqbal has a full fledged consistent metaphysics of love (as distinguished from if not opposed to every romantic and dualistic understanding of love, he envisions love as lying at the centre of reality as is the case in Plato, world mystical traditions and in fact in all religions) that can't be squared with romantic lovelatry. In Romantics we find love that is more romantic than mystical and more mystical than metaphysical that doesn't countenance the tragic squarely In the judgment of great modern critic like Eliot Romantics were, in general, not traditional enough and guilty of heresies that make them dangerous customers for any religion or tradition centric poet or philosopher. Iqbal belongs to the camp of philosophers who though no Cartesian rationalist or empiricist and not only a poet who could talk lightly of reason though censure a superficial rationalism ignorant of deeper movement of thought or intellect – he embraced Islam's central emphasis on objectivity of intelligence and emphasized essential continuity between reason and intuition. Belonging to the Muslim philosophical tradition centred on theomorphic reason or intellect he emphasized value of study of nature as God's behaviour (not merely an aesthetic appreciation of it) that we hardly find in the Romantics.

Despite his championing of love/feeling Iqbal is a great advocate of reason and even rationalism – he approvingly quotes Whitehead's point "The ages of faith are the ages of rationalism," equates the birth of Islam with the birth of inductive intellect as if the institution of prophecy was wrapped to pave way for the reign of reason and traced to the Prophet the genesis of the attempt to find rational justifications for faith. In fact Iqbal's mentor Rumi is also an advocate of *aql* understood as intellect. None of the Romantics

shares this eulogy of reason. Iqbal's advocacy of love aligns him with the Romantics but differences are also to be noted. His interests were more wide ranging than poets and secular philosophers. He could never approve of romantic solitariness that leads to isolation from larger community. As a philosopher of both the self and suprapersonal selflessness (Baykhudi) he remained rooted in the earthly and social realities and had very strong sense of history, time and finitude that most Romantics would seek to escape or occasionally transcend.

One also needs to guard against the possibility that Romantic rejection of reason (that Prof. G. R. Malik approvingly refers to) that would question traditional Islam's linking of salvation with right use of intelligence and objectivity of intelligence. In fact Prof. G. R. Malik doesn't derive any conclusions from Blake's use of the term intellect for imagination. If he had developed it, it would have landed him close to perennialist camp spearheaded by Kathleen Raine in Blake studies or with James Custing in Coleridge studies

The question is: Isn't Romanticism as represented by majority of English Romantics a counter-tradition or pseudotradition or rejection of important elements of Tradition? If yes, then linking Iqbal too strongly to the Romantics is problematic, to say the least. Keats, Shelley, Byron so categorically distanced themselves from any supernatural reference, especially in their social philosophy, that nothing could make them predecessors of Iqbal. Coleridge is too Christian and too Platonic a critic to appeal Iqbal and Wordsworth remains an exception in terms of his sense of mission as a poet-sage, his great achievement as a path breaker in evolving Romantic art theory and many affinities in affirmation of both self and transcendence with Iqbal and his relatively greater reverence for the scriptural material. Jacques Maritain, T. S. Eliot, Frithjof Schuon, Ananda Commarsawmy – to name only a few important figures in criticism of Romanticism from a metaphysical or theological viewpoint – have forcefully argued how Romanticism is more a scandal or counter traditional or pseudomystical formulation of heterogenous ideas that is incompatible with any integral tradition. The individuality or personality rooted in Spirit and the grandeur and comprehensiveness of the Perfect Man grounded in access to Absolute thanks to theomorphic intelligence are not satisfactorily safeguarded by the Romantics. Iqbal's judgment regarding Nietzsche that he failed because he could not follow a discipline or Master would apply largely to almost all the Romantics.

Prof. G. R. Malik seems to plead for Romantic (and implicitly) Iqbalian aesthetic that rejects the idea of mimesis attributed to Plato

