NATURE AND DEATH IN THE POETRY OF AL-MALĀ‘IKA, AL-SHĀBBĪ AND SHUKRĪ, AND CERTAIN ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Ronak Hassan Hussein

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of St Andrews

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NATURE AND DEATH IN THE POETRY OF AL-MALĀ'IKA, AL-SHĀBBĪ AND SHUKRĪ, AND CERTAIN ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS.

(A COMPARATIVE STUDY)

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Submitted for the degree of Ph.D in the Faculty of Arts in the University of St. Andrews

I, RONAK HASSAN HUSSEIN, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, that is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

17-11-1988

I was admitted as a research student under No. 12 in October 1983 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D in November 1985; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1983 and 1988.

17-11-1988

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Ph.D in the University of St. Andrews between 1983 and 1988.
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ABSTRACT

The first part of this thesis, divided into two chapters, deals with the early background of European Romanticism: the reasons behind its appearance and problems of definition. There follows a discussion on the question of the originality of Arabic Romanticism, with a brief review of the roots and main literary groups of this movement in Arabic poetry.

Part two examines the influence of English poetry and thought on three Arab Romantic poets: Nāzik Sādiq al-Malā'ika, Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbī and ʿAbd al-Rahmān Shukri. This is discussed parallel with the channels of this influence.

The main focus of this research is however, to show the ways in which al-Malā'ika, al-Shābbī and Shukri perceived and reflected nature and death in their poetry.

Their attitudes towards certain phenomena in nature such as the countryside, night, the sea, childhood and moral and social lessons of nature are compared with certain attitudes of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley.

Themes such as life and death, fear of death, fatalism, immortality and death as a welcome experience are also the concern of this thesis, with a comparison of these themes in the poetry of the Arab and English
Romantic poets.

However, owing to the popularity of Keats and Shelley with the three Arab Romantic poets, this thesis concentrates on their poetry.

This research has selected only certain phenomena and themes from nature and death because of the dominance of these subjects in the poetry of al-Malā'ika, al-Shābbī and Shukrī.

The translations of Arabic poetry in this thesis are intended to convey the general sense of the source texts, rather than to give a precise rendering of these texts into English.
PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

THE EARLY BACKGROUND OF EUROPEAN ROMANTICISM
CHAPTER ONE

THE EARLY BACKGROUND OF EUROPEAN ROMANTICISM (1)

Literary movements do not appear suddenly but rather they emerge gradually as a result of a variety of factors. In this, Romanticism is like other literary movements. We cannot say when or where Romanticism began. However, we can indicate "facts" or "events" which contributed to or had a close link with, the growth, rise and spread of Romanticism not only as a literary movement but also as an "attitude" in the widest sense of the term. In its latter sense, Romanticism is bound up with social life and change. We should therefore examine those factors which helped pave the way for the rise of Romanticism (2).

The rise of Romanticism is connected with the rise of the liberal movements in Europe. In France, the reign of King Louis XIV and all the subsequent monarchs was characterised by absolutism. This served to restrict people's tastes, aspirations and potential. Harsh laws governed all aspects of life in this country, so much so that even architectural forms, the movement of people and their daily behaviour were more or less 'governed' by rigid rules and conventions. Even art and literature were expected to conform to rigid and stifling
This situation weighed heavily on the people, whether artists, men of letters, architects or gardeners. It is reported that a farmer sought to demonstrate that freedom was far superior to rigidity and conformity by showing that the orderly arrangement of plants and flowers is far less appealing and beautiful than the informal and 'natural' style of landscaping.

Gradually art and literature in France, as well as in other European countries, began to free themselves from the exacting and stifling rules of acceptable composition and style which reigned therein for a long time. The main impetus behind this process was the French Revolution which broke out in 1789 and called for "liberty, equality, and fraternity" in human societies. In a sense, the French Revolution came to embody the ideals which many people longed for inside and outside France. The ideals of individual and social freedom which emanated from this revolution replaced the absolutism of the previous era. This newly-found spirit of freedom found its most pronounced expression in the arts. Freed from the shackles of the past and its restrictive traditions, the artist sought to express himself more freely, forging a new relationship between himself and his society in the process (4).
This newly won freedom, and the spirit it engendered in French society and literature, soon spread throughout Europe as a result of the improvements in communication which obtained at the time. In other words, the French Revolution was an important catalyst, in transforming the conditions which prevailed in Europe in various spheres. However, the conditions in European societies outside France made the assimilation of the ideals of the French Revolution feasible.

Nevertheless, the hope and optimism which prevailed in Europe were, to a large extent, short-lived. Perhaps people expected too much too soon. In his early days, Napoleon was almost universally regarded as the champion of the Revolution, and the man who, more than anyone else, symbolised the ideals of the newly emerging social order. However, Napoleon did not live up to these expectations. His failure to maintain and further the momentum of the cause of the French Revolution caused much disappointment to many people, including poets and writers.

Another factor which contributed towards the rise of Romanticism, albeit indirectly, was the Industrial Revolution. One of most significant and visible results of this revolution was the expansion of many cities in the industrial heartlands of many European countries. Farmers, peasants, artists and craftsmen left their villages to find work and live in the cities in the
belief that they would have a better life than that which they previously led in the countryside. These people found employment in factories more economically rewarding than work on the land. Many soon lost their jobs owing to the introduction of more efficient and cheaper methods of production which heavily depended on machinery. The condition of the new working classes in the cities deteriorated. Disease and illness spread among them; this situation was made more acute by the fact that the population in some cities more than doubled in a relatively very short period of time.

The shift from a largely agricultural economy to an industrially based one led to the emergence of a powerful and increasingly vociferous middle class in European societies. This bourgeois class consisted principally of the owners of the new businesses, traders, merchants and entrepreneurs, and others whose wealth was founded on newly acquired money. Members of this class exploited the working classes who resented this exploitation. However, they were strongly resented by the old aristocracy which previously controlled the economy and enjoyed all the privileges in society, including education. This reaction is not surprising, particularly as the newly emergent middle classes grew more aware of their importance in society and of their role in managing the economy, a role which was fast becoming indispensable. The middle classes began to usurp many of
the privileges which were previously almost entirely allotted to the aristocracy. They cultivated expensive tastes in personal possessions and made inroads into spheres of life previously barred to them, for example education and the arts. This situation was, perhaps, nowhere more strongly pronounced than in England.

The rise and expansion of many cities as a result of the immigration of many people to the city from the countryside, led to a degree of polarisation in society. The cities were associated with the industrial economy which was brought about by the Industrial Revolution, whereas the countryside continued to be associated with the aristocracy and the old, though not unimportant, agricultural economy.

The benefits which accrued from the Industrial Revolution were obtained at a very high price. In addition to the polarisation of society, the working classes particularly suffered heavily. As far as this class was concerned, the Industrial Revolution brought in its wake fear and anxiety as a result of the long hours of work, the atrocious working conditions and the pressure of having to adjust to a new life style and new modes of work and conditions.

Romanticism may be seen as a response to the new conditions which prevailed in European countries as a result of both the French Revolution and Industrial
Revolution. The idealisation of the countryside, and all that is connected with it, is but an expression of the rejection of the new oppressive city life. The ordinary man, living a simple life in natural surroundings became the hero.

Ironically, the new middle classes helped Romanticism to flourish through their patronage of the arts, which previously were the sole domain of the aristocracy. This and other related points will be amplified later in this thesis.

In France Voltaire's criticism of Shakespeare for having ignored the three unities of time, place and subject matter produced the opposite effect. By criticising Shakespeare in this way, Voltaire gave him a favourable introduction into French culture and literary scene which was trying to break away from the classical standards of literary composition in drama. The French subsequently approved of what Shakespeare did in his plays by not following the old traditions. Shakespeare combined tragedy with comedy in his plays because he thought life was a mixture of the two. Yet this clashed with the classical norms of dramatic construction which insisted on keeping the two, tragedy and comedy, separate (5).
Although Shakespeare's works appeared well before the rise of Romanticism in France, they indirectly helped create the literary conditions which allowed this movement to thrive later. As we have hinted above, Shakespeare's ideas proved to be in tune with the general trend in Romanticism to break away from the rigid norms which obtained in one sector of the arts, namely drama. In short, Shakespeare became a hero to many of the Romantics.

The style of the early Romantics, both poets and prose writers, was characterised by a strong sentimental and emotional tone. Their works express a feeling of melancholy, yearning, sadness, nostalgia, a longing to return to childhood, and a feeling of alienation or of being at odds with society. In many of Shakespeare's plays the protagonists are depicted as being at odds with their society and surroundings. In a sense, this writer seem to have reflected the feelings of sadness and despair experienced by ordinary people who suffered from social evils in much the same way as the poets had suffered spiritually.

In its early stages, Romanticism was not an isolated movement, with well-defined aims and objectives. Rather, it was part of a very widespread and general movement, which had both a social and an economic dimension. It reflected the feelings of general unease and unrest, which obtained at the time. In response, it demanded
and features of Romanticism within the framework of an all-inclusive definition.

Some writers and critics maintain that it is pointless to try and give precise definition of the term 'Romanticism', since writers who are labelled as 'Romantic' do not exhibit uniform features of style and content in their works (7). In other words, they claim that not all features of Romanticism may be found in all of the poets. Barzan, (1975), for example, mentions that none of the definitions given by writers and critics to this movement have been precise (8). Rodway (1963) agrees with Barzan that it is very difficult to give an exact definition of Romanticism, because some of the features found in Romantic poets are similar to some which can be found in poets at the time who were not regarded as Romantics. The following quotation illustrates Rodway's view (ibid:38):

"It is probably impossible to frame a satisfactory definition of European romanticism, (even when anchored to a limited period...). Even for English romanticism alone, limited to the same period '1780-1850' it is not easy to go much farther without omitting what ought to be in or including what ought to be out... He continues (ibid) "Certainly most current definitions of English romanticism are open to objection. We cannot sum [Romanticism] up as liberal idealism since the romantics are different from other liberal idealists, particularly the utilitarians. On the other hand, it is not merely a literary reaction to previous literature, since it takes non literary forms (especially in its earlier stage)..."
Definition by enumeration will not do, for doubts immediately arise. Smart, Chatterton, Cowper, Beckford, Lewis, Macpherson, Maturin, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Smith, Godwin and Burns? And what do writers so different possess in common to distinguish them from such contemporaries as Sheridan, Johnson, Churchill or Jane Austen? Similarity of opinion cannot be a determinant, since their opinions are similar. Smart's religious outlook, for instance, is far nearer to Johnson's than to Shelley's."

In spite of all these difficulties, it is necessary for the purposes of this thesis, to give an overall delineation of Romanticism (9).

Romanticism here will be taken to refer to an artistic creative movement which appeared in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is characterised by its distinctive attitude towards imagination - as will become clear later in this thesis - by its preference for emotion over reason, by its appeal to freedom, and its wish to liberate the arts, particularly poetry, from the shackles of the preceding normative prescriptions of standards of excellence. It is also characterised by its call for a return to nature which is generally seen as the anti-thesis of the oppressive city. Sadness and melancholy permeate the poetry of those poets who are generally called 'Romantics' (10).
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

(1) The word 'Romanticism' in English gives two meanings. In this connection, Barzun states, (1975:7):

"In England, the noun "Romanticism" gives two adjectives-romantic and romanticist. They are not commonly differentiated, but it is to be desired that they should be. We should then be able to tell apart the two distinct fields of application I have begun to distinguish: romanticism as an historical movement and romanticism as a characteristic of human beings. We should then say:"My friend X is a romantic" and "the poet Byron is a romanticist." When we say the romanticists at large we should mean a number of men who lived at a particular time and place, and who did certain things that fixed them in the mind of posterity. However much they differ ideally or fought among themselves, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Victor Hugo, Leopardi, Mickiewicz, and Schiller were romanticists. They received the name whether they liked it or not. Indeed, many romanticists vigorously disclaimed the title, like Delacroix, or accepted it for only half their work, like Goethe. In this sense, romanticism is a mere tag and not an adequate description. You cannot infer a man's personal characteristics, much less his opinions, from his correct labeling as a romanticist."

The same views concerning the word 'Romanticism' is expressed by the Egyptian critic Muhammad Mandur; (1968:39-40).

(2) It is worth mentioning here that the word "factor" does not mean 'reason' in the full sense of the term, but rather it refers to phenomena and events which intermingle, and create an atmosphere which may give rise to a literary movement. It is also worth pointing out that it is impossible to study each of these factors separately and in isolation from other factors as such an approach would be too simplistic.
(3) For more information about the psychological state of people during this period, see: Rodway (1963:4-5) also: Strickland and Thacker in Ford (1982, pp209-225).

(4) Rodway also refers to the strong link which holds between the French Revolution and Romanticism. He writes (1963:66) "the effect of the French Revolution, was not only to arouse the enthusiasm of these poets but in its later phase to arouse conflict which caused them to explore first principles and thus made possible an imaginative audacity impossible earlier."

(5) Strickland and Thacker, in Ford (1982) state, (1982:211) : "Voltaire was no romantic, yet his recommendation of British liberty and his introduction of Shakespeare to the French helped, willy-nilly, to further different aspects of Romanticism—the French Revolution, which was itself in some respect the culmination of early Romantic aspirations, and Romantic drama, inconceivable without Shakespeare as example and excuse."

(6) According to this view, Mandur's (1968:54) opinion, that the "early Romantics called their movement Romanticism..." is unfounded.

(7) Barzun considers a large number of definitions or delineations, but he concludes that none of them is exact enough as a characterisation of the totality of the phenomenon called romanticism. He (1975:14) concludes that "romanticism is first of all constructive and creative: it is what may be called a solving epoch, as against the dissolving eighteenth century."

(8) See also Saunders and Hugo in Halsted (1965:1-8).

(9) See Gleckner (1962:102).

(10) The reader may also consult Purst, (1969:1-14) for more information concerning the definition of Romanticism.
ARABIC ROMANTICISM

THE EARLY ROOTS

MAIN LITERARY GROUPS:

(1) KHALİL MUṬRĀN
(2) THE MAHJAR GROUP
(3) THE DĪWĀN GROUP
(4) THE APOLLO GROUP
(5) ROMANTICISM IN IRAQ
Arabic Romanticism first appeared in Egypt towards the end of the nineteenth century. Its appearance as a literary movement may be linked with the then prevalent political and social conditions of Egypt.

At this time, a "middle class" consisting of artisans, tradesmen, shop owners and government officials began to emerge. This newly emergent class gained some influence in society and, in due course, began to have an effect on everyday life in the country.

This class had its own political aims and hopes, such as the abolition of the colonial administration, the establishment of political autonomy and a parliamentary form of government. Members of this class also called for social and economic justice, and for the abolition of the power and cruelty of the rampant feudalism in Egypt.

With the passage of time, this class consolidated its newly won position in Egyptian society. It also sought to develop people's awareness of how feudalism and successive unrepresentative governments had sought to block their hopes and deprive them of their freedom of expression and political activity and organisation.
However, most of the aims and hopes of this class were frustrated, partly as a result of the failure of the many uprisings which took place, especially the 1919 uprising.

The events and factors which led to the appearance of Romanticism in Arabic literature in Egypt are not unlike those which led to the appearance of European Romanticism at the end of the eighteenth century. The differences between them are in the details of the two movements and in certain of the attendant factors. Broadly speaking, feudalism in Europe was more powerful than its Egyptian counterpart. The Egyptian aristocracy, including the landed gentry, were mainly concerned with preserving their political and economic privileges, almost completely ignoring the importance of the social inequities which prevailed in their country. The main reason behind this is the fact that this class was ignorant of the need to play an active part in preparing the Egyptian people, both intellectually and culturally, for assuming their role in the development of their country. In every respect, this class put self-interest above national interest.

It has been said above, that Egypt was the birthplace of Romanticism in the Arab world. The obvious question is: Why did Romanticism begin in Egypt, rather than elsewhere in the Arab world?
The answer must be sought in the social, political and economic conditions of Egypt which encouraged the emergence of Romanticism and, later, fostered it. These conditions, which we outlined briefly above, did not obtain in other parts of what later came to be known as the Arab world, mainly as a result of the Napoleonic expedition into Egypt. Napoleon brought with him the first Arab press and a group of intellectuals and experts. Even after the failure of Napoleon's expedition, Egypt continued to foster good relations with France through scholarships, cultural exchanges and the translation movement.

Romanticism in Arabic literature appeared a hundred years after its European counterpart. This is, of course, due to the differences in the social, political, and cultural conditions of the two movements, and to the entrenchment of the classical modes in Arabic literature. The conservative attitude of the Arab poets towards their classical heritage and civilisation is an important and contributing factor in delaying the emergence of Romanticism. Coupled with this is the mini revival of classicism in modern Arabic poetry at the hand of such poets as al-Jawāhirī from Iraq and Ahmad Shauqī from Egypt.
It is very difficult to ascertain the extent to which modern Arabic poetry has been influenced by European Romanticism. Was Arabic Romanticism no more than a blind imitation of European Romanticism? Or, was it an original movement in Arabic literature?

Many writers have dealt with the issues raised in these two questions. However, any survey of their views will reveal that there is a large measure of disagreement as to whether or not Arabic Romanticism is an 'original' movement in Arabic literature. Ahmad Amin expresses the view that Arabic Romanticism is a mixture of originality and imitation. He declares (1967:81) that this movement was not a mere "imitation" of European Romanticism, but that it "combined both imitation and originality". He believes that, in this respect, Arabic Romanticism is similar to French Romanticism which combined an original element, reflecting its social and native literary setting, situation and an imported element representing Shakespeare's influence on French literature as a whole.