and Aristotle. However if we note the point that the notion of mimesis constitutes the very definition and *raison d'être* of traditional understanding of art/craft and is thus crucial to what Coomaraswamy call true or Oriental philosophy of art – and this would subsume or include Islamic doctrine as well – one can't plead for either Romantics or Iqbal especially when we consider self avowed commitment to Islamic/Oriental/traditional doctrine concerning art. One can also show that Romantic view itself is not a radical departure from the classical idea of mimesis (to quote just one maxim from Blake "The Man who never in his Mind & Thoughts travelled to Heaven Is No Artist" that shows that the artist copies divine model above) if we note that human self is capable of participating in the Divine Creativity or Life of Imagination thanks to contemplative activity that penetrates Forms or essences. To create is to participate in divine creativity and not an autonomous activity of a separate independent creature. All actions are consecrated to God, for the glory of God. Cognizing the point that in traditional view God is the only Agent of action, as the ground of all beauty and perfection and requires from man surrender of all claims to autonomy or self reference, one can appreciate mimesis as condition for displaying creative activity of spirit. I think departments of literature today have vetoed Plato and Aristotle on mimesis and according to such critics as Martin Lings, Livingstone and Patrick Laude it is based on forgetting or improper reading of these giants. The metaphor of man as co-creator of which Iqbal is greatly fond of to the distaste of traditional authorities should not be allowed to imply license for any kind of Promethean viewpoint. Iqbal has given us theologically problematic dialogues between man and God as they give an impression of crass dualism of man and God that gets ultimately skewed in favour of man. Iqbal's Promethean-Protagorean humanist streak leads him to slightly diverge though occasionally quite sharply from traditional Islamic position that is characteristically Theocentric and nowhere anthropocentric. Iqbal's remark quoted in *Zinda Rood* by Javid Iqbal and endorsed by Prof. G. R. Malik on difference between himself and his ancestors on the question of Theocentrism and anthropocentrism illustrates this divergence. If "The ultimate subject of all pure or revealing art is God" (Coomaraswamy and Stella Block), "All traditional art can be 'reduced' to theology, or is, in other words, dispositive to a reception of truth." (Coomaraswamy) and "Art, void of its supernatural typology, fails in its inherent artistic essence." (Sir George Birdwood) one can well imagine distance between Iqbalian and Romantic aesthetic as the latter expresses more of self or subjectivity and

personal feelings than of God or Objective Other. One can say in defense of Iqbal, however, that when he talks about man, it is theomorphic man, pontifical man, vicegerent of God that he is mind. And given Iqbal's focus on the idea of Self and theology's deeper meaning as autology (science of Self), one may say that it is ultimately God conscious even God intoxicated man that is Iqbal's and the Lord servant polarity is well transcended in khudi centric vision. (*Khudi ke zed me sari khudayi*)

I think Iqbal belongs, generally speaking, more to transcendentalist camp of Emerson and others, especially in his spiritual dimension than to the camp of Romantics although with individual Romantics like Blake he does share (without deriving from him) many key metaphysical and religious premises. I think it would be more correct to situate both Romantics and Iqbal in the larger Idea of Tradition for best appreciating their debt to the latter and their unique *ijtihad* on it. Such an attempt has been made for situating Blake by Kathleen Raine in *Blake and Tradition* but Prof. G. R. Malik seems to have only tangentially engaged with this seminal work or found it unconvincing. Prof. G. R. Malik makes some remarks like "Blake makes the scripture a mere point of departure and uses its language to build a religion of his own which, to a large extent, runs counter to the scripture whereas Iqbal tries, as far as possible, to bring his philosophy in line with the principles of Islam."⁸ And "In his insistence on self-fulfilment and action as the means of true salvation, Iqbal strikes a note similar to Blake, although it is to be remarked that Blake removes all restraints on self and considers God too as one of the restraints"⁹ that need qualification in light of Raine's and some other critics' readings. Occasionally Prof. G. R. Malik takes theological language at its face value, doesn't keep eye on esoteric and thus faults Blake for apparently atheistic statement.

Prof. G. R. Malik notes Promethean element in Romantics and its echoes in Iqbal and doesn't engage with devastating criticisms of it from spiritual perspective he is otherwise consistently upholding and using as a standard to measure both Iqbal and the Romantics.

Prof. G. R. Malik dismisses Ibn Arabi accusing him of pantheism, of distorting Islamic *kalimah* and seeing human ego illusory entity.¹⁰ He largely follows Iqbal in these criticisms of Ibn Arabi. However, even a cursory look at a representative selection of over hundred commentaries that Ibn Arabi's central text *The Bezels of Wisdom* have received till now shows, as do a number of brilliant studies on Ibn Arabi from diverse scholars including Corbin, Nasr, Burckhardt, Hernestein and others, these charges appear unfounded.

There is some possibility of fruitfully exploring a trajectory from Romantics to Iqbal that is argued in Prof. G. R. Malik's study but could be developed to great length and that is doctrine of imagination developed by the Romantics and partly echoed here and there in Iqbal but can be reconstructed. Prof. G. R. Malik has insightfully commented on the cognitive and prophetic dimension of poetry in Iqbal and that can be grounded only in a doctrine of creative imagination developed by such thinkers and poets as Ibn Arabi. Iqbal, despite his many disagreements with Ibn Arabi, comes close to echoing his formulations regarding central place of imagination and beauty in his poetry. A serious cognizance of metaphysical roots of poetry as discussed by traditionalist scholars like Patrick Laude in *Singing the Way* and M. A. Lakhani questions modern critical constructions of poetry that divests it of cognitive claims, separates it from logic too sharply, takes no heed of its rootedness in the Intellect and lastly its key claim to be a portal to transcendence and complement though not supplant religion in the quest of enlightenment. Iqbal's anxiety to distance himself from being treated as a poet need not be taken on its face value but approached with the consideration of integral connection between poetry and prophecy, appropriation of poetical form or poetic resonances of the sacred scripture and key role of creative imagination in prophecy and mysticism and inseparable connection to the Intellect of both prophecy, mysticism and poetry and metaphysical roots or basis of language – language as the house of Being. A serious engagement with Heidegger and such seminal poets as Holderlin and Rilke would help dissolve certain hermeneutical problems in connecting Iqbal with the Romantics. Heideggarian openness to being and seeing seminal role for poets in hearkening us back to the call of Being is key theme in Iqbal as his notion of love implies radical innocence or openness to experience and his refusal of union as acknowledgment of finitude/servitude as the destiny of man translates into cool acceptance of our human condition and embracing our fall and finitude. To quote Rilke:

*Let everything happen to you
Beauty and terror
Just keep going
No feeling is final
You who never arrived
in my arms, Beloved, who were lost
from the start,
I don't even know what songs
would please you. I have given up trying*

*to recognize you in the surging wave of
the next moment. All the immense
images in me -- the far-off, deeply-felt landscape,
cities, towers, and bridges, and un-
suspected turns in the path,
and those powerful lands that were once
pulsing with the life of the gods—
all rise within me to mean
you, who forever elude me.
You, Beloved, who are all
the gardens I have ever gazed at,
longing. An open window
in a country house-- , and you almost
stepped out, pensive, to meet me. Streets that I chanced
upon,--
you had just walked down them and vanished.
And sometimes, in a shop, the mirrors
were still dizzy with your presence and, startled, gave back
my too-sudden image. Who knows? Perhaps the same
bird echoed through both of us
yesterday, separate, in the evening..*

“It is always what I have already said: always the wish that you may find patience enough in yourself to endure, and simplicity enough to believe; that you may acquire more and more confidence in that which is difficult, and in your solitude among others. And for the rest, let life happen to you. Believe me: life is right, in any case.”

This view of receiving the Word, of perfection of attention, of silencing the agitations of a mind, of submitting soul to Spirit and renouncing the individualist claim to possess better appropriates traditional view of life and art and one could read Iqbal also in this way. So far a more personalist interpretation of Iqbal has dominated Iqbal criticism that hasn't paid adequate attention to centrality of love, of *amor fati*, of ceaseless travel, of innocence of becoming, of community all of which require a sort of self transcendence. Granting that all life is individual and contribution to strengthening of personality is the test of every doctrine for Iqbal, I think Iqbal's great poetry has enough resources for a more suprapersonal interpretation that would build on the metaphysics of love instead of self that has so far been the case. If Iqbal's Perfect Man is more an adaptation than a radical departure from Ibn Arabi's or Jili's doctrine of *Insan-i-Kamil* and the latter is simply a corollary of metaphysics of love and comprehensiveness of the Divine Names, and note suprapersonal nature of intellect and of joys, ecstasies, beauties that

life of spirit exemplifies and indispensability of need to transcend what is ordinarily called personality for the sake of producing and appreciating great art one can't ignore supra-individual founts of inspiration of Iqbal's basic ideas including the idea of the self.

Another path from the Romantics to Iqbal could be through developing Abram's suggested approach to Romanticism in *Natural Supernaturalism*. Prof. G. R. Malik has not adequately dealt with the central problem of Romantics – secularization and demythologization even though Iqbal's choice of Self would have made for a remarkable comparison. Is God or grace or supernatural agency important? How does Iqbal approach the question of the supernatural give antipathy of modern audience to it? And how does he see the treatment of this problem in his beloved Romantics and modern theology? An engagement with these questions would illuminate further areas of mutual engagement or distance between Iqbal and the Romantics.

The idea that nature can be a theophany, a vivifying symbol, and one can get access to the transcendent principle by being sensitive to the mystery in the depth of things or keeping alive the sense of wonder and beauty revealed to the seeing eye in every manifestation of it (recall Wordsworth's "to me the meanest flower that blows can give/Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.") is echoed in many traditions and mystically informed poets including the Romantics and Iqbal. One can thus bring together otherwise heterogeneous band of Romantics. And perhaps various appropriations of theological language in the Romantics could be misleading and one needs to keep close watch on esoteric, metaphysical and symbolic aspects of language used.