A different position is adopted by Alwân in his book Taḥawwur al-Shi'r al-ʿArabi al-Ḥadîth fî l-ʿIrāq. (The Development of Modern Arabic Poetry in Iraq. Alwân asserts that most Arab poets in the first half of the twentieth century were attracted to Romanticism merely because they had seen it as a new movement, which they strove to follow. As such, their interest in Romanticism could not be described as the result of internal forces
peculiar to Arabic literature. To support his view, ʿAlwān points out how modern Arab poets exchanged Romanticism for Realism, and how they more or less slavishly adopted Symbolism and Surrealism when these trends became fashionable in European literature. In other words, ʿAlwān holds the view that most movements in modern Arabic poetry arose as a result of the influence of European literature on Arabic literature.

In our opinion ʿAlwān's view is far too extreme. The charge of "imitation" levelled by ʿAlwān against Arabic Romanticism cannot be fully accepted because it fails to recognize that Arabic literature, throughout its history, has displayed features similar to those found in Romanticism, although not all the features of Romanticism can be found in any poet or poetic genre in pre-modern Arabic poetry.

Our position concerning the issue under discussion here is closer to that advocated by Amin. It is safe to say that Arabic Romanticism was imitative of European Romanticism in its inception, but that it later developed a momentum of its own which integrated it, in one form or another, in its literary milieu. In other words, imitation of European Romanticism gave way to originality in Arabic Romanticism in this century.
Romanticism was not the only movement to which Arab poets adhered in the first half of the twentieth century. Other movements, such as symbolism, made their presence felt in Arabic poetry during this period. It is therefore not unusual to come across a poem which contains a myriad of features: romantic features, symbolic features and features of the classical tradition in Arabic poetry all mingled together.

Arabic Romanticism in its early stages was not very innovative with respect to the subject matters it dealt with. Traditional topics persisted and very few new ones were added. Furthermore, the influence of Arab Romanticism on Arab social life did not match the influence of European Romanticism on its societies. This may be partly due to the fact that Arab writers and poets did not aim at a particular group of readers, unlike European Romantics, who, initially, addressed the members of the growing middle class.
According to some critics, for example Manṣūr (1977) Khalīl Muṭrān is regarded as the earliest pioneer of Romanticism in Arabic literature in the first half of this century. Muṭrān was born in Lebanon in 1872. His family decided to go to Egypt towards the end of the nineteenth century (1). This explains why his writings mostly appeared in Egyptian magazines and newspapers.

As has been mentioned above, Manṣūr regards Muṭrān as the earliest pioneer of Romanticism in Arabic literature; he (1977:Int) states:

"Muṭrān is a genuine Romantic poet who laid down the foundations of Romanticism in modern Arabic literature, through composing love poetry which expresses his true personal experiences and through his description of nature in a way which reflects his true personality and his desire to be united with nature."

This view is shared by al-Ramādī (1958:302) who states that "Muṭrān was the first pioneer of Romanticism in modern Arabic poetry."
Badawi disagrees with this assessment of the role and place of Muṭrān in modern Arabic literature. He regards Muṭrān as a pre-romanticist and declares (1975:82) that

"There is generally some tension between the old form and the new content in his poetry and it is this tension which leads me to call him a pre-romantic, in spite of the possible misunderstanding to which the term may give rise besides, there is much in Muṭrān's poetry that is in no way different from the conventional output of the neoclassicists."

Badawi (ibid) also argues that Muṭrān could not be legitimately considered as a Romantic poet because he wrote "poems written on or for specific occasions".

Jayyūsi (1977) holds the same view as Badawi with regard to the nature of Muṭrān's poetry. Jayyūsi accepts the commonly reiterated position that Muṭrān's poetry contains some romantic trends but declares (ibid:63) that

"Muṭrān's Romantic tendencies were offset to an extent by his Classical sense of balance, by too much deliberation and by an occasional tepidity of tone and emotion. He was unable therefore, to generate a current of Romanticism in Arabic poetry."
Mandūr (1954) takes a middle position. He (ibid: 12) regards Muṭrān as a "genuine Romantic poet", but maintains that his Romanticism is watered down by a feeling of "excessive sensibility" and his "constant self-examination" which led to the suppression of his deep romantic nature.

Implicit in the position of some critics is the view that Muṭrān was more of a critical theorist who provided some of the literary insights of the Romantic movement than a Romantic poet himself. It is generally agreed that Muṭrān called for the renewal of both the content and form of the classical Arabic Qāsīda. In particular, he called for abandonment of the unity of the line, which is generally taken as a feature of the organic unity of the Qasida in favour of the organic unity of the Qasida as a whole. While this call is seen by some as sufficient to brand Muṭrān as a modernist, but not as a romanticist, other features of his poetry justify attaching the label romanticist to him in a very loose sense. One such feature is his sensitivity which pervades many of his poems. Another romantic feature to be found in his poetry is the love of nature in all its aspects. Nature provides him with inspiration and is the source of his creativity. He also personifies nature, and, on reading his poetry, one senses his strong desire to achieve unity and harmony between himself and nature. This desire for achieving unity with nature is most
clearly illustrated in his poem "al-Masa'" (The Evening) in which he describes the sunset and the tears which stream down his face like pearls.

Mutran's poetry often displays his deep passion for life and his genuine concern for his surroundings. Some of his poems have a distinct melodic quality, so much so that they are set to music in the Arab world. The most famous poem in this regard is "Hal Tadhkurin?" (Do You Remember?) addressed to his cousin Najla al-Šabbagh. This poem is full of nostalgia, and in it the poet reminds Najla of their childhood together and of their love for nature (1908:18):

Do you remember the time we were children in (Zahla), whose memory is rich
Do you remember our great effort at the time of picking the choicest grapes
When we were like shadows in the vineyard, laughing, while the vineyard enjoyed our company
Paying in it by smiles and experiencing a pleasure resembling its joy.
However, Muṭrān's Romanticism is diluted with a strong strain of classicism. He often employs the traditional form of the Qasida with its metres and rhymes. In his poetry he expresses traditional values and adheres to traditional subject matters. It is therefore not possible to regard him as a fully-fledged Romanticist, although he deserves to be regarded as a precursor of Romanticism, mainly through his critical pronouncements and, to a lesser extent, through the form and content of certain of his poems (2).
THE MAHJAR GROUP

The early roots of Arabic Romanticism also go back to the mainly, North American "Mahjar group", which was established by emigrants to the United States from the area now called Syria and Lebanon (3). Jibrān Khalīl Jibrān was the most distinguished member of this group, although such members as Mīkhā'īl Nu'aima, Nasīb Ārīḍa, 'Abd al- Masīḥ Ḥaddād and Rashīd Ayyūb are no less eminent (4). The members of this group, particularly Jibrān, were famous for the strong Romantic vein in their works. By contrast, the South American "Mahjar group" was generally more interested in the nationalist issues of the motherland. Its members include Fawzī Maʻlūf, Abī al-Faḍl Wailī and Amīn al-Rayḥānī, whose poetry displays a strong romantic flavour.

The difference between these two groups is spelled out by al-Jundi (1968). He points out that the North American group was strongly critical of the rigid norms of classical Arabic literature, and he speculates that this may have been the result of the intensive contacts the members of this group had with the west and its literatures. By contrast, the South American group largely retained the time honoured albeit rigid norms of classical Arabic literature and insisted on purity of style in poetry. As a result, their poetry
maintained a strong classical flavour.

The poetry of the North American group is characterised by an intense feeling of nostalgia which permeates their poetry. Long residence in America, with its advanced materialistic culture, enhanced rather than severed their connection with their homeland which came to represent simplicity, innocence and security. Their poetry is full of references to their motherland, the scene of their childhood memories. They also often express their loneliness in their adopted homeland and talk about the pain of separation from their original motherland. Furthermore, this group is distinguished by its "reflective" attitude which mainly centres on the attempt to come to a better understanding of the self and its inner complexities. To propagate their ideas, the Northern group established a literary guild, called "al-Rabiţa al-Qalamiyya", in New York. The aim of this group, as stated by Fadl (1963:32) was to:

"spread a new spirit in Arabic literature... in order to rescue it from the abyss of inactivity and imitation into which it had fallen, so that it becomes an active revivalist force in the life of the nation."
It has been mentioned earlier that Jibrān was the most prominent member of the Northern group. In his poetic works as well as in his prose, Jibrān expresses the feelings of the immigrant in his new country and his longing for home. His poetry evokes memories of the motherland, and conjures up a picture of its green and dreamy countryside (5).

Jibrān is generally seen as an influential figure in the emergence of the Romantic movement in Arabic literature. A good discussion of Jibrān's role and leadership in this regard is to be found in Jayyūsī's authoritative work: *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry* (1977). According to Jayyūsī (ibid:91):

"It was Gibrān, in fact, and with him the rest of the poets of "al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya" in the North who formed the first Romantic school in Arabic poetry and let loose the forces of Romanticism. Gibrān's pervasive influence on the other poets of " al-Rabita" was such as to cause a profound change in them towards several aspects of Romanticism especially in their enchantment with nature."

Jayyūsī is not alone in adopting this position. Earlier, Iḥsān Ābbās puts forward the same views in his book *Fann al-Shī'ī* (1955:46). In this book, Ābbās asserts that
"We cannot find a fully-fledged romantic school in Arabic literature except in the modern period, and its founder is Jibrān. Jibrān was a romantic right down to his finger tips, and his imagery is hardly different from the imagery of the Romantic poets in France and England."

The similarity between Jibrān and the English Romantics is most clearly evident in his love of nature and in his views concerning death. Like Keats and Shelley, Jibrān extols the beauty of nature and sees a direct connection between beauty and truth. More specifically, he shares Keats' views concerning reincarnation and the unity of all creation. Furthermore, when Jibrān declares (1966:33) that he had fallen in love several times and that he called death "with secret names", he is directly reiterating Keats' words in "Ode to a Nightingale", which will be discussed later in this thesis.

Jibrān's enchantment with nature permeates all his literary works, whether in poetry or in prose. Nature comes to represent for him all that the city is not: simplicity, purity, and freedom from the oppressive and restrictive norms which prevail in the city. Nature is seen as the ultimate teacher and healer. Jibrān's preoccupation with nature in his writings truly reflects his love for it as a living thing. Not surprisingly, therefore, Jibrān spent a great deal of his time in the
countryside, and his happiest moments were those he spent walking in forests and gardens, climbing mountains or contemplating the secrets of the universe on a quiet and deserted beach, watching the sun set. Jibrān's love for nature may be illustrated by the following lines in his poem "al-Mawākib" which, incidently the Lebanese singer Fayrouz made famous when she recorded it in song (1964:363):

منزلت دون القصور
وسلعت الصخور؟
هل تخدت الغاب مثلي
فشبعت السواقي

هل جلست العصر مثلي
والعناقيد تدلى
بين جفنت العنب?
كثريات الذهب

وتحفت الفضاء
ناسيما قد مضى ؟
هل فرشت العشب ليلاً
زاهدا في ما بياني

Have you - like me - taken the forest instead of palaces as a home?
Have you followed the streams in their courses and climbed rocks?

Have you - like me - sat between the eyelids of the grapevine in the afternoon?
While the bunches of grape have hung down like golden chandeliers

Have you taken the grass as a mattress at night and taken the sky as quilt
Not coveting that which will come, forgetting that which has passed? (6).
Jibrān did not shun suffering and pain, but characteristicallY regarded them as essential human experiences. In this, he behaved like a "true" Romantic. Suffering and pain have a cleansing and purifying influence, according to Jibrān, who believed that through them alone great men are created. His views in this respect are most clearly presented in his book "Damā wa Ibtisāma" (A Tear and a Smile). It must, however, be pointed out that Jibrān rejects the pain inflicted on helpless people by unjust and tyrannical rulers.

Jibrān's "revivalist" contribution also extended to his use of language. The simplicity of his language - which is sometimes imbued with sufi symbolism - and the immediacy of his style exercised a great influence on modern poets in general, and on Romantic poets in particular. His attitude towards language as a means of artistic expression is most beautifully illustrated in the following quotation, (1966:132):

"Keep your own language and I will keep mine...Keep to yourselves its dictionaries and lexica, and I will keep what the ear chooses and approves of, and what the memory retains by way of familiar and entertaining speech which people use in talking about their happiness and sadness."

- 29 -
Two Mahjar writers whose contribution is worthy of brief consideration in the present context are ʻIlyā Abū Mādī and Mīkhā'īl Nuʿaima. Abū Mādī's poetry amply reveals the poet's enchantment with nature which he regards as the source of ultimate beauty. It also shows the poet's commitment to a new conception of Arabic poetry in which rhyme and the use of words as an end in themselves are not given the pride of place which is given to them in the rigid imitations of classical Arabic poetry, (1927:4):

المتمني أن حسب الشعر الغاظا ووزنا
خلفت دربك دربي وانقضى ما كان منا
فانطلق عني كلما تمتنى همـا وحزنا
واخت غيري رفيقـا وسوى دنياي مغنى

You are not related to me if you reckon poetry to be merely words and metres
Your way differs from mine; that which belonged to us both has disappeared.
So leave me alone lest you cause me to die of anxiety and sadness
Take someone else as a friend and a place other than my world as a place of enjoyment.
In his book *Al-Ghīrbaṣ (The Sieve)* (1923), Nuṣma attacks the strict application in modern poetry of traditional Arabic prosody as set out by al-Fārāhīdī. Nuṣma does not deny the greatness of al-Fārāhīdī's achievement, but regards it as primarily suitable for his time and the literary norms prevalent then. He also calls on poets to employ a modern form of language which would confer a sense of immediacy and relevance on their message. Furthermore, he (ibid:95) declares that "rhyme and metre are not necessary for poetry, in the same way as mosques and churches are not a necessary precondition for prayer and worship." Equally important in his view of the nature of poetry is the necessity of imagination and emotion and the importance of concentrating on the inner self.

Clearly, the Mahjar group, especially Jibrān, was instrumental in the emergence of Romanticism in modern Arabic literature. Its influence covered both sides of poetic composition: form and content. They were a revivalist movement which had the good fortune of having first hand experience of western literature. The Mahjar group served as a channel of communication between Arabic literature and Western literature, with the flow being mostly from the latter to the former.
Another group which is often claimed to have been instrumental in the emergence of Romanticism is the "Diwan group". This group was contemporaneous with the "Mahjar group". However, there is no evidence that they had influenced each other. The three major figures in this group are 'Abd al-Rahmān Shukrī, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī and Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād. We will briefly deal with the latter two figures here. As Shukrī will be discussed in detail later, I will refrain from dealing with him at this stage in the thesis.

Like Shukrī, al-'Aqqād and al-Māzinī were influenced by English poetry, and called for a renewal in Arabic poetry. However, these poets failed, in varying degrees, in applying what they had preached regarding the form and content of poetry in their words. Their poetry is characterised by the application of the rigid norms of classical Arabic poetry, as well as by the employment of a poetic diction which belonged to a by-gone age. As such, their poetry contained a strong classical flavour in form, style, diction and, even subject-matter.

Clearly the importance of the Diwan group vis-à-vis Romanticism in Arabic literature resides in its pronouncements concerning the issue of renewal in Arabic
poetry rather than in the quality of their poetry itself. In other words, their influence was mainly as theorists and not as poets, with the exception of Shukri. Such critics as Jayyusi (1977) and Badawi (1975) rightly regard the Diwan group as pre-Romantic, because of the sustained classical character of their poetry.
THE APOLLO GROUP

We have previously mentioned that the Mahjar group and the Diwan group were instrumental in preparing the ground for the emergence of Romanticism in Arabic poetry. The Apollo group went further in that it contributed directly to the establishment of the main features of Romanticism in modern Arabic poetry.

The Apollo magazine was the mouthpiece of the Apollo group. This magazine which appeared between 1934-35, was launched by Abū Shādī, the head of this group. Other members of this group are 'Alī Māhmūd Ṭaha, Ibrāhīm Nājī, al-Ṣayrafi, al-Shābbī and Māhmūd Ḥassan Ismā'īl. The materials published in the Apollo magazine were contributed by like minded poets from Syria, Lebanon, Sudan and Egypt. Most of these poets were influenced by Muṭrān’s poetry and his call for renewal in Arabic poetry. Their poetry is full of self-examination and is characterised by a sense of helplessness, sadness and a strong outpouring of emotions. The relentless search for an idealistic world pervades their poetry thematically. At times, these poets call and welcome death in their poetry. These poets also call for the espousal of the principle of organic unity in poetry.
Abū-Shādī's poetry expresses his intense feelings and emotions. In his collection 
\textit{al-Shafaq al-Bākī} (The Weeping Dawn), he expresses the view that his poetry is nothing but the expression of his feelings, (1927:776):

\begin{quote}
My throbbing heart accompanies my breath; my poetry is nothing but my feelings
\end{quote}

Abū Shādī lived in Britain for ten years and this explains his sound knowledge of English poetry and his admiration of English Romantic poets, particularly Wordsworth. He shares with Wordsworth his love for nature which he considers as a real mother to man, (1927:305):

\begin{quote}
I fortified my heart which yearns for the infatuation of inspiration with the infatuated dawn of the spring And I looked at mother Nature, smiling and lo and behold, kindness in her smiling lips.
\end{quote}
'Ali Mahmūd Ṭāhā is regarded as the foremost Romantic poet among this group. A feeling of nostalgia and a strong sense of melancholy permeates his poetry. The poet often feels lonely and lost in this world which is full of worries and anxieties. Jayyūsī (1977:106) regards 'Ali Mahmūd Ṭaha as a "more robust Romantic than his contemporaries". In his authoritative study ʿAli Mahmūd Ṭaha: al-Shāʾir wa al-Insān, al-Mahdāwī describes Ṭāhā's poetry as an unending stream of sighs.