The book's appeal would have further increased if it had an updated bibliography as Romantic Criticism has expanded a lot in last few decades and we have seen certain influential revaluations in Blake criticism.

The Romantic critique of traditional idea of mimesis approvingly referred by Prof. G. R. Malik needs to be historicized or put in perspective. We find a lot of discussion on mimesis in literary criticism but none that matches Coomaraswamy's profound elaboration and defence making most of the routine criticisms of the theory irrelevant. In his last essay "Athena and Hephaistos" we find his exegesis of the idea that connects it to "two modes of being":

Imitation, the distinctive character of all the arts, is accordingly two-fold, on the one hand the work of intellect (nous) and on the other of the hands (cheir). These two aspects of the creative activity correspond to the "two in us", viz. our spiritual or intellectual Self

and sensitive psycho-physical Ego, working together (synergoi). The integration of the work of art will depend upon the extent to which the Ego is able and willing to serve the Self, or if the patron and the workman are two different persons, upon the measure of their mutual understanding.

As Iredell Jenkins has pointed out, the modern view that “art is expression” has added nothing to the older and once universal (e.g., Greek and Indian) doctrine that “art is imitation,” but only translates the notion of “imitation, born of philosophical realism, into the language and thought of metaphysical nominalism”; and “since nominalism destroys the revelation doctrine, the first tendency of modern theory is to deprive beauty of any cognitive significance.” The older view had been that the work of art is the demonstration of the invisible form that remains in the artist, whether human or divine; that beauty has to do with cognition; and that art is an intellectual virtue.¹¹

Coomaraswamy advocates a divine model for artist. Far from defying the World of Forms true artists are required to contemplate the same and draw models of what they have seen. Man’s perfection lies in imitating and what distinguishes Faustian and Promethean modernism is imitating lower things or what doesn’t transcend man with all his limitations. One’s self becomes the source of values. One’s emotions are expressed. Personality is not escaped. Needless to comment that penchant for the ugly in modern art and cities and disappearance of great beauty that characterized traditional crafts follows when the model to be imitated is not what transcends man and grounds all earthly beauty. Poetry is originally a craft or making in different traditions including Islamic and Western and this is best understood in relation to theory of imitation with God as Master Craftsman. As Coomaraswamy puts it:

All tradition has seen in the Master Craftsman of the Universe the exemplar of the human artist or “maker by art,” and we are told to be “perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Compare our artists depicting the ugly or art tailored to interests of entertainment industry. That the Shakers were doctrinally Perfectionists is the final explanation of the perfection of Shaker workmanship; or, as we might have said, of its “beauty.”¹²

If the theory of Imagination can be explained in Platonic terms and the theory of inspiration has Platonic echoes and Shelley’s Platonism was central to his aesthetics as appears in his *A Defense of Poetry*, we can’t keep on unproblematically endorsing antiPlatonic rhetoric of Romantics and epistemology of antimimetic argument endorsed by Romantics. Platonic view of mind is not what

Romantics could eschew or afford to totally reject. Modern psychology and psychoanalysis on the whole have only reaffirmed the stand of mysticism in regard to the ultimate unreality of the autonomous humanist separating ego. Western Idealistic philosophies as well as modern psychology have led on the whole to disbelief in the reality of independent metaphysical reality of ego though not of the Self of which traditions speak. Although one can't identify Iqbal's ego with the traditional doctrine of Self as formulated, for instance, in Sankara, Ibn Arabi, Eckhart and Schuon, it is an appropriation albeit individualistic of the same and not to be equated with humanist view of human personality. The Spirit or Self is not, in itself, something individual and specific, with all the variations in range, balance, and effectiveness of its unity. It is supra-individual and universal. All life may well be individual, as Iqbal avers elsewhere but the Spirit of which Iqbal is talking about can't be individualized or objectivity and true unity or objectless/witnessing awareness and the latter's reaching out to the heart of being by virtue of participation in the object of its knowledge would be difficult to sustain (in view of the traditional epistemological principle that knower is adequate to object being known). Epistemology of most of the significant Muslim philosophers/Sufis has been, generally speaking fundamentally Platonic that involves knowledge as anamnesis even if it appears so incomprehensible to empirically oriented modern thought. Emphasis on reason and intellect in Iqbal would imply somewhat similar conception in his work. The fact that love or feeling has cognitive value for Iqbal and the sources of them are ultimately more within than without, we can appropriate Iqbal in the great tradition that includes Plato and his key epistemological and artistic doctrines. All this has implications on approaching Iqbal vis-à-vis Romantics who embarked on selective and often half-hearted appropriation of Plato's epistemology, metaphysics and theory of art. A key question if often of clarifying our approach to Plato whom "the Greatest Master" Ibn Arabi called Divine Plato. Iqbal's dismissive remarks on Plato's "asceticism" of "life denial" shouldn't be exclusively highlighted (in fact it can be shown that these constituted exaggerated rhetorical statements that more careful Plato scholarship can't concede at face value) and his debt to the philosophical and mystical heritage informed by Plato ignored. Muslim philosophy, mysticism and art have been largely development of key themes formulated in Plato and his intellectual disciples or inheritors including Aristotle and Plotinus. This is because Plato was largely a transmitter rather than an originator of traditional thought received from ancients who in turn have been

drinking from the fountains of gnosis and prophecy. If nothing great has been conceived outside tradition as no less a thinker than Heidegger had to concede and one can never dismiss tradition but only creatively reinterpret it or express in new idiom its perennial structure, achievements both Iqbal and Romantics have to be necessarily put in perspective with respect to this Criterion or *Furqan*. The unchanging metaphysical foundation of Tradition, as traditionalist scholars inform us, can be rendered as *Ad-Deen* that never changes.

Iqbal would best deserve comparison with Blake and Coleridge, two Romantics who find only a marginal place in Prof G. R. Malik for other good reasons, however. I think future researchers need to examine the central problem in theology of Romanticism dealt by Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism*, Kathleen Raine in his study of Blake and Custer in his study on Coleridge. Here I develop a few points regarding the first one to show how fruitful would be this study and how Prof. G. R. Malik's work would serve as a point of departure.

I first reproduce a few excerpts from Abrams and try to situate Iqbal in their light or comment from an Iqbalian viewpoint on them.

Much of what distinguishes writers I call "Romantic" derives from the fact that they undertook, whatever their religious creed or lack of creed, to save traditional concepts, schemes, and values which had been based on the relation of the Creator to his creature and creation, but to reformulate them within the prevailing two-term system of subject and object, ego and non-ego, the human mind or consciousness and its transactions with nature.¹³

Iqbal's key project is also to reformulate and reconstruct traditional religious thought in these terms and his engagement with both Sufism and Muslim scholasticism may be better comprehended if we keep the Romantic, specially its German expressions in view in which Iqbal was specially interested. It is remarkable that Iqbal's debt to Hegel has already been subject to an extensive study by Rashid though it is marred by certain problems that have obstructed its positive reception by Iqbal scholarship. It is time to take Iqbal's deep debt to major Romantic thinkers more seriously for which Prof. G. R. Malik's work invites us to take this as a point of departure for further studies. However, he has primarily focused on more literary than other kinds of debts to which other Iqbalians have drawn our attention. B A Dar in his work on voluntaristic thought has also illumined one dimension of this issue. Series of studies on Nietzsche and Iqbal, Kierkegaard and Iqbal have major modern figures who

shared something of the Romantic sensibility have further illumined these questions. Studies on Iqbal's panentheism and naturalism have also been subjects of some papers that illuminate his complex relationship to both theological and Sufi understanding of the supernatural. It seems clear that he comes close to but then parts his significantly from the general Romantic thesis of considering this world as the locus of manifestation of the divine/supernatural and thus worthy of exclusive attention. For Iqbal, as for the great mystics of all climes and such Romantics as Blake and Coleridge, this world is an exterior face of the Beloved that calls for attention and the otherworld is welling up through it if we could see it properly; it is a symbol and not the symbolized. It is what remains normally veiled that we can access though that doesn't mean turning away our attention from this world. The other world is not a negation but an enlargement of this world and as it is God – or unity of a higher sort – and not this or that world that ultimately whose beauty remains to be explored for ever by travellers on the path.

Hegel and other philosophers and philosopher poets who hailed from Germany and who formed important part of the tradition Iqbal inherited and engaged with not only during his stay in Germany but later as well more seriously in understanding Iqbal's unique response and unprecedented reformulation of religious thought he inherited. What the great Romantic philosophers sought to do with Christian and Western philosophical heritage, Iqbal appropriated for framing Islamic theological and philosophical heritage. It is also not without significance to note that Iqbal was much interested in important mystical philosophers such as Fichte, Schiller, Bradley and Whitehead. Iqbal's own philosophy of ego and especially its implications for religious thought and its appropriation of mysticism could be expressed in terms of all these philosophers or their general romantico-mystical tenor.