Al-Hamsharī associated happiness with death; this feature of his poetry has been recognised by Nāzīk al-Malaʿīka who goes so far as to say that his poetry comes closer to that of Keats in this respect than al-Shābbī's poetry does. This is no trivial assessment considering the fact that al-Shābbī's poetry is imbued with the strong aroma of death. However, the association of happiness with death in al-Hamsharī's poetry is not complete, as is clear from the following two lines of poetry in which al-Hamsharī expresses his negative view of death:-(1963:113):

 غدا يا حياة تشبه محكاة
 والأمننا تفتى وتفتى المشاعر
 وسلمنا أيدي الحياة الى البلي
 ويحكم فيها الموت والموت جائر

- 36 -
Tomorrow, O my life, our laughter will come to an end
and our pain will become extinct, as will our feelings
Life will hand us over to destruction
and Death will rule over us, and Death is unjust

Finally, it is worth mentioning here that the
Egyptian writer al-Manfalūtī exercised some influence on
the emergence of Romanticism in Arabic literature in
general, and Arabic poetry in particular. His two novels
al-Nazarāt and al-‘Abarāt contain much suffering and
grief which appealed to the hearts of his readers. These
two novels are well-known amongst the Arabs for their
excessive romanticism. In his other writings
al-Manfalūtī describes the condition of hopeless and
unhappy people who are deprived of their rights and are
treated unjustly by society. He also idealises
faithfulness, sacrifice and pride in his novels. His
popularity derives from the fact that his readers found
in his novels and other literary works an expression of
their own pain and suffering, i.e. something with which
they could identify.
In the previous section, we dealt with Romanticism in Egypt indirectly by talking about the Apollo and Diwan groups. We have also mentioned that Shabbi and Shukri belonged to the Apollo and Diwan groups respectively.

In this section, we will deal with Romanticism in Iraq. The discussion in this section will serve to demonstrate that Romanticism did not appear at the same time and with the same intensity in all Arab countries. It will also serve as a background for our discussion of Nāzik al-Malā'ika later in this thesis.

Romanticism in Iraq did not appear until the 1940s and 1950s. According to some critics this is due to the late emergence of a bourgeois class in this country. It is also to a certain extent due to the fact that the "classicism" was deeply entrenched in Iraq. Young poets continued to imitate the guardians of the classical tradition in Iraq such as al-Zahawi, al-Ruṣāfī and al-Jawāhirī. The delay may also be related to the fact that during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Iraq was, in certain ways, isolated from the rest of the Arab world for a long time. While Egypt was undergoing great social and intellectual upheavals as a result of its contacts with the West, Iraq was culturally at a
standstill. Its only contact was with Turkey.

This delay in the appearance of Romanticism in Iraq had its advantages. Firstly, it enabled the Iraqi Romantic poets to absorb the experience of their counterparts in Egypt as well as the equally important experience of the Mahjar group. Secondly, the Iraqi poets were largely spared the wrath of those classically minded critics who unsuccessfully opposed the appearance of the Romantic movement in Egypt and in the Mahjar. In other words, by the time Romanticism made an appearance on the Iraqi poetic scene, critics in that country were accustomed to reading Romantic poetry as produced by the various groups we have mentioned earlier in this thesis. This has also been facilitated by the fact that one of the champions of the classical tradition, namely al-Zahawi, saw some advantages in using blank verse, as is demonstrated by his poem "Al-Shi'ir al-Mursal". However, it must be pointed out that al-Zahawi's attempt paved the way for such Iraqi poets as al-Sayyab and al-Mala'ika.

In its early stages Romanticism in Iraq was influenced mainly by the Egyptian experience and by the experience of the Mahjar group. Amongst the poets and writers belonging to the latter group, Jibrān had the greatest influence on the Iraqi poets. The fact that the Iraqi Romantics based themselves on the models provided by the above two movements, does not mean that they had
no access, at least through translation, to European Romanticism. However, by basing themselves on Arabic Romanticism, Iraqi Romantic poets could claim that they had followed an "indigenous" movement in Arabic literature, thus warding off any attack from their critics to the effect that they had been following a colonially inspired attempt to infiltrate Arabic literature and Arab culture.

Romanticism in Iraq is somewhat linked with the name of Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, the most famous modern Iraqi poet - particularly in his first two collections: Azhār Dhābila (1948) and Asātīr (1950).

Al-Sayyāb's Romanticism may be partly attributed to the tragic events of his life. He lost his mother at a very early age, and with that he lost her love and affection. He was also deeply affected by the fragmented state of the Arab countries which had been imposed upon them by the colonialist powers of the day. Furthermore, al-Sayyāb was a country person and his life in Baghdad filled him with a feeling of strong rejection of city life and, from the point of view of Romanticism, a feeling of nostalgia towards and idealisation of country life as symbolised by his native village of Jīkür. Al-Sayyāb's love of the countryside and his dislike of city life may be illustrated by the following lines of poetry quoted from his poem "Jīkür wa al-Madīna" - (Jīkür and the City) (1971:414)

- 40 -
visitor who could relieve him of his pain by putting an
deal to his life. At other times it is an unwelcome
visitor. The first attitude prevails in his later
poetry. In the following lines al-Sayyab urges death to
come quickly to put him to sleep, (1971:706):

اليس يكفي ابها اللالله
ان الفناء عاية الحياة
فتصبح الحياة بالقتام؟
تخيلني، بلد ردي،-حظام:
سفينة كبيرة تطفو على المياه؟
هات الردى اريد ان امام
بين قبور اهلي المبعثرة
وراء ليل المقبرة
رسامة الرحمة يا إله!

Is it not sufficient, O God
That extinction is the ultimate end of life
And life is wrapped in darkness at its dawning
Rendering me, without the incidence of Death,
like a wreck
Of a damaged ship floating on the water?

Bring Death, I want to sleep
Among the scattered graves of my people
Behind the darkness of the graveyard
Give me the Bullet of Mercy, O God.
In his Romanticism, al-Sayyāb was influenced by the English Romantic poets, particularly Keats and Shelley, whom he had read while training for the teaching profession at Baghdad Teacher Training College. Considering his love of nature and the countryside, the tragic conditions of his life and his preoccupation with death in his poetry, it is not at all surprising that al-Sayyāb was influenced by these two poets.

There is also a strong romantic element in the first two collections of poetry by al-Bayyātī, namely Abārīq Muhashshāmā (Broken Water Jug) (1955) and Malā'ika wa Shayātīn (Angels and Devils) (1967). However, unlike al-Sayyāb, al-Bayyātī was not influenced by the English Romantic poets. The main influence on al-Bayyātī was the Turkish humanist poet Nazīm Hikmat.

In his early poetry, al-Bayyātī complains about his exile and about the many worries and anxieties he has to endure in his exile. His poetry is full of woeful cries and is permeated by an intense feeling of melancholy as a result of his homelessness. In the following lines from "Ilā Sāhīra" (To a Sleepless Woman) (1971:100-101), he says:

ولاتسالي النجم عن موطني
فما موطني
غير هذا الغشاء

- 43 -
Don't ask the stars about my homeland
My homeland is
Nothing but this sky:
Don't ask me who I am
Or bewail our fortune—
For I am, like this wing,
A fugitive
Who, even wounds, shed tears over him.

This feeling of homelessness is expressed in an effective manner in his poem "Musāfir bilā Ḥaqā'ib" (Traveller Without Suitcases). Al-Bayyātī shares with al-Sayyāb his rejection of city life and his yearning for the feelings of security, purity and innocence which the countryside imparts to mankind. He describes the city as a "black cat" in one of his poems, (1971:428):
In the nights of death and creation and in the depths
The depth of the city,
She remains like a black cat,
Like a sad mother
Giving birth to living things,
In silence.

Al-Haydari also shares some of the thematic concerns
which preoccupied his colleagues. Like them he was
influenced by the political and social events of his time
which caused traumatic changes in his country and beyond.
The most important event to exercise an effect on his
poetry and intellectual development in the early stages
of his poetic development was the Second World War. The
destruction and deprivation which this war left behind in
Europe and other parts of the world left the Iraqi poets
completely stunned. It is therefore not surprising to
find in al-Haydari's poetry a sense of despair and
homelessness, as clear from his poem "Khuṭuwāt fī
-l-Ghurba" - (Footsteps in Strange Lands;1973:32):

اذي اين وحكي.... لا تسالي
فرجلذي مثلك تفهمان
اغيبي مع الليل في ماملي
واصفي ولد شيء غير الزمان
ولبس وراء انعلاقي مكان
نغلست الارض في خطواتي

- 45 -
Where are you going? O woe to you ... don't ask
Like you, my legs are inquiring
I disappear with the night in my contemplative moods
And I get up, there is nothing but time
There is no place behind my isolation
The earth had shrunk under my footsteps.
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

(1) For more information on Mutran's life and education the reader may refer to: Mansur S (1977: pp 59-127).


(2) Daif (1959:140) also mentions this feature in Mutran's poetry. see Dirāsāt fī l-Shīr al-ʿArabi al-Muʿāṣir (p:140).

(3) Their emigration was due, to some extent, to the political, social and economic conditions which pertained in their home countries.

(4) In connection with this point 'Awad (1961:209) say Those who laid down the foundation of the Romantic school in modern Arabic literature between the two World Wars were... the Mahjar writers and poets, such as 'Iliyya Abū Mādi, followed by the Apollo group."

(5) For more information on this group's love of and attitude towards nature see Ihsan 'Abbās (1966:131).

PART TWO

CHAPTER THREE

THE INFLUENCE OF EUROPEAN POETRY AND THOUGHT ON AL-MALĀ'īKA, AL-SHĀBBĪ AND SHUKRĪ. (THE CHANNELS OF THIS INFLUENCE).

Section One  
Nazik al-Malā'īka

Section Two  
ʿAbd al-Ḥāfīẓ Shukrī

Section Three  
Abū Qāsim al-Shābbī
The influence of European literature, in general, and English Romanticism, in particular, upon Arab writers and poets at the beginning of this century was neither arbitrary nor sudden. The introduction of European literature to the Arab world was the result of many gradual events and factors. Such events date back as far as Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, for not only did he take arms to Egypt, but scholars as well. Another channel of influence was through students who were then sent to Europe by the Khedive and returned with greater knowledge of culture, civilisation, language and literature.

These were powerful factors which cannot be denied. Similarly, translations of English literature into Arabic at the beginning of this century facilitated the quick transference of European ideas into Arabic literature.

The aim of this chapter is to shed some light on the sources or channels which brought the poets with whom we will deal in this thesis into contact with European literature, especially English Romanticism. It is
generally agreed that there are similar elements in the poetry of al-Malāʾika and Shukrī and that these similarities to a large extent spring from their acquaintance with English language and literature. Both poets had direct contact with English literature, owing to their knowledge of the language. This contact was not shared by al-Shābbī, as he did not speak English, even though there are certain thematic similarities between his poetry and that of Keats and Shelley.

We will start by looking at the manner in which al-Malāʾika received her knowledge of European literature. Al-Malāʾika had English lessons as part of her curriculum at secondary school, which she finished in 1939 (2). Five to seven classes of English language are taught in Iraq to twelve and thirteen year olds; it is the only foreign language taught at this stage. In 1940 she was admitted to the Teacher Training College in Baghdad. She showed a keenness to learn more English, alongside a passion for the Arabic language, history, music and the various sciences. It was during her time at the College of Education, Arabic section, that her poetic talents became visible. She was influenced by her mother who was a well-known poet at that time (3); she was also encouraged by her father who wrote on a number of subjects, and indeed wrote poetry himself. Both were writing and publishing poetry in Iraqi magazines and newspapers. However, the difference between mother and
daughter was that al-Malā'ika's attention was not only to Arabic, but to French and English literature as well, for soon she began to learn these two languages and Latin while she was at the College of Education.

It is interesting to note how she came to learn Latin in this period. While she was studying English language in the Arabic section of the College of Education, her English teacher mentioned on several occasions the advantage of knowing Latin for those who wished to specialise in English. This suggestion appealed to her, but her desire to study the language remained hidden until 1942, when she heard that the College administration had decided to add Latin to the first year curriculum in the English section. Although al-Malā'ika was not officially entitled to join the course, which was specifically mounted for the first year students in the English section, she managed to persuade the Dean of her faculty to allow her to attend this class. Al-Malā'ika seems to have enjoyed the challenge of learning this classical language, and soon started to read Latin. She even used it in writing her memoirs (4).

Al-Malā'ika also started learning French during this period. In 1949, she began to study French at home with her brother, who was studying English in the College of Education. They both depended on a book which taught French through English. In 1953, she attended a course in the Iraqi Institute to read French literature.
Although al-Malā'ika was able to read critical works in French, and even translated a French poem into Arabic, it seems she was not fluent in the language. Apart from this one poem, there is no concrete evidence that she was influenced by French literature. The same situation applies to Latin, for there is very little evidence in her poetry which indicates that classical culture played a role in influencing her thoughts during this formative period of her life (5).

There is no doubt that the most influential foreign language al-Malā'ika came into contact with was English. We have already mentioned that al-Malā'ika learnt English throughout secondary school, and that she continued to do so at the College of Education. The English curriculum here included the study of Shakespearian sonnets and plays. Among the latter was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which al-Malā'ika claims to have translated into Arabic, although no existent text of this translation is available. During this time at College, al-Malā'ika's attention was drawn to some of the English Romantic poets, especially Byron, Shelley and Keats (6).

In 1950, al-Malā'ika attended a course in the British Educational Institute in Baghdad to study English literature and modern drama. The purpose of this course was to enable her to sit the examination for the Cambridge University Proficiency Certificate. The standard of this certificate was high, but she passed the
examination. This examination should have been followed by further examinations in Cambridge itself for greater proficiency, but al-Malā'ika did not sit these.

Al-Malā'ika's contact with English language and literature was given a qualitative boost as a result of her being granted a scholarship by the Rockefeller Foundation to study literary criticism in the University of Princeton, New Jersey in 1950. It is worth mentioning here that at that time Princeton was an all-male University, and that al-Malā'ika was the only female student in attendance at that institution. Most beneficial to her was that she was able to study under the most eminent literary critics in the United States of America, such as Richard Blackmore, Alan Donner and Donald Stalfar. As her scholarship was for one year only, al-Malā'ika returned to Iraq in 1951 upon its expiry. Three years later she was sent to the United States by the Iraqi government on a full scholarship to enable her to study comparative literature for the Master's degree. She was very enthusiastic about this trip, rightly believing that it would enrich her knowledge of European literature and languages, in particular English (7). Al-Malā'ika was a diligent student, and she spent a great deal of her time reading literature in the library of the University of Wisconsin.
Al-Malā'ika (1970:15) describes her experience as follows:

"I spent a great deal of my time in the western library of the university, which had the greatest influence on my life at that time. My life was also enriched with various sweet thoughts and my life was enriched considerably by this experience. My values, ideas and standards all changed, and my whole personality was transformed."

Al-Malā'ika found the system of writing brief literary essays rather than long theses at the University of Wisconsin most advantageous. The training, this system gave her made her more proficient at writing short essays on a variety of literary subjects. In addition to all this training and the opportunity to make use of the contents of a well-stocked library, al-Malā'ika used her time at Wisconsin to write her memoirs about her experience in America, about the people she met and about her ideas concerning American women. She also did some research on American writers.

Al-Malā'ika's direct contact with English literature and with Western culture and civilisation had a great effect on her outlook on life, literature and social issues, particularly on the position of women in Arab society. Therefore I will examine her attitude to women first, and secondly, her attitude to literature.
After her first trip to America, it appears that al-Malāʾika was greatly influenced by what she had seen of the life enjoyed by American women—particularly their freedom and independence of personality. As a result of this experience she started to make comparisons between American and Arab women. Two years later, in 1953, she wrote an article entitled "al-Mar'a Baynā al-Ṭarafain al-Salbiyya wa al-Akhlāq" (Woman Between Two Extremes: Negativism and Morality), which she delivered as a lecture to the Iraqi Women's Union in Baghdad. In this article, al-Malāʾika criticized the position of women in Arab society, and indeed Arab society itself for the way it treated women. Al-Malāʾika proclaimed that the position of Arab women in their society approached that of slaves, and she called for their material, as well as spiritual, liberation in an attempt to release their potential for the good of their societies (8).

Arab society, being male dominated, places heavy restrictions on women: culturally, emotionally and financially. In order to be fully accepted by her society, a woman must adhere to an extremely restricted code of conduct in which the operative concept is 'honour'. The Arab woman turns out to be the true and ultimate guardian of the concept of honour imposed upon her by a male-dominated society. If she carries out her 'duties' in this respect, she is not rewarded, for she will have done what is expected of her by her society.
If, however, she does not, then she exposes herself to the wrath of her society in general, and the cruel punishment of men, in particular. Other women would take part in this punishment, adding a psychological element (9).