In the Prelude, Wordsworth's project was to envisage an earthly paradise transferred from the supernatural to natural setting consisting of "A simple produce of the common day," and speaking of "nothing more than what we are." Blake's estimate of Wordsworth who was content to celebrate "this goodly universe" as a pagan with his engaging mixture of candor and generosity, finally set Wordsworth down as "a Pagan," needs to be kept in mind while assessing Iqbal's estimate and appropriation of Wordsworth. Iqbal doesn't seem to be reading him as a pagan and even declares that he helped him outgrow his doubts about God. Keatsian salvific project that avoids reference to posthumous life doesn't attract Iqbal's negative response. Similarly Shelley's early atheism and later

agnosticism and anti-Jehovah stance doesn't seem to interest him; he seems to find in him a fellow traveller, a sort of mystic. Similarly Keats' critique of Christianity as a "pious fraud" is hardly relevant to him. Goethe's critique and other German poets and philosophers who distance themselves from traditional Christianity or Byron's rebellion against Christianity don't trouble him as he doesn't reject them on this ground and finds enough reasons to laud them. It is clear that the Romantics attract Iqbal despite their differences from Christianity or theistic religion. We need to ask questions regarding Iqbal's reading of Romantics and then Prof. G. R. Malik's reading of Iqbal's reading if it is not the Romantic's paganism or critique of religion. We can't ignore the fact that Iqbal is vulnerable to a naturalist reading and his metaphysical system despite theistic idiom is comparable to Coleridgean one that has been (mis)described as secular. Or we better read Iqbal in the tradition of major Protestant theologians such as Tillich who propose a theological reading of modernity and radical transcendence of transcendentalist thrust of theology and a celebration of the unity of the sacred and the secular in a way that few Muslim thinkers excluding some Sufis have suggested. It can't be ignored that Iqbal was the first great Muslim philosopher who engaged with Nietzsche and major critics of religion or transcendence centric thought. And he wasn't just dismissive but found much worth his attention and taking home.

Iqbal, a professing Muslim throughout life, is comparable to Coleridge, who from the time of his maturity was a professing Christian, carried on "a lifetime's struggle to save what seemed to him the irreducible minimum of the Christian creed within an essentially secular metaphysical system." However, it seems that such Romantics as Shelley took liberty to frame such key texts as the *Divina Commedia* and *Paradise Lost* in the wake of secularizing ideas they were seeking to engage with and he remarked that they have conferred upon modern mythology a systematic form,"¹⁴ and assimilated, rather eclectically and inconsistently, what seemed "intellectually and morally valid in this mythology to his own agnostic and essentially skeptical world-view."¹⁵ It is humanistic naturalism that exerted such a pervasive influence on most of the Romantics that we find its strong presence in major modern thinkers and theologians who inherited Enlightenment, Reformation and modern scientific paradigm. Iqbal lived in the thick of this ferment of ideas that were in tension with received traditional religious outlook.

What attracted Iqbal to the Romantics may be summed up in the words of Burzun who has given us one of the most scholarly account of Romanticism in his *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Yea of Western Cultural Life*. In Romanticism, Burzun noted that "thought and

feeling are fused; [Romanticism's] bent is toward exploration and discovery at whatever risk of error or failure; the religious emotion is innate and demands expression... the divine may be reached through nature or art." And regarding general tenor of the Romantics:

They found the Middle-Ages a civilization worthy of respect; they relished folk art, music, and literature; they studied Oriental philosophy; they welcomed the diversity of national customs and character, even those outside the [Eighteenth Century] cosmopolitan circuit; they surveyed dialects and languages with enthusiasm. This was a genuine multiculturalism, the wholehearted acceptance of the remote, the exotic, the folkish, [and] the forgotten.

What Iqbal cherished includes all the above mentioned elements and what is called symbolic vision of things as all phenomena point to a spiritual or sacred reality and what has been described by Jansen as "the labor of the soul to break free from the trammels of degraded matter and to rejoin a vital spirit that suffuses the universe and renders it intelligible." The Romantics revived essentially religious or traditional view of Nature against Enlightenment and upheld spirit centrism of Platonism and perceived nature as living, *meaningful*, and pointing beyond itself to the *supernatural*. "In Christian, rather than Pagan, terms, the Romantic rediscovers Nature as "The Book of Nature," a kind of supplement to the two Testaments, whose author is God, as normally or eccentrically conceived by the individual writer-thinker." For Berdyaev in *The Meaning of the Creative Act*, religious and the Romantic were synonymous and asserted that while "pagan art is classic and immanent" "Christian art is romantic... and transcendent."

Abram's reading of Neoplatonism is largely accepted by Iqbal and his own critique echoes Romantic critique of it. Both Iqbal and the Romantics critique what Abrams (not quite correctly) calls "the circular monism of the Neoplatonists." For Abrams the Romantics echoing the early systems of post-Kantian philosophy, "transferred the unity which is the beginning and goal of all process, and the locus and criterion of ultimate value, from the Plotinian other-realm to this world of man and nature and human experience."¹⁶ And for the Romantics version of emanation and return, "when the process reverts to its beginning the recovered unity is not, as in the school of Plotinus, the simple, undifferentiated unity of its origin, but a unity which is higher, because it incorporates the intervening differentiations."¹⁷ For the Romantics we don't return to point of origin or undifferentiated unity without having in the process made a real progress by taking time real and the world with all its weal and woe as significant to our odyssey. It is not circular but the ascending

circle, or spiral that describes for them contours of our journey. They give seminal importance to our career on earth, to sin and fall and redemption through the colourful and tragic sojourn on earth. Abrams quotes Hugo von Hoffmannsthal's later description of this design: "Every development moves in a spiral line, leaves nothing behind, reverts to the same point on a higher turning."

It is particularly significant to note Iqbal's reading of the Fall of Adam as dawn of consciousness of individuality and opening a vast field of creative development is echo of the Romantic reading. Iqbal's reading of the Fall in *The Reconstruction* and some poems like *Ruhi Arzi Adam ko salam karti hae* and his general implication of evolutionist paradigm is well known and it is implicitly accepted without criticism in Prof. G. R. Malik's account but he doesn't discuss in any detail Romantic predecessors in this regard.

For Schiller, whom Iqbal seems to reproduce verbatim in his *Reconstruction* Man's rebellion against "the voice of God in Eden, which forbade him the tree of knowledge" is "a fall [*Abfall*] from his instinct, and so as the first manifestation of his autonomous activity, the first venture of his reason, the beginning of his moral existence."¹⁸ Iqbal echoed Kant in his reading of the fall. For Kant, taking the standpoint of the human race as a whole, the "emergence from the state of nature and instinct to that of culture and reason is seen to be gain, not loss." Our destiny "consists of nothing other than a progress toward perfection," in which man's transgression to rationality was the indispensable first step.¹⁹

The impact of Romanticism on/correspondences with Iqbal may be seen in remarkable echoes of Holderlin, Schiller and others in Iqbal. Note Hölderlin in an early draft of *Hyperion*: "No action, no thought can reach the extent of your desire. That is the glory of man, that nothing ever suffices." Wordsworth's *The Prelude* notes that "our home/ Is with infinity," and therefore with "something evermore about to be"; Blake's *There is No Natural Religion*, notes "The bounded is loathed by its possessor.... Less than All cannot satisfy Man." Both in Holderlin and Schiller, as in Iqbal, "the goal of absolute unity can be ever more closely approached but never entirely achieved."²⁰

Prof. G. R. Malik's conclusions as presented in the concluding chapter are unassailable. He has precisely formulated areas of convergence though he hasn't eschewed foregrounding differences and, in general, reasons for taking Iqbal's side if required. For instance, unlike Blake, Iqbal doesn't free himself from the duty of practising artist and doesn't deny the reality of the outside world – he doesn't forego the best of realism in his Romanticism. Regarding treatment of symbolism of moon, Prof. G. R. Malik notes that while