Financially, women in Arab society are dependent on their husbands or male relatives who are the breadwinners in their family. It is the man's duty to ensure the economic welfare of his family. A woman's contribution is restricted to the home, doing the household 'chores' and bringing up the family. Her work in this very important sphere is regarded as a duty which earns her the respect of her society, but which does not give her any economic independence. Being dependent on men economically, women are regarded as appendages to men. As such, they are expected to take their husbands' name upon their marriage. Furthermore, women suffer from double standards, in the sense that they are normally punished for an error, whereas men are normally forgiven.

The heavy moral restrictions placed on women, as well as their economic dependence on men, mean that women have very little freedom, and almost no opportunity to indulge in self-expression and self-fulfilment in whatever spheres they may choose, or may prove to be congenial to them. Women, therefore, seem to lack the creativity displayed by their male counterparts. Their personalities are not well-developed, and, in this
respect, they all seem to be 'cut to the same mould'.

Language, al-Malā'īka observes, is man made in Arab society. Witness, for example, the use of the masculine to refer to both the masculine and the feminine when expressing generic concepts. In a show of objectivity, al-Malā'īka observes that women, in their obsession with the trivialities of life, such as their excessive concern with their beauty and appearance invite criticism from their male colleagues. Men withhold respect from them because of this excessive concern with beauty and appearance, although, ironically, the highest compliment a man may pay a woman centres upon her beauty (10). This is yet another example of the hypocrisy which women are called upon to endure (11).

Al-Malā'īka's concern with women's issues is reflected in her prose work. It is also reflected in her poetry, particularly in that poetry which belongs to what the present writer has chosen to refer to as the Romantic Period in the career of al-Malā'īka. For instance, the 'victims' in her two poems "Al-Nā'ima fī l-Shāriʿ" - (The Woman Sleeping in the Street) and "Marthīyya lī Imraʿa lā Qīmata lahā" - (An Elegy to a Worthless Woman) are women. The restricting code of honour which controls a woman's life in Arab society, and the double standards which pervade this society, are most clearly expressed in her poem "Ghaslan lī-l-ʿĀr"(To Wash away the Shame). In this poem, al-Malā'īka describes the scene of a murdered
woman who is in her twenties. The chilling picture of the blood gushing from her wounds, and her plaintive and helpless cries in the darkness of the night have a great impact on the poet, but none whatsoever on the perpetrator of the crime, (1979:351):

"O Mother", (and there was) a rattle in the throat, tears and darkness
The blood gushed out and the stabbed body quivered
Mud nested in her wavy hair
"O Mother", but no one heard her but the executioner
Tom row, the dawn will come and the roses will open up
The twenty years and the enchanted hopes are calling
And the meadows and roses reply:
She has left us to wash away the Shame.
Having carried out his criminal act, the executioner, the victim's brother, returns to the 'pub' where his 'mates' are waiting for him. He proudly informs them of his deed, and declares that the stigma on the family's honour, brought about by the dishonourable deed committed by the girl, has been removed. Triumphanty, and with great relish and pleasure, he orders drinks for his 'mates' and asks for the services of one of the prostitut who hangs about the place. He even goes so far as to declare his readiness to give her the Qur'an in return for her services, (ibid:352):

The savage executioner return, and meets the people "Dishonour!" And he wipes his knife clean [ saying] "we have torn this dishonour to pieces; And have become honourable people again, with a fine pure reputation.
"O, lord of the tavern: where is the wine? where is the drinking cup?"
Summon the lazy songstress with the sweet breath, "I give the Qur'an and the Destinies as ransom for her eyes. Fill your cup, O slaughterer
The slain woman has paid for the washing away the Shame.
The death of the girl does not only free the family from the stigma which previously stuck to them, but also acts, first, as a positive testimony to their ability to act honourably to protect their honour, and also as a deterrent to other women who will have a gruesome reminder of the fate which would await them if they were to break the code of honour within their society, (ibid:352-353):

The dawn will come, and the young women will ask about her:
"Where is she, we wonder?"
The savage beast replies: "We killed her!"
"She was a dishonourable blot on our forehead and we washed it away"
The female neighbours will relate her dark story
As will the date-palm trees in our part of the town
The wooden gates will not forget her
And the stones will whisper:
Let the dishonour be washed away!
Let the dishonour be washed away!
In the last part of the poem, al-Malā'ika ceases to be an observer and assumes the role of the participant. She mocks the double standards of men and deplores the unjust position of women in their society, or, more accurately, male-dominated society in which they have to suffer (ibid:353-354):

"يا جارات الحارة يا فتيات القرية"
"الخبز ستعجبه بدموع مانا"
"سنن جداولنا وسنسلخ إيدنا"
"لنظل كيابهم بيض اللون نقيه"
"لذ بسمة، لذ خربة، لذ فتة فالامية"
"ترقينا في فضة والدنا واخينا"
"وودنا من يدري أي قطر"
"ستوارينا، غسل للحار؟"

O, female neighbours of our quarter!
O, young women of the village,
"We will knead the dough with the tears of our eyes
"We will cut off our plaits and remove the skin off our hands"
"So that their clothes will remain white
and pure"
"No smiles, no happiness, glances
"For the knife, in the hand of our fathers and brothers,
is watching us"
"Tomorrow, who knows what wilderness will conceal our bodies
"To wash away the Shame, (12).
In spite of her criticism of the values of her society, al-Malā'ika often advocates positions which she calls on her fellow women to renounce. This point may be exemplified by her call on women to be proud of their men. She also shows the typical Eastern woman's reserve in relating to her lover, as may be exemplified by her reluctance to admit that she has a lover. This may explain al-Malā'ika's references to her lover as her "Shā'ir" (poet). However, this term is appropriate for two reasons. On the one hand, it emphasises the identity of al-Malā'ika as a poet. On the other hand, it plays on the meaning of the root sh- -r as something to do with feelings (1981:610-611):

مر- عام يا شاعري منذ ان ابصر
تك في ذلك الصباح الكثيب
مر- عام ولم اقابلك، ماذاء؟
كيف ابتقت علي حياتي الهموم؟

A year has passed, O my poet, since I have seen you
On that depressing morning
A year has passed, but I haven't met you
How on earth did anxieties preserve my life?
The poet misses her 'poet' and wishes to see him. But when she sees him, even after an absence of a year, she finds herself unable to relate to him in the normal way which would be expected of her in this situation. She maintains her pride and reserve by hiding her love of her sorely missed lover (1981:557):

We always meet, but I turn away, bewildered although my sad heart is full of the yearning of one who is smitten with love Pride does usurp the soul making the lover appear to be unloved

And also (1981:555):

Whenever my eyes reveal my love I punish them with deprivation
Al-Malāʾika even regards love as a kind of weakness. In order to overcome this feeling of weakness, and to demonstrate to herself that she is a strong female, al-Malāʾika puts an end to her 'love'; however, she soon realises that by putting an end to her love, she extinguishes the flame of life in her. Al-Malāʾika is confused: she wants the spiritual side of love and the feeling of elation love generates in her, but at the same time she rejects the concomitant physical side of love. The physical side of love holds no appeal to her. Furthermore, it causes love to lose its attractiveness and glory. Women, she proclaims, are attracted by the 'spiritual' or 'platonic' side of love, whereas men are attracted by its physical side. She even regards sex as something akin to animal behaviour, and blames the frustration experienced by so-called lovers on their lust and on their strong tendency to give in to it. In its physical manifestations love is like 'mud': it is a dirty and filthy thing which human beings would be well-advised to get rid of. This explains the abundant use of the word "ţīn" - "mud" - in her love poetry during her Romantic Period (1981:608):

تمعق فلين بالنجوم وفليم
تعرق في الاراحل والطين يكبد

My heart is attached to the stars
But his heart rolls in the mire, as the mud
testifies to that

And also (1981:137):

وإذا ما تحقق الحلم العذب
ب اشاحوا عن سحره كارهينا
وبعود الضياء ليند دجيا
وتعود الازهار شوكا وطينا

When sweet dreams become a reality
they turn their faces away from its magic,
full of hatred

And the day turns into a dark gloomy night
and the flowers turn into thorns and mud

Al-Malāʾika's stay in the West has, as we have seen
above, shaped her attitude towards such social issues as
the position of women in Arab society. More important
from the point of view of this thesis, however, is the
influence exercised by certain European poets on her
poetry. Amongst these poets we may specifically mention
Keats, Shelley and Byron.

Al-Malāʾika admired Keats. The influence of his
odes and sonnets is clear in more than one place in her
poetry. Her admiration for Keats is reflected in her
poem "ilā al-shā'ir Keats" - (To the Poet Keats) - in
which she refers to the latter poet's poem "Ode to a Nightingale". Al-Malā'ika returns to Keats in her article "al-Shi'r wa al-Maut." - (Poetry and Death) - in which she discusses Keats' views on death; she also claims in this article that Keats' early death is almost a prophetic fulfilment of his preoccupation with death. Al-Malā'ika goes even a step further in her admiration for Keats, predicting, like Keats that she would die young.

Al-Malā'ika's poetry often echoes the atmosphere of melancholy and sadness which are characteristic of Keats' poetry in general. Al-Malā'ika also admits to writing long odes in imitation of Keats (13).

Al-Malā'ika was also influenced by Shelley, although Shelley's influence on her poetry was not as extensive as Keats. His poems "Ode to the West Wind" and "Adonis" influenced her. She was influenced by Shelley's yearning for death and his glorification of sadness. The extent of the influence of Keats and Shelley on al-Malā'ika will be dealt with later in this thesis. Similarly, we shall discuss later in this thesis the influence of Byron on al-Malā'ika mainly through his poem "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage".

In her preoccupation with the theme of death in her poetry al-Malā'ika found a kindred spirit in the poet Rupert Brooke. In her article "al-Shi'r wa
al-Maut *(Poetry and Death)* al-Malā'ika refers to Brooke's early death and regards this as a prophetic fulfilment of his interest in this theme.

In her second collection *Shaţāyā wa Ramād* al-Malā'ika incorporates two poems which she claims to be translations of two poems by Brooke. The first one is entitled "al-Safar" (Travel). However, upon investigating Brooke's poetic collection, we discover that Brooke has not written a poem under this title. The second poem is meant to be a translation of Brooke's "It is not Going to Happen Again". However, a comparison of this poem with al-Malā'ika's 'translation' quickly reveals that the two poems have very little in common. Al-Malā'ika retains Brooke's theme of the two lovers, Romeo and Juliet, replacing them with the famous Arab pair of lovers: Jamil Buthayna and Kuthayr 'Azza on the one hand, and Qays wa Layla on the other. My claim that al-Malā'ika's poem is not a translation of Brooke's poem can be established by the reader upon reading these poems (1952:162):

I have known the most dear that is granted us here,  
More supreme than the gods know above,  
Like a star I was hurled through the sweet of the world,  
And the height and the light of it, Love.  
I have risen to the uttermost Heaven of Joy,  
I have sunk to the sheer Hell of Pain—  
But— it's not going to happen again, my boy.  
It's not going to happen again.  
*** *** *** ***
It's the very first word that poor Juliet heard  
From her Romeo over the Styx;

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And the Romeo will tell Cleopatra in hell
When she starts her immortal old tricks;
What Paris was tellin' for good-bye to Helen
When he bundled her into the train—
Oh, it's not going to happen again, old girl,
It's not going to happen again.

Al-Malā'ika's so-called translation: (1979:473-474):

واعترف هذا بيتة في دركات الحلم
ويدركه توبة جميلة
وكم غمغمه أناشيد في سمائه رخيم
وواستله حزن ليل الطويل
وكم ردده شفاه كثير في نحات
لعرفة وهي تموت كسرة
ولكنها ستكون الأخيرة يا حلوتي
ولكنها ستكون الأخيرة
Al-Malā'ika's translation into poetry of Grey's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is far more successful than any other of her translations from English. Poetic translation is no easy task, for in addition to the requirement of conveying as much of the content of the source text as possible, the poet must also adhere to the poetic conventions which operate in the target language. Further complications arise, particularly when the cultural universe of the source text and the target text are radically different from each other. These conflicting considerations call on the full range of the poet's abilities to be exercised in executing a translation of the above type. As we shall see later, al-Malā'ika does, on the whole, overcome these difficulties successfully.

Al-Malā'ika's interest in Grey's "Elegy" is not surprising considering the fact that this poem accords thematically with some of the themes she deals with in her poetry. Al-Malā'ika was attracted to the "Elegy" by the atmosphere it evokes: the scene of the lingering sunset, the tired peasant returning home with his flock, weary after a long day, the prevailing silence in the graveyard, the simplicity of the village life in comparison with life in the city, the weakness of man in the face of nature and death and the poet's concern for people in suffering.

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Al-Malā'ika's 'translation' of Gray's "Elegy", however, is given a definite Malā'ike's romantic flavour. This is clear from the overwhelming melancholic mood found in the translation, the excessive feeling of grief and sadness, the repetition of the images of the night's darkness, the frightening darkness and loneliness of the grave and, finally, the centrality of the poet in the existential scheme of things. Many of these images are found in her early collections, particularly in Āshigat al-Layl.

Al-Malā'ika shows a commendable degree of ingenuity in conveying into Arabic some of the cultural information present in the source text. For example, she translates the word 'owl' in the original text as 'dove' - 'qumrīyya' - in the target text (stanza 3), thus overcoming the radically different cultural connotations of 'owl' in English and 'būm' in Arabic. In other words, although 'owl' in English does not, qua semantic import, correspond to 'dove' in Arabic, both 'owl' and 'dove' are equivalent in terms of their cultural connotation - both being regarded as signs of good omen. Furthermore, by translating 'owl' as "qumrīyya" in Arabic, al-Malā'ika, through the root meaning of "q-m-r", successfully captures the idea of the moon in the second line of the third stanza in the English text. These two points will become obvious by reading Grey's third stanza and Al-Malā'ika's translation of it (Grey's 3rd stanza

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Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The mopeing owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'ring,
Molest her ancient solitary reign (14).


لا يُسِيلُ قُمرٌ يَرِسِلُ الشَكَكَ
وي الى القدر قلبها المعمون
عَنْهَا قَنْتَةُ تَسْلِفُها النَّشْر
رَوَاجْهُهُ في ظُلّةِ العَمْوَن
تَنُكُّتُ الْمْيَنْ مَرَوا بَدْنِيَاء
هَا فَلَمْ تَدَرْ مَا عَيِّنْ سَيْكَن
عَكِروا العزلة القديمة والصَّمَّة
تَفَوَّى هِئَافَا المحزون

The effect of European literature on al-Malā'ika's poetry was not only limited to content and themes, but also to form. It is a fact that al-Malā'ika was one of the pioneers in promoting free verse in Arabic poetry.

It was due to the influence of English poetry that she wrote her introduction to her collection Shażāya wa Ramāq (Splinters and Ashes), which was published in 1949. In this introduction al-Malā'ika deals with the
role of rhyme and meter in Arabic poetry. She also deals with certain modern ideas concerning expression, image, inspiration and symbols in poetry. In dealing with these matters, al-Malā'i'ka was highly influenced by her reading of English poetry. She expresses the view that rhyme is an obstacle which blocks the flow of poetic expression. Furthermore, she ridicules those who extol the 'richness' of Arabic literature. She sees that the application of a strict single rhyme in traditional Arabic poetry prevents it from reaching the majestic excellence of heroic poetry which exists in other world literatures. The restriction in rhyme may lead a poet to be stilted in his expressions; his search for a rhyme may also stifle some beautiful and spontaneous words and expressions. Rhyme, thus, is the major obstacle which a poet faces in the spontaneous expression of his poetic talents. Al-Malā'i'ka's deep appreciation of English poetry can be seen in her enthusiasm and call for renewal in both the form and content of the Arabic Qasīda. Al-Malā'i'ka's ideas concerning the nature of classical Arabic poetry and such issues as rhyme and metre are set out in her book Qadāyā al-Shīr al-Muṣāgīr. However, we will not deal with these issues here as this will take us beyond the scope of this thesis.
Of the three Arabic Romantic poets with whom we are dealing in this thesis, Shukri (1886-1958) may be regarded as the poet who was most influenced by English literature, not least because of his direct contact with it. This contact took place, both at home, in Egypt, and abroad, in Sheffield, England.

In assessing Shukri's contact with English literature at home, we must start with the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt in 1798. It is well known that this expedition influenced the intellectual life of Egypt and led, eventually, to the opening up of Egypt to Western culture and civilisation, through, mainly, the then newly emergent educational system. The French influence in Egypt made itself felt at various levels of life in the country, not least in the fact that French became the first foreign language in the country. The privileged position of French is reflected in the fact that it was used in everyday business and in many newspapers and magazines.

The British occupation of Egypt in 1881 eventually resulted in the replacement of French by English as the main foreign language in the country. The school curricula reflected this change, with the emphasis now
being placed on English to the detriment of Arabic, the native language of the people of Egypt. Furthermore, the school system allocated more time to the study of European history, culture and civilisation than it did to the study of Egyptian history and culture. Thus, an Egyptian child attending state schools graduated with a sound knowledge of English.

It was into this background of European influence that Shukri was born on October 12, 1886, five years after the British had invaded Egypt (15). It is worth noting here that Shukri's family originated from North Africa and that his father, Muhammad 'Ayyād, had great sympathy for some of the Egyptian revolutionary leaders, such as 'Abdallāh al-Nādim (16). Shukri started his schooling at the Kuttab (17). He began to learn English while he was in primary school in Port Said (18). Later on, at the age of fourteen, he moved with his father from Port Said to Ra's al-Tīn in Alexandria, which, at the time, had many expatriates including English, French and Greeks nationals (19). In Ra's al-Tīn Secondary School where Shukri started studying European history and literature, it was forbidden for staff and pupils to speak any other language apart from English.

One of the teachers at this school seems to have had a great influence on his pupils, particularly with regard to their interest in English literature. That was Mr. W. H. Stevens. Stevens encouraged his pupils to read
undemanding books about English literature, giving them a list of books they could obtain. His greatest contribution here was to write a book, especially for Egyptian students on English literature, entitled *Introduction to the Study of English Literature, Its History and Form*. Stevens explained its purpose, as that of clarifying the History of English Literature and its form. In this book, Stevens compared Arabic writers with English poets and writers. There is no doubt that this book was most useful to the Egyptian students, not only as an introduction to English literature and its greatest poets and writers, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Spenser, Marlow, Matthew Arnold, Darwin, Ruskin, Hardy, Swinburne, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron and Hazlitt, but also because of the comparative material it contained.

After finishing secondary school in Ra's al-Tin, in 1904, Shukri enrolled in the School of Law and Justice, in which teaching was done either in English or in French. Shukri consolidated his command of the English language by enrolling in the former section.

It was at this time that the political climate in Egypt became most precarious. Cairo in 1904 was the centre of various political movements whose purpose was to demand independence from British rule. One of the main figures in this movement, Muṣṭafa Kamil, was a graduate from the School of Law and Justice. Thus
the students in this school regarded him as their hero and they were highly influenced by his writing in "Al-Liwā'" newspaper of which he was the editor. (24) There were many student protests during this period, and in 1906, one of these protests seems to have been encouraged by Shukrī. As a result, he was expelled by the school's administration (25).

The period following this had an even greater effect on Shukrī's English education, for in the same year as he was expelled from the school of Law and Justice, he began to attend the Khedive Training College. One of the attractions of this college was that students did not have to pay any fees, which were paid by the College (26). It is significant that most of Shukrī's teachers during the three years he attended this College were English, and that the reading of European literature was encouraged by the teachers there. Shukrī spent four hours a week studying English language, literature and calligraphy. Most important during this period is the fact that Shukrī's vision, ideas and thoughts concerning poetry were shaped through his reading of The Golden Treasury which was a set text-book in the College. The influence of this anthology on Shukrī derived mainly from the editor's choice of poems, for they were among the greatest in English literature. The fact that this book contained many lyrical pieces coincided with Shukrī's interest. His Arab upbringing, traditional education and
his sensitive moods, ensured that many of the poems contained in this anthology appealed to him. The popularity of this collection among Shukrî's contemporaries may be attributed in part to its being inexpensive and small enough in size to be carried around anywhere. The Golden Treasury contained lyrical pieces from three centuries, starting with sonnets drawn from the second half of the sixteenth century. Among the English poets represented in this collection were Byron, Shelley, Coleridge...

Shukrî's admiration for Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth and Hazlitt helped mould his view of poetry as the reflection of faith and emotion. Shukrî was first and foremost attracted to Shelley, as were most Arab writers and critics of the time. Shelley was seen as the champion of social reform, political activity and regeneration in the world. Shukrî expresses his admiration for Shelley (27):

"I liked Shelley at that time, despite the fact that I was unable to assess his shortcomings and to realise that at times Shelley soared high above the realities of life. Moreover, I did not give enough weight to the fact that his antagonism towards religion tarnished his art. Nevertheless, I admired his love of freedom and his hatred of hypocrisy. I also liked some of his beautiful imagery and his tender love poetry which is free from the
excesses of imagination."

The influence of Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth and Hazlitt on Shukri will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Shukri's contact with English literature came during his stay in Sheffield. After he graduated from the Khedive Training College, Shukri was sent by the Egyptian government on a full scholarship to Sheffield University in England. Here, between 1909 and 1912 he attended "a special course leading to a certificate for students of the Egyptian Educational Mission. He undertook a number of Bachelor of Arts courses, including Ancient and Modern History, English History, Geography, Economics, Constitutional History and Political Philosophy "(28).

Shukri's stay at Sheffield had a great effect, not only on his knowledge of European culture, education, but also on his social attitudes and his outlook on nature. In what follows, we shall deal with these three issues: firstly, Shukri's attitude towards nature, secondly, his attitude towards the position of women, and thirdly, the influence of English literature on his writing.

Shukri's stay in England had a lasting effect on his attitude towards nature. The contrast between English scenery and the unchanging scenery of Egypt where he had
come from caused him to notice the variety of the British landscape even within a small area. Shukri himself indicates how in one journey he undertook in the English countryside, he was fascinated by all the different manifestations of nature: (29)

"During the journey to my destination, I looked out through the train window and I still remember my impression of ... these [English] scenes [which] are different from the scenery I used to look at from the train windows in Egypt. Whereas in Egypt when we view even land, it appears as if it is drawn by an architect on one level on paper, in England one finds that a small piece of land differs remarkably in height and appearance. Even after my return from England, the effect of the variety of natural scenery has remained alive in my consciousness. In England I saw hills and mountains wrapped by trees and covered with ice and snow flakes during the wintertime. I also saw the vestiges of huge ancient forests whose effects on the viewer were no less than the effect of the huge ancient forests themselves. I saw the waterfalls dropping from the hills, and their effect on any one who possessed imagination and feeling... was, by no means, smaller than the effect of the gigantic world famous waterfalls. I also saw snow flakes covering the streets and houses making the sunny day look like a moonlit night..."

Although Sheffield is industrial, this did not mean that it was without its parks and beauty spots. In his writings, Shukri mentions how he was inspired by the
flowers in this city, and he wrote a poem entitled "Sunflower". Shukri was amazed by the beauty of snow covered trees and houses, and we see the effect of this in his poems "al-Shitā' fī Inglītera" (Winter in England), "al-Tabī'a" (Nature), "Yūn al-Nadā" (The Eyes of Dew) and "Saʿīt al-Layl" (The Voice of Night).

However, although Shukri was fascinated by English landscape, it seems that the gloomy, English weather depressed him, as is clear from his poem "Hanīn Gharīb" (1960:155):

I am in a town in which time passes sadly, not being lit by sunshine.
It is like a frowning prison during the day, calamities have affected me with desperation in it.
The sky was in mourning above us as though it was the dome of a tomb.

Furthermore, it is difficult to determine whether Shukri had an altogether happy stay in England, for his love for the English countryside is counterbalanced by his homesickness and sense of alienation which he expresses in his poems "Hanīn Shā'īr" (The Nostalgia of a Poet) and "Shā'īr fī l-Ghurba" (A Poet absent from Home). He says
in the latter poem (1960:154):

I was like the twittering bird brought from its garden
while Time was fair
Where the face of the day was jubilant and smiling,
and the face of the night was not yet black
Where many things caused me to sing, a beloved,
a homeland and a dear friend
They made it alight in a home akin to the
belly of the earth: with gloomy sky and earth

Secondly, Shukri's stay in England had a lasting
effect on his attitude towards such issues as women's
rights, particularly as this was a live issue in certain
quarters in English society. Shukri's social life in
England was limited, mainly because he was shy and
withdrawn, and also because of the reserved nature of
British. He was invited to one English home during
the entire duration of his stay in England. However, in
this new environment of a more free society, Shukri
seemed to have been struck by the difference between
women's lives in Arab societies and the life of women in
England, and he published an article in the Egyptian
newspaper "al-Jarīda" in 1911 under the title "The Question of Veiling and Unveiling" (30). At the same time, an article appeared in the Students' magazine "reamus" signed by "a non bigotted Muslim" under the title "The Position of Women in Islam". This article might have been written by Shukri, although we have no firm evidence to support this conjecture. Shukri's sympathy towards women in Arab society may be seen in his poem entitled "Imra'a Tukallimu Ba'lahā" (A Woman Addresses her Husband) in which the wife denies that she is merely a beautiful thing to be possessed by her husband, but rather asserts that her beauty is due to God and thus belongs to other people as well (31). It would, however, be wrong to attribute Shukri's views concerning the position of women in Arab society directly to his experience in England and to the social trends which were in vogue in that country at the time, for evidence suggests that Shukri was influenced by Qasim Amin and Rifāḍa al-Tahtawī who, in their turn, were influenced by European thought on the matter under consideration here.

It seems that Shukri was moved by the beauty of English women, and he compared his love of flowers to his love of a woman's smiling face. He reflects the inspiration they brought him in his poem "al-Ibtisam" (Smiling). It is worth pointing out here that Shukri's treatment of the position of women in Arab society does not occupy the same place in his poetry as
does the same issue in al-Malā'ika's poetry. This is probably because al-Malā'ika is a woman and she had direct experience of the subject.

Thirdly and finally, let us examine Shukrí's education at Sheffield, with the view to establishing the influence English education had on his poetic talent. In the three years he was there, Shukrí derived great benefit from the acclaimed brilliance of his tutors in the study of literature. His course included some of Shakespeare's plays such as Macbeth, Hamlet and The Tempest. Among the textbooks he studied was The Golden Treasury which, as we have already seen, had already had a great impact on him. The English poets' main influence on Shukrí may be seen in his views concerning the nature of poetry and the role of the poet in society, and in his ideas concerning fancy and imagination. Some of his ideas on these issues are based on Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Hazlitt.

Wordsworth and Hazlitt emphasise the importance of emotion in poetry, witness Wordsworth's famous statement that (1904:735) "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling", and also Hazlitt's statement that (1910:1) "poetry is the language of the imagination and the passion "(32). The importance of imagination in poetry is also supremely stressed by Shelley who declares that (1965:109) "poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be the expression of the imagination" (33).
Shukrī also shares with these poets the view that poetry offers a true reflection of life (34). The poet, in his poetry, reflects the variety of human emotion. Shelley (1965:115) declares that a poem is the image of life expressed in its eternal truth. Hazlitt takes the same view (1910:9): "Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair, or madness are all poetry" (35). This, of course, is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the emotions which poetry can express, but it serves to illustrate the types of emotion or feeling which one finds in poetry. Hazlitt also expresses the view (1910:11) that "poetry in its matter and form is natural imagery of feeling, combined with passion and fancy".

Shukrī uses the poetic medium to explicate his views concerning the nature of poetry and the role of the poet. His poetry is full of pronouncements concerning this issue. For example, one of his poems, "al-Shiʿr" (Poetry), is totally devoted to this purpose (1960:334-335):

س ومعقل حـّــبـيــانـها
س حـدـار من نـتوأتـها
غـرـسة غـي جـناتـها
بالـشـعـر مـن نـفحاتـهـ
والـشـعـر مـن مـوجاتـها

والـشـعـر تـاريخ النـفو
والـشـعـر كـاس لـلنـفو
والـشـعـر وـرد باـنـان
والنفـس رـيـح قد هـفت
والنفـس شـر زاـخــر

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Poetry is the history of the soul, and its fortress
Poetry is a cup for the soul, so beware of its intoxication
Poetry is a blooming flower, planted in its paradise
The soul is like a wind which had been passionately excited by the gentle breeze blown by poetry

The soul is a rich sea, and poetry is one of its waves

Poetry is life's mirror, in which life appears,

Poetry is part of its tears,
poetry is part of its laughter.

Clearly the issue at stake in this poem is the universality of poetry and comprehensiveness of poetry as a record of human feelings and emotions. Shukri's view on this matter resembles that of Hazlitt who states that poetry is the (1910:1) "universal language which the heart holds with nature." Wordsworth also stresses the universality of the subject matter of poetry, stating (19:739) that poetry expresses the "great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations..."
The universality of the subject matter of poetry gives it a centrality in all areas of human knowledge. This view is championed by Shelley, who strongly believes that (1963:135):

"poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all, and that which if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life" (36).

The same view is expressed by Wordsworth and Coleridge (37). The former poet sees poetry as the (1904:738) "breath and finest spirit of all knowledge and also the first and last of all knowledge". It might be worth pointing out here that al-Shabbi holds similar views, as is expressed by the following verses (1972:319):

عَشْ بِالْشَّعورِ، وَلِلْشَّعورِ، فَانِمَا
دْنَيَاكَ كَمُحْوَفٍ عَواطفٍ وَشَعورٍ

Live with feelings, and for feelings
for your world is a universe of emotions and feelings.

And (ibid:321-322):
Let your feelings in nature guide you
she is the expert in its enchanted wilderness
It befriended life while she was young and walked
with her between the skulls and the spilled blood

And ran with it over the towering heights, smiling
and singing, for centuries and ages
The mind though vulnerable and dignified
remains very small
It marches when the wind beats it, bending
with pain like a bird with a broken [wing]

The above statements from Wordsworth and Shelley
give the lie to the accusation which was levelled against
them by many critics, to the effect that they were
anti-science. White (1953, p xxii) points out that
Shelley was an "amateur scientist" who nurtured his mind
"enthusiastically upon the great discoveries of science
in (his) time. " Modern writers are sometimes oblivious of the different status which science holds in present day society in relation to its status in the society in which the Romantics lived. Taking this into consideration, Wordsworth's and Shelley's views concerning the centrality of poetry in all fields of human knowledge might not have been regarded as exaggerated in their day as these views may be regarded in our contemporary society. In other words, one could not justifiably interpret the view that poetry is the nucleus of all human knowledge as an anti-science stand on the part of the Romantics.

Shukri seems to echo Shelley and Carlyle in their views concerning the role of the poet, namely that the poet is a prophet who should discharge his duties towards humanity through the medium of poetry (38). The view of the poet as a prophet is an ancient one as Shelley points out (1965:112):

"Poets, according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called, in the earlier epochs of the world, legislators, or prophets: a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters" (39).
Let us now consider Shukri's views concerning the notion of "poetic style". Although Shukri does not specify this notion explicitly, a reasonably adequate delineation of it can be arrived at through a process of elimination by looking at those features of poetic style which Shukri does not favour. Shukri denies the existence of a necessary connection between "correctness" of style and the use of outlandish expressions and words. He explicitly states that great poetry often employs common and accessible language, and he regards the employment of strange diction and rare modes of expression by some poets as an attempt to hide their lack of poetic talent (40).

It is clear from what has been said in the preceding paragraph that Shukri was influenced in his views by Wordsworth in his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads". This influence is most clearly present in the area of poetic diction. However, it is worth pointing out that whereas Wordsworth practises what he preaches, Shukri does not. This difference between them is somewhat reflected in their poetry. Whereas Wordsworth, at least in certain parts of the "Lyrical Ballads" uses accessible language, Shukri employs diction which in no way can be understood by ordinary people. Shukri is a classicist by inclination and temperament. His imagery and modes of expression betray the influence of the major Arab poets of, particularly, the Abbasid period. In other words,
Shukri's achievement in the fields of poetry and poetic criticism are Janus-like: one side points towards the early giants of Arabic poetry, and the other points in the direction of Romantic critical theory, especially that of Wordsworth.

Shukri draws a distinction between the use of similes on the one hand, and imagination on the other. Although simile is regarded as one of the devices in the expression of poetic imagery, imagination is said not to depend on the use of similes. According to Shukri, the abundance of similes in a poem does not necessarily endow it with the property of being high in imaginative value. This boils down to saying that there is no necessary correlation between the employment of similes and the quality of imagination in poetry.

Shukri believes that similes should not be used for their own sake, but to further our understanding of the similarity between the two terms of the simile. Simile should be used to deepen our understanding or appreciation of the objects between which the simile holds.

Shukri distinguishes between two types of poetic imagery: imagination and fancy (tawahhum). The purpose of a poetic picture, according to Shukri, is to create an explanatory relationship between two or more sets of objects, in the widest possible sense of the word.
'object'. With this understanding in mind, we can now proceed to explain Shukri's characterisation of the difference between imagination and fancy. Whereas in the former the postulated relationship is required to be existentially plausible, it lacks this character in the latter. Shukri goes so far as to say that fancy 'fabricates' a relationship between two sets of objects between which no existentially plausible connection could be established.

Shukri further distinguishes between two types of imagination: false and genuine imagination. He likens false imagination to the mirage in the middle of the desert: it has the appearance of water from a distance, but it vanishes as soon as one approaches it. He also explicates the difference between false imagination and genuine imagination by comparing the former to false diamonds and the latter to real ones.

The difference between the two may therefore be stated in terms of the difference between appearance and reality. False imagination has the appearance of imagination proper, but on further investigation or reflection it fails to reveal the true distinctive of the imagination, that is, existential plausibility. All that glitters is not gold. This proverb aptly applies to false imagination. In contradistinction, genuine imagination is negatively delimited: it is everything which false imagination is not.
However, Shukri's views concerning false imagination make us suspicious of the validity of the distinction between this type of imagination and fancy, as it is sometimes not very clear where the borderline is to be drawn between the two (41).

In addition, Shukri's view concerning imagination may prove, from the point of view of practical criticism to be too difficult and imprecise to apply. This follows from the fact that his classification of the different types of imagination is characterised by a great deal of fuzziness, although it may be argued that this fuzziness arises from the nature of his subject-matter rather than from the inherent imprecision of his conceptual categories.