as for Shelley moon mirrors loneliness, for Iqbal “it is a spring-board, as it were, to extol man who has the source of power within him and chooses his own destiny, unlike the moon which borrows its light from the sun and is bound in chains of servility.”²¹ While comparing certain poems of Iqbal and Shelley, Prof. G. R. Malik notes that “Iqbal’s emotions, unlike those of Shelley, are subjected to a rigorous intellectual discipline.”²² Greater objectivity or dramatic power of Iqbal, for instance, is pointed out and special uses it is put into. Prof. G. R. Malik’s Iqbal presents the distillation of what is the best in the Romantics – their essentially individual, spiritual, intuitive, revolutionary, passionate imaginative celebratory attitudes. The Form of Transformed Vision: Coleridge and the Knowledge of God Prof. G. R. Malik succeeds in pointing out varied evidences of Romantic temperament of Iqbal but stops short of demonstrating how Iqbal would contend with the Romantic image as far as it can be shown to be in problematic relationship to the Tradition which he more consciously sought to uphold. He also stops short of drawing full implications of Platonist heritage as appropriated in Coleridge given Iqbal’s reservations regarding the same and how this would impact Iqbal’s critique of doctrine of mimesis. He mentions only in passing (without pausing to see that it might imply a problem for construing Iqbal’s own Romanticism) the stark divergence between Iqbal and Keats on the key question of self as the latter is committed to effacing it against the former. If a key Romantic poet is thus on the opposite camp regarding a key doctrine, it might force us to concede more radical qualifying clause to the thesis of Iqbal being essentially a Romantic both as a thinker and a poet. Especially the case of a Romantic thinker gets problematized as thought can’t countenance a basic contradiction between the two in foundational premises and then allow convergence. I think we can grant the self-avowed image of a Romantic for Iqbal (given the debt acknowledged to Wordsworth, deep fascination for Shelley, great praise for Byron in Iqbal, commitment to many other key premises of Romantics) distinguish it from more academic and technical use of the term Romantic in the history of ideas and criticism. Iqbal has sharp divergence from every important Romantic thinker and poet. Wordsworth’s and later Shelley’s pantheism, early Shelley’s and Byron’s and Keats’ distance from theism and transcendence centric/*akbira* affirming religion, Coleridge’s full fledged Platonism and Incarnationist Trinitarian Christianity, Byron’s pagan irrelevant attitude and Blake’s view of institutionalized religion and many elements of his mythology. From choice of imagery to diction to profundity, sublimity and scope of content it is Iqbal who emerges as

the hero. The great claim – successfully demonstrated through analysis of almost every important aspect of respective works of Iqbal and the Romantics – that makes this book both provocative and important for Western audience is that Iqbal needs to be read along with (and even privileged) great Romantics and that he has much to teach the contemporary world. He is an illustrious sage who has resonances everywhere and belongs to mankind and needs attention from contemporary readers. Prof. G. R. Malik's advocacy of Iqbal is one of the most successful and eloquent that Iqbal scholarship should take special note of. He has put his multifarious gifts of erudition in several classical languages at the altar of Iqbal's sagely vision in which he finds panacea for the modern world and he shows how the Romantics pave way for his more thorough critique of the modern West. It is a long way from Wordsworth's softer dismissal of certain aspects of his age to Iqbal's war against the modern world (*Zarb e Kaleem*).

If it can be demonstrated that Romantic tradition diverges in significant manner from traditional or what Coomaraswamy calls true doctrine of art which is also Islamic doctrine as the giants of traditionalist approach like Coomaraswamy and Burckhardt have shown, and if Iqbal is primarily to be approached from the Quranic or Islamic framework as almost all Iqbal critics agree and Iqbal himself categorically asserted and Prof. G. R. Malik agrees, we need to contend with widely influential readings of Romanticism that underscore its heterodoxy from integral orthodox traditional viewpoint. Iqbal is both consciously and unconsciously drawing on Tradition his deepest convictions and aspirations. And the same could be said about the Romantics, especially Wordsworth, Blake and Coleridge, that they too echo/invoke Tradition in more significant ways than hitherto noted. Prof. James Custinger's incisive and wide ranging work on Coleridge is a standing testimony of this. God is so central to his view of self. He doesn't despair except occasionally in his earlier life (he once wrote to Atiya Faizi about his utter disgust with certain received notions and how he feels more inclined to believing in the central role of *Abriman*). He celebrates and affirms everything. He has no problem with transience as he is able to see from the eye of eternity. Iqbal is not aspiring for a heaven on earth. He is not desperate to seek temporary trip into eternity through the world. He is rooted in theonomous reason or intellect. On all these and some other points already implied in the above discussion, it is clear that we need to qualify Iqbal's Romanticism or add, with Prof. G. R. Malik, caveats limiting the usual understanding of this term or its application to Iqbal. In Prof. G. R. Malik's reading

the Romantics would leave much to be better developed/corrected by Iqbal who was more conscious of his roots in Tradition and self avowedly rejected everything that contradicts the Islamic canon as he understood it. The book has done an important service to the Romantic criticism by eloquent advocacy for considering Iqbal in approaching the English Romantics. It has added a new chapter to the comparative literature on Iqbal as in it he has addressed “a major problem in Iqbal studies, a problem from which most Iqbal scholars tend to shy away for understandable reasons” (need to master diverse literary and cognitive universes of the East and the West). It has helped to open up new vistas in approaching both Iqbal and the English Romantics. And one may fittingly conclude with Prof. Vinod, a distinguished literary critic, that it is a substantial study which documents very fully a major Indian poet’s relationship to Western literature without overlooking the points of difference between Iqbal and the English Romantics.

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