Shukri is similar to the English romantics in believing that imagination and truth are inseparable, in the sense that the former is a means for articulating and manifesting the latter. In other words, Shukri, along with the English Romantics, held the view that imagination reveals important truths and illuminates different types of reality.

However, it must be pointed out that Shukri's use of the terms "fancy" and "imagination" is different from the interpretation given to these two terms by the English Romantics, particularly Wordsworth and Coleridge. For example, Coleridge, having distinguished between
imagination and fancy, and having assigned imagination a higher place than fancy in poetry, distinguishes between two types of imagination: primary imagination and secondary imagination which are related to each other. The difference between them is seen as a difference of degree rather than of kind; secondary imagination is essentially an echo of primary imagination (42).

It seems to us that the similarity between Coleridge and Shukrī is on the level of form and not of substance in content. In other words, the similarity between them concerns the affinity in matters of form: they both distinguish between 'imagination' and fancy, with further sub-divisions within the former.

Another important feature of Shukrī's work, both in poetry and criticism, is his insistence on the importance of emotion and passion in poetry. Shukrī's motto in this respect may be stated as "Poetry is the language of emotions", using the terms "emotion" and "passion" to cover all that excites the poet and, in turn, the reader or listener. Poetry, according to Shukrī, must express the full range of human emotions, rather than restrict itself to one single emotion. Playing on the root of the word 'al-Shiʿr' in Arabic, Shukrī declares that only poetry which makes the recipient feel and experience human emotions in a strong way may be regarded as poetry proper (1960:364):
"Poetry is that which makes you feel, and renders you able to experience intensely the soul's emotions."

And (ibid:209):

"Poetry no matter what subject matter it deals with, must express emotion."

The idea of the inseparability of poetry from emotion is a salient feature of, at least, Shukri's critical theory. Shukri expounds this connection by constructing a triangular view of the nature of poetry. In his view, fine poetry must embody three indispensable elements: emotion, imagination and fine taste. Weakness in any of these components would have, in his view, a specific detrimental effect on poetry. Thus weakness in imagination leads to worthless poetry, poverty of emotions results in staleness, and tasteless poetry offends people's sensibilities.

Another important aspect of Shukri's work is his view of the role of the poet. He sees the poet as essentially a communicator of emotions and ideas. He therefore seeks to address his readers' emotions and
intellects. Through his poetry he also seeks to impart to his audience pleasure and happiness. Shukri regards the poet's role to be somewhat similar to a 'prophet's. Like a prophet, the poet is said to have the ability to reveal the secrets of nature in captivating language. By virtue of his sensitivity and insight, the poet can uncover many secrets and reveal them to his audience effectively employing a poetry which conforms to the three conditions set out in the preceding paragraphs (43).

The view that poetry imparts pleasure is also found among such Romantics as Wordsworth and Shelley. According to Wordsworth (1985:739): "The end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an over-balance of pleasure" (44). Sheliey reiterates more or less the same idea (1965:116): "Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits on which it falls open to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight" (45).

The message of the poet is universal. He writes to all people at all times addressing their intellects and exciting their emotions. The universality of the poet's message should not, however, submerge its specificity. Shukri believes that the poet should reflect in his poetry the life of his people. It would be interesting to speculate on the manner in which these two types of message can be reconciled; however, such an undertaking falls outside the scope of this thesis.
Shukrī, like many of the poets of his time, was influenced by Byron's poetry. On the one hand, Byron's poetry contains a generous measure of such Romantic features as sadness. On the other hand, because Byron himself was influenced by Islam and the East, many Arab poets felt an affinity with him and were influenced by him. Byron's interest in Islam and the East is too well documented in the literature to warrant any discussion here. Suffice it to say here that Shukrī shows his admiration for Byron in his poem "Kalima fī-l-Shā'ir Byron" - (A Word Addressed to the Poet Byron;1960:74):

Your utterance makes our tears descend out of sadness, as if your heart is inspired with wisdom
You have clothed your heart with the morning of sorrow, as though it springs from the blackness of heart and the eye
The angel of inspiration keeps your heart jubilant, your mind is bent on the changing time.
If you grasp a meaning, your meaning sounds better than the achievements of success and victory
You have collected the most honourable opinions; you personify the heart of the truth in every message (46).
He also shares with Byron his view of love linked with glory (47).

However, Shukri was most influenced by Shelley. This is not surprising considering Shelley's views concerning freedom. In his poetry, Shelley called for freedom and for the destruction of all repressive socio-political institutions. He also reiterated this call in his prose writings. Shelley's espousal of freedom as an ideal for the poet and for all liberally-minded people, made him the favourite English poet as far as Shukri and his contemporaries were concerned, owing to the fact that these poets were fighting for the same ideal in their societies.

Shelley expresses his views concerning freedom in a number of poems: "The Revolt of Islam", "Ode to Liberty" and in "Prometheus Unbound". Shukri's poem "al-Malak al-Tha'ir" (The Rebellious Angel) bears an uncanny resemblance to the last poem by Shelley mentioned in the previous sentence.

Prometheus symbolises the human being who sacrifices himself for the happiness of humanity. Shukri realised that the notion of Prometheus as a god would not be acceptable to the Arabs on religious grounds. Thus in his poem "al-Malak al-Tha'ir", Shukri replaced Prometheus
by an angel and the Greek god Zeus by God. In Shelley's poem, Zeus, in accordance with the original myth, punishes Prometheus by ripping him open at the top of a mountain and by letting vultures prey on his intestine every day. For Shukri, this punishment is replaced by restlessness in the angel's soul. The angel and Prometheus are similar: they sacrifice themselves for mankind's happiness and the reform of society. Both poets believe that the world is full of evil in which man is made miserable. However, Shelley is more optimistic than Shukri vis-a-vis humanity's future happiness.

Like Shelley, Shukri glorifies love, elevating it to great heights and treating it as a source of comfort in an evil world (48). Love purifies man's spirit; it enriches and softens the heart, so men can live at peace with one another (49).

The idea that love is associated with cruelty is found in both Keats and Shukri. This may well spring from their common experience with women. Keats associates love with cruelty, as it is said, a result of his personal experiences, namely the remarriage of his mother soon after his father's death, then her divorce and consequent early death. Her death was a kind of betrayal which reminded him that all people are cruel, especially young and beautiful women. The same theme of the inseparability of love and cruelty is found in Shukri's poem "Al-Zawja al-Ghadira" (The Deceitful Wife).
During his short life (1909-1934), the Tunisian poet al-Shābbī achieved great distinction and eminence as one of the most celebrated Arab Romantic poets of this century (50). Like Shukrī, al-Shābbī began his early education at the local Kuttab-Quranic School. He showed great aptitude for learning so much so that by the time he was nine, he had memorised the whole of the Qur'an. Al-Shābbī's father was a judge and his ambition was that his son would follow him in his education and profession. To prepare him for what his father intended to be his future career, al-Shābbī senior arranged for his son to be taught privately Arabic grammar and Sharī'a law for two years. At the age of twelve, al-Shābbī was sent to Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, to the College Mosque of al-Zaituna (51). Al-Shābbī spent seven years at this institution of higher learning in Tunis. After graduating from this school he joined the Tunisian School of Law where he was awarded a degree in this subject after two years of study, ready to follow in the footsteps of his father – as the latter had wished and anticipated. Instead, al-Shābbī directed his attention to literature (52). Like Keats, al-Shābbī did not pursue the vocation for which he was trained, but followed his literary inclinations (53).
Al-Shābbī lived during a critical period in the history of his country. Tunis was occupied by the French, and the Tunisians were, on the whole, rather apathetic about this foreign occupation of their country. Al-Shābbī was sensitive to this situation and to the political, social and intellectual atmosphere of Tunisia at the time which did a great deal to shape his attitude towards life. In response to the French challenge to, and domination of his country, al-Shābbī wrote many poems warning his people against the dangers of occupation and extolling the virtues of freedom (54). This partly explains why al-Shābbī quickly became popular in Arab countries which had been suffering the same colonialist fate as Tunisia (55).

Al-Shābbī's poetry shows remarkable similarity to the poetry of the European Romantics, particularly the English Romantics. This is all the more remarkable considering the fact that al-Shābbī did not know any foreign language (56). This, however, does not mean that al-Shābbī had no access to European literature. Firstly, European literature was available in translation, and al-Shābbī could have acquainted himself with this literature via this channel. Secondly, al-Shābbī was an avid reader of the works of the Romantics in Arabic literature, namely the Mahjar and Apollo groups whose works, as we have mentioned earlier, were influenced by European literature. Amongst the Mahjar group, Jibrān’s
work exercised the greatest influence on al-Shābī. Thirdly, al-Shābī was exposed to contact with European literature, through his friend al-Helewi who was well-read in Western literature. This can be ascertained if one looks at the correspondence which took place between these two men.

Let us first examine al-Shābī's views on criticism. Names such as Lamartine and De Vigny are constantly mentioned by al-Shābī in his letters to his friend al-Helewi and in his book on criticism al-Khayāl al-Shi'i ānd al-'Arab (The Poetic Imagination of the Arabs.) Al-Shābī compares these two writers to the giants among the Arab poets such as Abū Tammām and al-Buhtūri and concludes that the poetic imagination and imagery of the European poets are richer and fuller than those of their Arab counterparts. He also extols the rhythmical variations in the poetry of Lamartine and De Vigny and criticizes the Arab poet's attitude to nature and women.

Beauty is one of the major themes to be found in the poets whose works will be examined in this thesis. Shukrī, for example, contrasts "beauty" with "ugliness", associating the former with "good" and the latter with "evil". He also declares that the poet is a messenger of beauty (57). An individual's love for beauty is synonymous with his love for life, and the more appreciative a person is of beauty, the larger will be
his share of the pleasures of life. Shukri goes even further by asserting that a nation's appreciation of beauty is a positive factor in its progress and ascendancy over other nations.

Similarly, Beauty occupies a central place in al-Shabbi's poetry. Al-Shabbi uses the term "beauty" in its widest possible sense, to cover both the beauty of nature and human beauty (58). According to him, beauty is the force which makes birds sing and butterflies flutter their wings, hopping from one flower to another. Poets are inspired by beauty in composing their poetry. Nations are judged by their appreciation of beauty. Similarly, their poetic heritage is judged by the degree to which beauty is present in it. In terms of this, it is not surprising to find that al-Shabbi often took refuge in nature from his cares and anxieties, (1972:469):

في الغاب، في الغاب الحبيب، واثئة
حرم الطبيعة والجمال السامي
ظهرت في نار الجمال مشاعري
ولقيت في دنيا الخيال سلامي

In the forest, the beloved forest,
it is nature's sanctuary and its magnificent beauty
I have purified my feelings in beauty's fire,
and found peace in the world of imagination.
Al-Shåbbï appreciates human beauty and extols the beneficial effect human beauty has on him - although he often associates beauty with sadness, (1972:360):

There is ingenious magic in the beautiful woman which kindles sadness and causes it to grow

Man's aim should be to live to appreciate beauty, which al-Shåbbï associates with art, inspiration and purity (1972:309):

Life must be devoted to an appreciation of beauty, art, inspiration, purity, vividness and worship.

Al-Shåbbï puts beauty on a high pedestal, calling on man to worship it reverently (1972:470):

Send up your sincere prayer, mixed with the intensity of inspiration, to beauty.
Keats, with whom al-Shābbī shares his interest in "beauty" is by far the most celebrated English Romantic poet to deal with the theme of beauty in his poetry. His famous line of poetry (1908:57), "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" encapsulates his attitude. According to Keats, Beauty is associated with joy on the one hand, and with truth, on the other. The latter view is expressed by Keats as follows (1908:234):

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty - that is all
Ye know on earth, and all you need to know" (59).

Obviously, truth and joy are indirectly linked with each other via beauty. Beauty is, therefore, the 'lynch pin' which ties together a variety of attributes (60).

The great similarities between al-Shābbī and the English Romantic poets, especially Keats and Shelley, are manifested in his great passion for melancholy and grief and in his longing for death. Al-Shābbī shares with some of these poets the feeling that he will die a young man. Like many romantics, al-Shābbī believes that sadness and pleasure are two sides of one and the same coin.

According to al-Shābbī, poetry is the vehicle through which the poet expresses his emotions, whether sad or happy ones. Al-Shābbī also advocates the view
that poetry is the source of pleasure and pain. In this respect, al-Shābbī resembles Shelley and Hazlitt. He also resembles Shukrī who explicitly states that poetry expresses a variety of emotions and sentiments. He also agrees with these literary figures in viewing the poet as a prophet, an idea which Shukrī and Shelley especially emphasise.

Like Shukrī, al-Shābbī expresses his views concerning the nature of poetry, in terms of content and form, through the poetic medium itself. Put differently, many of al-Shābbī's views concerning the nature of poetry are stated in poetry. For example, al-Shābbī explains his view of the importance of emotions and feeling in poetry in the following lines, taken from his poem "Ya Shīr" (Oh, Poetry: 1972:102):

O, poetry : you are the spokesman of feelings and the cry of the depressed soul
O, poetry : you are the echo of the sobbing of the heart and a strange ardent love
O, poetry : you are tears which have clung to the eye-lashes of life
O, poetry : you are blood, gushing out of the wounds of creatures
In his poem "Fikrat al-Fannan" (The Artist's View), al-Shābbī exhorts the artist to immerse himself in emotions and to live for emotions, for his life consists of emotions and feelings. It is this fact which gives life the intensity and vitality which would be lost to it if man were to live by "reason" and "rationality" alone.

Al-Shābbī sees a direct link between emotion and imagination, the latter being the means through which emotions can be effectively imparted. Al-Shābbī regards imagination as a vital element in man's life; he even goes so far as to say that it is as essential for man's existence as air and water.

Al-Shābbī distinguishes between two types of imagination: poetic imagination, which, he also calls artistic imagination, and artificial imagination. The first type of imagination is used by all people to try to understand the secrets of the universe, including the secrets of human nature. Imagination thus understood combines a variety of sources, including art and philosophy. On the other hand, artificial imagination involves the use of similes and metaphors and other means of linguistic embellishment.

It is clear from the above discussion that al-Shābbī's views concerning imagination differ from, say, those of Coleridge or Wordsworth. However, it would be safe to say that there are some obvious similarities.
between al-Shābbī's view of poetic imagination and, for example, Coleridge's ideas concerning primary and secondary imagination. One might even be able to go further and suggest that al-Shābbī's artificial imagination is to a certain extent similar to the concept of fancy in Coleridge.
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE (al-Malā'ika)

(1) Naẓīk al-Malā'ika was born in Baghdad on 23rd of August, 1923. She is a member of al-Malā'ika family, which is regarded as one of the families of noble descent in Iraq. The poet enjoyed a wealthy and educated life since her early childhood. Most members of her family enjoyed a high position in Iraqi society; for example, her uncle ʿAbd al-Šāḥib al-Malā'ika was a poet who according to al-Malā'ika published a collection of poetry in 1963. Her grandfather al-Ḥāj Muḥammad Kibba was a leading scholar in the field of Islamic jurisprudence. He was also a poet; he published most of his works towards the end of the 19th century.

Al-Malā'ika left Iraq for Lebanon in (1959), to show her disapproval of the tragic events which followed in the wake of the 1958 revolution. She however, returned to Iraq in (1960) and continued her job as a lecturer in the College of Education in Baghdad. In 1969 al-Malā'ika and her husband left Iraq for Kuwait to teach in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Kuwait. They are still living in Kuwait. Al-Malā'ika is currently retired.

In 1962 al-Malā'ika married her colleague ʿAbd al-Ḥādi Maḥbūba, who was teaching Arabic at the College of Education in Baghdad where al-Malā'ika was teaching at the time. Al-Malā'ika and her husband were instrumental in the establishment of the University of Basra in 1964. Al-Malā'ika was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the newly established University, while her husband was appointed President of the same university.

(2) She finished in 1944, whereupon she was granted a first class B.A degree in Arabic Language and Literature.

(3) Al-Malā'ika's mother was known in public by the name Umm Nizar. Her only collection of poetry Unshūdat al-Majd (The Sonnet of Glory) was published in 1964.

(4) Al-Malā'ika continued to learn Latin during her stay at the university of Princeton.

(5) During her stay in the Teacher Training College, al-Malā'ika attended the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad in order to learn to play the Lute. She spent six years at this Institute, graduating in 1949.

(7) During her stay in Wisconsin between 1954 and 1956, al-Malā'ika wrote her literary memoirs. Portions of these memoirs were published in the "Al-Liwā" newspaper in Cairo in 1960.

(8) See al-Malā'ika (1975: pp 47-62)


(10) For more information concerning this theme, see al-Malā'ika's article al-Tajzī'iyā fī l-Mujtama' al-'Arabī; (1975: pp 47-62).

(11) For more information on al-Malā'ika's view concerning the position of women in Arab society, see Jayyūsī's article "al-Mar'a wa Sūrat al-Mar'a 'Inda Nāzik al-Malā'ika" in Muhanna (1985: pp 233-271).

(12) For more information about this poem, see al-Muhannā (1985: pp 430-436).

(13) Al-Malā'ika was fascinated by mythology in her early poetry. She utilises myths derived from, mainly, Arab and Greek sources. For more information on this feature of al-Malā'ika's poetry the reader may refer to al-Najjār in al-Muhannā (1985: pp 334-423).

(14) Al-Malā'ika sometimes changes the internal order of the stanzas in the translation, as is evident in her translation of stanza (No.9).

In other places she adds new material in order to clarify the meaning of, or supplement the force of, a preceding stanza. Thus she adds a wholly new stanza in the target text to supplement the translation of stanza (No.27) in the source text. These and other formal alterations are understandable in that al-Malā'ika had to adhere to the relatively rigid strictures imposed on her by virtue of her attempt to 'translate' the source text into poetry in the target language. Changes in the overall mood and atmosphere of the poem, to which we have alluded in the text of this thesis, are to be regarded as inevitable consequences of al-Malā'ika's excessive Romanticism. The two poems differ from each other in
other respects, as will be explained below.

It is clear that al-Malā'ika added the idea of cruelty in the description of death in her translation of stanza (No. 11) by saying "al-himām al-qāsī" (cruel death), which does not exist in the original stanza (No. 11). The poem is also infused with her personal feelings concerning life and death, as is clear from her use of the expression "raʿshat al-iḥsās," to translate "life" in the source stanza, Gray's stanza.

If we compare the following stanza of Gray's Elegy with al-Malā'ika's translation of it, we will see that she gives it a personal flavour, as is obvious from her reference to the grave as a "dark" and "cold" place:

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires,
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.

Al-Malā'ika translates this as (1981:683):

بي الروح حين ترحل تهفو
لنوادر خان وصدر خفوق
والعين الموعدت بغريب
ها اتى منفوق ودمع صديق

ومن القبر ذلك العلم البا
رد يعلو صوت الزمان العميق
آه حتى في شلو احساسنا البـ
ت نبقى آثار ذاك السـ

Another example of the way in which al-Malā'ika projects her personal views and feelings on to the translation is also evident in her description of the
graves as places which are engulfed in darkness. A comparison of stanza (No. 20) with al-Malā'ika's translation of the same stanza illustrates this point. In Stanza No. 20, Gray says,

"Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh."

Al-Malā'ika translates this stanza as follows (1981:681):

"رقدوا والقيام عارية الد
من الصمت والهدوء الحزين
وعلى البعد تلمع العين تمتبا
لذ صهيلة يبكي لصرعى المتون
كتبت تحته قوافٍ واعشا
ر ثغت في الأبد وسوا في الطين
يقال العابرين آهة حزن
لقيوم تحت الدجى والدجى"

The influence of Gray's Elegy on al-Malā'ika can be seen in other poems. For example, one can vividly see the similar imagery in Gray's first stanza and in al-Malā'ika's poem "al-Ghurūb" (The Sunset, 1981:542):
Gray's first Stanza (1909:109):

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.
(15) Shukrī was brought up during the period of revolutionary abyss in his country when Egypt was occupied by Britain. He witnessed the collapse of the 1919 revolution which was not supported by Egyptian bourgeois and the feudal class.

(16) ʿAbdallah al-Nadīm was one of the leaders of ʿUrābī's revolution. He was a poet, a journalist and a public speaker for the above mentioned revolution. He was a friend of Shukrī's father and was a frequent visitor to his home. Shukrī paid keen attention to his conversations during these visits.

(17) For Shukrī's impression of his time at al-kuttāb and the method which the 'Shaikh' employed in teaching his pupils religion and language, the reader may refer to Shukrī (1939:545):

(18) Shukrī spent his early childhood in Port Sa'īd with his family and remained there until 1900. He was fourteen years old when he finished his primary school.

(19) Ra's al-Tīn secondary school was situated at the port of Alexandria. Shukrī, therefore enjoyed a beautiful view and spent long periods of time reading poetry on the beach.

(20) For more information about Shukrī's study of Wordsworth, Milton and Shakespeare, the reader may refer to Shukrī's article (1939:456).

(21) Shukrī graduated from Ra's al-Tīn secondary school in 1904; he returned to it as a teacher after eight years.

(22) It is worth mentioning that Shukrī's father, Muhammad Shukrī 'Ayyād was put in prison for a period of time. He was accused of being sympathetic to ʿUrābī's revolution and of being a friend of ʿAbdallah Nadim. During this imprisonment Shukrī's father suffered greatly and some of his children died.

(23) Mustafa Kāmil was also the editor of "al-Liwa'".
newspaper, a poet and a leader of the national revolution in Egypt. Shukrī had a great admiration for this leader and wrote an elegy dedicated to him after his death in 1908. See Shukrī (1960:47) on this point.

(24) Shukrī remained in the School of Law between 1904 and 1906. It was said that he was dismissed from this school because he had written a poem entitled "al-Thabāt" (Firmness). In this poem Shukrī encouraged Egyptian students in "al-Azbakiyya Park" in Cairo to be firm in their demands for reforms. As a result of this, Shukrī was accused by the government of being a provocateur in the student revolts.

(25) After being dismissed from the School of Law, Shukrī asked Muṣṭafā Kāmil to employ him on the staff of "al-Liwa'" newspaper. Muṣṭafā Kāmil, however, encouraged the young enthusiastic Shukrī to go and continue his higher education first, then to work in any field which may suit his talent in the future.

(26) Shukrī was admitted to the Teacher Training College in Cairo in 1906 and remained there until 1909. It was in this school that he met ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Māzinī with whom he shared a keen interest in poetry. They remained close friends for a long period of time and established with their colleague ʿAbbās Mahmūd al-ʿAqqād a literary group called al-Dīwān.

The friendship between Shukrī and al-Māzinī however, deteriorated after certain gossip and slander. Shukrī heard that al-Māzinī criticised Shukrī's poetry and accused him of stealing ideas and expressions from European poets, especially the English Romantic poets. Subsequently, Shukrī, in his introduction to the sixth volume of his collection, criticised al-Māzinī. In 1921 the first version of their book al-Dīwān was published. The book included two chapters by al-Māzinī in which he described Shukrī as a mad person.


(28) A letter from the University of Sheffield to the present writer in May 1987.


(31) See Shukri's poem "Imra'a. Tukallimu Ba'lahā" (A Woman's Retort to her Husband;1960:141).

(32) Hazlitt (1910:7) refers to poetry as the "highest eloquence of passion, the most vivid form of expression that can be given to our conception of anything, whether pleasurable or painful, mean or dignified, delightful or distressing".

(33) For a similar notion in Shukri's poetry, see Shukri (1960:364, and 289). See also his poem "al-Shīr wa al-Tabi‘a” (Poetry and Nature; 1960:226-227).


(35) According to Shukri (1960:289) poetry expresses a variety of emotions and does not restrict itself to one single emotion.

(36) Shelley also declares that (1965:135) "poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will".

(37) See Coleridge Biographia Literaria Vol 11 (pp 12-14).

(38) In On Heroes and Hero Worship Carlyle (1965:313), declares: "Indeed at all times, Prophet and Poet, well understood, have much kindred of meaning. Fundamentally indeed they are still the same; in this most important respect especially, that they have penetrated both of them into the sacred mystery of the Universe:"

(39) Shukri expresses a similar view concerning the poet as prophet. See his collection (1960:287).


(41) The reader may refer to Wordsworth (1985:753-756) and to Coleridge (1907:202) for this point.

(42) See Coleridge Biographia Literaria Vol 11 (pp 12-14).
(43) See his poem "Usfūr al-Janna" (The Bird of Paradise; 1960:266).

(44) For the same theme in Wordsworth's poetry see his poem "Simon Lee the old Huntsman" (1981:300:303).

(45) Shukrī (1960:165) also expresses the idea that poetry provides man with pleasure.

(46) See Fakhrel Deen 91977:198).

(47) In his poem "All for love", for example, Byron links love with glory (1964:174).

I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory

Shukrī expresses the idea that love elevates him above this mortal life (1990: 507):

كل لعمرك ان الحب يرفعني عن الحياة وعن عيش لها فاني

Nay! by your life, love lifts me above life and the transience of life for its own sake.

(48) It is worth mentioning here that most Arab Romantic poets were influenced by Shelley's "Love's Philosophy". For more information on Shelley's popularity among Arab Romantic poets, especially this poem, see "Abd al-Hayy." Shelley and the Arabs" (1972:pp 72-89).

(49) Shukrī also associates love with worship as is clear in this line (1960:562):

لا تخجلن اذا علمت محبة تحكي الصلاة وحشبة القربان

Do not be ashamed if you experience love

- 115 -
Imitates prayer and is similar to sacrifice.

In this respect he resembles Shelley, especially in these lines (1964:202):

I can give not what men call love;
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the heavens reject not.
There are many conflicting ideas concerning al-Shabbi's exact date of birth. In his book al-Adab al-Tunisi fi l-Qarn al-Rabi' al-Hijri: (Tunisian Literature During the Fourth Century A.H) al-Sunusi designates the 24th of February 1909 as the date of al-Shabbi's birth. Kerrou in his book al-Shabbi Hayatuwa Shi'ruhu: (al-Shabbi: his Life and Poetry) states that al-Shabbi was born in March 1909 without, however, giving an exact date. Ghadira in his Muhawalat Ja'il Itar litarjamat al-Shabbi: (An Attempt to Establish a Framework for the Translation of al-Shabbi) says that al-Shabbi was born either on the 24th of February 1909, 24th of April in the same year. In spite of these differences as to the exact date of al-Shabbi's birth it is clear that all scholars agree that al-Shabbi was born in 1909.

Al-Shabbi's family is reputed to have had Sufi leanings. His great grandfather al-Shaikh 'Arafa al-Shabbi was a Sufi leader, a military man and a governor of an emirate whose capital was Qairawan. Al-Shabbi's father, Muhammad Bin al-Balgasim, was at that time the only Tunisian educated man to have studied at al-Azhar in Egypt. He also had the additional distinction of having been a student of the Egyptian reformer Muhammad 'Abdu. See Kerrou (1986, pp. 101-102).

Al-Shabbi married in 1931 his cousin Shahla al-Shabbi. It is not clear whether al-Shabbi had done this out of love or out of a desire to conform to the tradition of cousin-marriage in Arab society.

Al-Shabbi's poetry was not known to the majority of the Tunisians before 1927. In this year al-Shabbi published some of his poems in such Tunisian literary magazines as "al-Nahda.

Al-Shabbi's only collection of poetry Aghani al-Hayat (Songs of Life) was published twenty one years after his death in 1934, although he had been preparing this collection for publication since 1929. He was hoping to publish it under the auspices of the Apollo group in Egypt as he indicates in a letter to his friend al-Helewi. In May 1934 he had to postpone this matter, because of his poor health and some financial problems.

Al-Shabbi's prose work may be divided into two sections:

A MANUSCRIPTS:
A Study of Arab Poets).

(3) Al-Itirafat aw fî-l-Maqbara. (The Confession or in the Graveyard).

(4) Al-Sikkir. (The Drunk).

B PUBLICATIONS:

(1) "Al-Adab al-'Arabi fî l-Asr al-Hadîth" (Arabic Literature in Modern Times). This is an introduction to Abû Shâdî's collection of poetry entitled al-Yanbû'î (The Spring). Abû Shâdî, the Egyptian poet, who was the editor of Apollo Magazine, was a friend of al-Shâbbî. It is appropriate perhaps to mention here that al-Shâbbî published some of his poems in the above mentioned magazine. Indeed his fame and popularity in Eastern Arab countries is due to the fact that Arab readers came to know al-Shâbbî's poetry through this magazine.

(2) Al-Khayâl al-Shicrî 'inda al-'Arab (Poetic Imagination of the Arabs). This book may be regarded as the most important work of criticism written by al-Shâbbî. It was originally delivered as a lecture in 1929 in Nâdî Qudâmî al-Sâdiqîyân Tunis, then published posthumously as a book in 1962.

(51) The College Mosque of al-Zaituna was regarded as the highest institution of education in Tunis. Its position is similar to that of al-Azhar in Egypt. The College Mosque of al-Zaituna was built in 732 A.D. by Ubâd Allâh Ibn al-Habhâb. The building is situated in the area where Âsân Ibn al-Nu'mân prayed during his conquest of Tunisia in 698, during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Musta'in al-Lâhî. Al-Zaituna is now a mosque only.

(52) Al-Shâbbî started writing poetry when he was only thirteen years old while still a student in the College Mosque of al-Zaituna.

(53) Keats originally trained as apothecary.

(54) During his nine years of residence in Tunis, the
capital city of Tunisia, al-Shābbī was very active socially both in The College Mosque of al-Zaituna and in The Tunisian School of Law. With other Tunisian writers, he had participated in many literary occasions; he also was an active member of the Qudamā' al-Ṣādiqiyya Society, a literary club. He also became an active member in 1928 of the Muslim Youth Society. In the same year the students of the College Mosque of al-Zaitūna demanded certain reforms in the rules of administration of this institution. Al-Shābbī led the students' movements which set out to achieve these demands.

(55) Al-Shābbī's revolutionary attitude towards social and political reform in Tunisia is similar to that of Shelley. The similarity is most clear in their view that "force" is the only way for change in social and political institutions. They both agree about the necessity of this change which cannot be achieved except by a strong will which motivates action by the people.

This idea appears frequently in al-Shābbī's poetry. For example in "Irādat al-Hayāt" (The Will of Life), "al-Nabī al-Majhūl" (The Unknown Prophet) and "Nashīd al-Jabbār aw Hākadhā Ghanna Prometheus," (Sonnet of the Giant or Thus Sang Prometheus). Al-Shābbī uses philosophical symbols to show the necessity of force and strength in this world. In his poem "Falsafat al-Thuʿbān al-Muqaddas" (Philosophy of the Holy Snake), al-Shābbī regards "force" as the only hope and guarantee of existence for the weaker nations. The snake in the poems eats the nice and timid blackbird. At the point of death, the blackbird says "what did I do to deserve this punishment".

In the introduction to this poem al-Shābbī speaks of so-called "educated force" and the philosophy behind it. In this poem al-Shābbī compares the weak nations to the "blackbird" which is killed by the "snake", representing the colonial powers and their policies towards their colonies. The following lines illustrate the attitude of both the "blackbird" and the "snake" (1972:488):

إن السلام حقيقة مكذوبة
والعدل ملحة اللهيب الخابي.

لاد عدم، إلا أن تعادلت القوى.
وتعادم الإرهاب بالإرهاب.

فتسم الثعبان بسمة هاري.
واجب في ست وفرط كذاب:
"Peace is a false truth and justice is the philosophy of the fire which is dying out.
"There is no justice except when the protagonists are equally matched, and terror clashes with terror."
"The snake smiled mockingly and replied in a patently false way:
"O, You gullible chatterbox, I bewail your rebellious slanderous ignorance."
"The wise man forgives the gullible man when the ignorance of youth takes hold of his impetuous heart."

Shelley on the other hand speaks of the social and political condition of people in England. In his book A Philosophical View of Reform, Shelley refers to the misery and hardships which some people in England had to endure. He also mentions the necessity of change in the social and political structure of society by saying (1920:7) that the "will of the people to change their government is an acknowledged right in the constitution of England..................

(56) It seems that al-Shābbī initially attended a French and Arabic school in "Qābis", (500 K South of Tunis). However, he remained only two weeks in this school because his father moved him to the local Kuttāb. This may be due to his father's fear that al-Shābbī might fall under the influence of Western culture and civilization. See Kerrou (1971, pp 6-7).

(57) For more information on Shukrī's attitude towards beauty, the reader may refer to his poems "al-Ḥuštwa al-Jamāl" (Love and Beauty; 1960:290), "al-Ḥubb wa al-Khulūd" (Love and Eternity; 1960:269).
(59) This idea of the oneness of "beauty" and "truth" is a major theme in Keats, both in his letters and in his poetry. In a letter dated 4 July December 1818 (1818:19) he declares that he cannot "feel certain of any truth but from a clear perception of its beauty", and in another letter dated 8 October 1818 (1818:373) he says: "Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic of his own works".

(60) Shukri also associates truth with beauty. In his poem "al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Jamāl" (Truth and Beauty), Shukri expresses the view that when a man is miserable, he moves from beauty to truth. See Shukri (1960: 62).


CHAPTER FOUR

DEATH IN THE POETRY OF AL-MALĀ'IKA, AL-SHĀBĪ, SHUKRĪ,
KEATS AND SHELLEY.

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Death is a dominant theme in Romantic poetry. It holds an important place in the thought and emotions of Romantic poets who express different attitudes towards it. Some poets rebel against it and view it negatively because it deprives them of their loved ones. Others complain about its cruelty, while others welcome death, likening it to love and passion. However, few Romantic poets hold a consistent view concerning death. This point will be amplified later in this chapter.

Among modern Arab poets who have become famous for their love of death are al-Hamshari, al-Shabbi, Shukri and al-Malā'ika. The three latter poets may be regarded as the poets most concerned with death among the Arab Romantic poets. Al-Malā'ika deals with death in the following collections of poetry: Ma'sāt al-Ḥayāt, ʿAshiqat al-Layl, Shazayā wa ramād and Qarārat al-Muqāa. The first collection, i.e Ma'sāt al-Ḥayāt, best illustrates the poet's obsession with death, as we shall explain later. As far as Shukri is concerned, he deals with death in many poems in his diwans Anāshīd al-Ṣībā, al-Khāṭarāt, al-Afnān and Azhār al-Kharīf. Al-Shabbi's Aghāni al-Ḥayāt is full of references to death.
As has been mentioned above, death figures prominently in the poetry of al-Malā'ika, al-Shābī and Shukrī. A brief consideration of some of the events in their lives will, perhaps, help throw some light on this element in their poetry. Shukrī's attitude towards death was not, it seems, affected in any significant manner by any tragic events in his personal life. It had more to do with his state of mind. He was a pessimistic and unsettled person who was painfully aware of Egypt's crippling problems in his time, particularly the problems associated with British colonisation of Egypt and the lack of a national and political consensus. Both the British and Khedives exploited the differences which existed at the time to their advantage, ignoring the interests of Egypt and its people. Shukrī deeply felt all these problems and they seem to have affected him personally.

Al-Shābī's attitude towards death is formed largely as a result of many painful and tragic events in his life. To begin with al-Shābī suffered from some sort of heart condition, although the exact nature of his illness remains unknown. Al-Shābī's heart condition seems to have began early on in his life and it remained with him until his premature death at the age of twenty five (1). Al-Shābī mentions his heart condition in his letters to his friend al-Helewi and he talks about his visits to "fAin al-Drāhim" and other Tunisian resorts in order to
get some rest. The pain, suffering and uncertainty which he had gone through in his short life as a result of his physical illness permeates his letters and his poetry as well (2).

Al-Shābbī's attitude towards death seems to have been greatly influenced by the death of his 'girl friend' and his father. Al-Shābbī lost the former suddenly at a very young age. All we know for sure about the death of al-Shābbī's 'girl friend' is that she was struck by a sudden illness while al-Shābbī was away studying law and Islamic jurisprudence at al-Zaitūna. Her death was a traumatic experience for the poet who continued to remember her long after his marriage to his cousin Shahla (3).

Al-Shābbī's father died when the poet was in his early twenties. Al-Shābbī was attached to his father and he suffered greatly during his father's long and drawn out illness (4). In addition to being a most tragic event emotionally, the death of al-Shābbī's father placed many responsibilities on his shoulders and, as the eldest son, he had to manage the financial affairs of his family and take on the role of moral guide to his brothers and sisters. His poem "Ya Mawt " (O Death!) illustrates the poet's feelings towards death (5). The death of the poet's father also prevented him from pursuing his love of the arts and poetry. Furthermore, it prevented the poet from spending sufficient time in
the countryside owing the fact that he had to be present at the family home to attend to his family's needs. The poet's feelings concerning this issue are expressed in his poem "Quyūd al-Aḥlām" (Fetters of Dreams).

Clearly, al-Shābī's illness, coupled with the deaths of his beloved and his father, had a profound effect on the poet's outlook on life. His beloved's death deprived him of her emotional support which he badly needed and the death of his father placed on him heavy responsibilities which he was not yet fully ready to shoulder, owing to his physical condition and his psychological state. It, therefore, seems reasonable to conclude that al-Shābī's poetry was influenced by the tragic circumstances of his early years.

Similarly, al-Malā'ika's attitude towards death may be linked to her personal experiences. The first experience which brought her face to face with death was the death of her aunt's husband. In spite of the fact that he was not very young, or very close to her, his death affected her and made her think about death. She realized after this event that the joys and pleasures one experiences in life are transient, this experience left the poet with a lasting impression of the cruelty of life(6).
The cholera epidemic which struck Egypt in 1947 also had a profound effect on her outlook on life. Al-Malāʾika listened to the radio news announcing the constantly increasing number of dead people, and this filled her with both fear and indignation: fear of death, which could not be stopped, and indignation at the miserable destiny awaiting Man and his helplessness in the face of death (7).

Al-Malāʾika's fear of death was intensified after the death of her aunt, to whom she was very close. She saw death as a cruel thing which deprived people of their friends and wrote two poems to express her feelings on this occasion. They are "Ilā 'Ammatī al-Rāḥila" (To my Departed Aunt) and "Hal Tarjaʿin" (Will you Come back?).

The other event which contributed greatly to al-Malāʾika's attitude towards death was the death of her mother. This event was a great shock to her. She wrote three poems describing her feelings concerning this shattering event in her life: "Ughniya li-l-Ḥūzn" (Song to Sadness), "Maqdām al-Ḥūzn" (The Arrival of Sadness) and "al-Zahra al-Saudāʿ" (The Black Flower). This is how al-Malāʾika describes the effect of her mother's death on her (1979:9): "In the year 1953, there was an event which shook my life to its very roots . . . I saw the moment of my mother's death as a dreadful occurrence"(8).
In losing Umm Nizār' al-Malā'ika lost not only a parent but also a friend and the mother figure. Al-Malā'ika's mother, was a poet herself and played a crucial role in the upbringing of al-Malā'ika and in directing her towards poetry and literature.

Among the English Romantic poets, Keats is the most comparable to al-Shabbī in terms of the events he experienced in his life.

Keats experienced bereavement at a very early age in his life. He was nine years when his father died in a tragic accident. Soon afterwards Keats' mother deserted her family leaving them to be looked after by their grandmother in order to marry the man with whom she fell in love. This marriage was short lived and ended in divorce and much heart-ache for her. When she grew tired of her affairs, she returned to her family only to become a victim of tuberculosis, an illness which claimed the lives of two of her sons, John and Tom. Keats was only fourteen when she died. His mother's death at this stage in his life caused him a great deal of pain. During her illness, Keats looked after her, carrying out all the duties of the sick room, administering the medicine and feeding the patient. His experience in this respect is similar to the experience of al-Shabbī and al-Malā'ika who had to look after their ill father and mother respectively, at a young age in their lives.
Keats also looked after his brother during his illness. The death of his brother Tom left Keats distraught, as letters to friends from this date show. Keats' own poor health began to deteriorate in about 1819-1820. Keats knew he had T.B; and felt that his chances of a complete recovery were practically non-existent. Therefore, he knew he could expect to die while still quite young. Al-Shābbī also knew that his illness was fatal and that he would die young.

Keats entertained a variety of emotions with regard to his mother while he was a child: jealousy, protectiveness and love. He was also affected by her charm and beauty. His mother's remarriage and her domestic instability had a negative effect on him for many years to come. The desertion of this beloved and delusive parent inspired him with a deep distrust for the human race in general, and for young and beautiful women in particular. For him, to distrust life was to cherish the idea of death. Keats' constant death wish may well go back to this early event in his life.
LIFE AND DEATH

Most Romantic poets complain about the contrasting rules and traditions of their societies which clash with their own very romantic ideas of freedom and what a society should be like. Thus there was a great divide between their dreams and their often bitter reality. Some Romantic poets came to see death as the only solution to this irreconcilable conflict; yet others sought to achieve a balance between their views of death, on the one hand, and life, on the other. However, not all poets thought of death as the antithesis of life; many realized that their dreams were unfulfillable in this life, so they looked to the next life as an answer to all their hopes and dreams.

Dreams and aspirations are not always realized or realizable. Romantic poets in general are fully aware of this, but this awareness still does not protect them from the feeling of disappointment, grief and sadness which they undergo when their dreams fail to materialise. The disappointment which these poets often experience is reflected in their attitude towards life and death. It is this attitude which we shall examine in this chapter.
As a young woman, al-Mala'ika had a great love for life. She was an idealist and a highly sensitive person. She dreamed of a life full of joy and happiness and was hopeful she would achieve it one day.

Romantic poets are generally renowned for their high sensitivity and idealism. This is as much true of the Arab Romantic poets who will be dealt with in this thesis as it is of such English Romantic poets as Keats and Shelley. On the credit side, sensitivity and idealism often enable people to experience life in its fullness, great variety and potential. On the debit side, they often lead to disappointment and frustration, not least because of the universal difficulty of realising "ideals" and the feeling of isolation idealistic people often experience in their lives. For example, al-Mala'ika thinks that her delicate sensitivity isolated her from other people who do not share her view of the importance of emotion in the life of the individual. She also thinks that her delicate sensitivity made her a stranger in this world (1981: 518):

O fire of my gentle emotions, O, you that are strange amongst humans.
Al-Shabbi adopts a similar position. He believes that his great sensitivity brought him a great deal of sadness and disappointment, particularly because he could not cope with the fact that feelings experienced by people of his type are normally dismissed by ordinary people. Al-Shabbi considers himself to be a wretched person because of his sensitivity and intense feelings (1972:251):

الشلبي الشقي من كان متهني
في حساستي، ورقة نفس

The miserable person is one who is like me in the sensitivity and tenderness of their heart.

Al-Mala'ika and al-Shabbi also stress the importance of emotion in their lives. The poetry of these two poets emphasizes the importance of sensitivity and emotions in human life, particularly the life of the poet. In addition to containing such pronouncements, their poetry is characterised by its sensitivity and by the role played by emotions in it. In this respect they differ from Shukri who does not exceed the limit of declaring the importance of emotions and sensitivity in poetry. In other words, Shukri plays the role of the theoretician rather than that of the practitioner with respect to the
importance of emotion and sensitivity in poetry. Shukrī's theoretically orientated views of the role of emotion and sensitivity in poetry may be illustrated by the following (1960:335-6):

The heart throbs, and poetry is one of its pulses.
Poetry is the tune of a singer played on the soul.

Also (1960:226)

Poetry is nothing but an excited heart
poetry only flows when the poet is moved.

The glorification of emotion and sensitivity among such Romantic poets as al-Malā'ika and al-Shābbī, and the attendant dangers of disillusionment and disappointment to which these two types of feeling often lead, made the poets concerned feel alienated from their society and
intensified their yearning for a Utopia which does not exist. Realising their predicament and the feeling of isolation experienced by them, these poets developed a pessimistic outlook on life.

Al-Malā'ika likens life to the colour of the eyes of a dead man and feasts that life is full of fear and anxiety and behind its smile lurks the shadow of death (1979:84):

قولوا الحياة
هي لون عيني ميت،
هي وقع خطو الفاتل المفلت
أيامها المتعددة
كالمستفح المسوم ينضح، بالمحات
احلامها بسمات مخادة خدمة الاليون
وراء بسمتها المنون

They said life is:
The colour of a corpse's eye
The footsteps of a furtive killer
Its wrinkled days are
A poisoned coat oozing death;
Its dreams are the smiles of a female demon

Behind which lies death.
Similarly, al-Shabbi presents us with a dark and pessimistic picture of life. Life according to him may be described as an 'ode to sadness'; it is also full of fears and terror. Real happiness in life is a distant and unrealisable dream; thus man's happiness in this world is a transient and illusory thing which hides behind it the bitter reality of life (1972:141-142):

O, my friend, Life is a song of sadness, so recite my mourning of life. Life's cup is full of tears, so pour my beloved over the morning. The wadi of darkness is overflowing with fear; how distant are the smiles of the heart. Don't be deceived by people's smiles, for behind the rays are the scalding flames.
Shukrī likewise thinks that life is but a short dream and links it to a bird which flies away and never returns (1960:519):

غير ان الحياة كالحلم يمضي، إنما العصر طائر لن يعودا

Life passes away like a dream and it is but a bird which will never return.

He expresses his amazement at how people long for life in spite of the fact they do not understand its meaning and significance (1960:185):

فيا عجباً كيف نرجع الحياة، ولد يعرف المرء معنى الحياة

O, How strange! How we long for life when one does not know its meaning.

The attitudes of these three Arab Romantic poets towards life, in terms of its relation to death, is similar to the attitude expressed by Shelley in his poem "Adonais". In this poem Shelley likens life to a dome made up of different types of coloured glass which "stains the radiance of eternity". Shelley views life as the antithesis of eternity; whereas the former is transient and lacks purity, the latter is ever-lasting.
and pure. Life is a short and fragile thing which death breaks to pieces (1907:438):

Life, like a dome of many coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments-

Both Shukrī and al-Malā'ika try to weigh the merits and demerits of life in order to arrive at an informed judgement as to which one to choose. In his poem "Bayna al-Ḥayāt wa-l-Maut" (Between Life and Death), Shukrī expresses his hope that death will provide him with the comfort he cannot attain in this world. But this somewhat positive attitude towards death must be considered against the feeling of fear which the poet experiences when he thinks of death. The poet is, thus, completely paralysed, unable to make up his mind whether to choose life or death (1960:213):

أعمال صرف الدهر في غير مطمئن ولكني أرجو من الموت راحة
وللعيش إلا الذل في نوبته ولكن كالخمر تحلو للخرب
فها أسفل بين العيش والموت واقف...

I deal with the vicissitudes of time without
ambitions and do what the destinies dictate to me.
I ask death to provide me with comfort, although
I get frightened when I hear its footsteps or think of it.
Life is nothing but a wolf with blood stained teeth
life has murderous teeth and paws
Life is like wine which appeals to the drinker
even though he was deprived from intellect and thought.
Here I am transfixed between life and death?
Is there anyone to tell me when I will depart?

The inability to choose between life and death is a
dominant theme in al-Malā'ika's poetry. In her poem "
"Uṣṭūrat Wādi al-Nisyān" (The Myth of the Valley of
Forgetfulness), al-Malā'ika compares life with death and
sees the former as the realm of cruelty, anxiety and
continual change, and the latter as that of
forgetfulness, nothingness and oblivion. Both are very
painful to her (1981:187):

المعيشة ما صافو قوي
وشقاء الممات اقوي واهمي
في ظلم الحياة تضطرب لا
ن ونفسي عما قليل ونفسي
كل عمر قصيدة كتبها
في كتاب الحياة كالفارزمان
وغدا، يفمي الكتاب جميعاً
وتذوب الحروف في اللامكان

- 137 -
The pain of life, O river banks, is strong
but the wretchedness of death is stronger and harsher.
In the darkness of life we feel confused
but we will shortly perish and be forgotten

Man's life is a poem which the hand of
time inscribed in the book of life.
Tomorrow everything in the book will be erased
and the letters will dissolve in the coffins.

However, al-Mala'i'ka sometimes chooses life and
prefers it to death which she views with horror and
revulsion. This preference is most clear in her poem
"Bajna Fakkayy al-Maut" (Between the Jaws of Death)
which she wrote while she was bed-ridden with some sort
of fever. The poet conjures up a vision of death and its
horrors, and soon realises that her love of life is
stronger than her love of death and whatever comfort from
worldly miseries it might bring her. She fervently begs
death to slacken its pace and to be kind to her youth.
In her unreadiness to face death, she starts to enumerate
the good things in life proclaiming her attachment to it.
She implores death to give her time to enjoy the bright
light of day and the music of her lute; she also asks
death to show mercy towards her and unashamedly declares
that her heart has fallen in love with life
(1981:494-496):
Here I am, between the jaws of death like a heart which is still throbbing with the love of life; Like eyes which are thirsty for the pleasures of the world secretly calling on the charming past time (I am) still like a bud on time's branches, fresh with dreams and hopes. So Death, it would be a great shame if you buried my youth in the world of the dead.

O Death! Halt before you set on my corpse your everlasting silence O, let me fill my eyes with the lights
have mercy on my poetic heart.  
O, let me say farewell to my lute,  
it was a faithful friend to me.

* * * *

Have mercy on me, O Death, and pity  
a heart smitten with the love of life

Perhaps the most distressing and painful thing about death, according to al-Malā'ika, is the fact that she will not be remembered after she dies. She mentions this in several places in her poetry, as the following line from the above mentioned poem illustrates (ibid:497):

وستحو الأيام ذكر فتاة  
شغفتها الله الشعر حبا

Time will erase the memory of a young woman  
smitten with love by the Goddess of poetry.

Al-Malā'ika tries to convince herself to accept the idea of leaving this world by reminding herself of the loneliness and suffering she has endured in it, but all to no avail. Furthermore she tries to make herself hate life and tries to view it with contempt, albeit unsuccessfullY. This attitude on the part of al-Malā'ika may be exemplified by the following lines (ibid:499-500):

- 140 -
Why cry over the world, 
although you have lived like a stranger 
within its bounds.
O, you wretched person, life is a tragedy 
which excites sadness and causes the heart to cry.
Show your contempt of life and merrily proceed to the world of the dead, O my tender heart!

If we compare the attitudes of our three poets towards life and death with the attitude held by Keats towards the same matter we shall notice that Keats firmly believes that man's attachment to, and love of, life is far stronger than his desire to die. Man's desire to live is, according to Keats, connected to his instinct for survival. Furthermore, Keats differs from al-Malā'ika specifically in that, whilst he concentrates on the ordinary man's views on life and death, she largely concentrates on what she thinks and feels about death. In other words, al-Malā'ika differs from Keats in being selfcentred with regard to her view concerning life and
death (1908:283):

The transient pleasures as a vision seem,
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die

How strange it is that man on earth should roam,
And lead a life of woe, But not forsake
His rugged path; nor dare he view alone
His future doom which is but to awake.

Both Shukri and al-Malā'ika wanted to commit suicide, but they both refrained from doing so for different reasons. Shukri complains about the harshness of life and acknowledges that death might give him some respite from the difficulties and problems he faces in life. However, he refrains from putting an end to his life because of his faith and fear of God (1960:32):

إني للاضري ان في الموت راحة واجبة حتى كاني لدا دري
ولولا تفقي لد دملك البس صرفه للاوردني الناس علي الملك الوغر

I do know that there is comfort in death but I avoid it as though I didn't know. Had I not been a pious person who cannot be thwarted by desp

despair would have led me down the rough path.
In her "romantic period", al-Malā'ika does not seem to possess the faith of Shukrī which prevented him from ending his life. In her poem "ʿala ʿHāffat al-Huwa" (On the Edge of the Abyss), al-Malā'ika expresses her wish to end her life. This wish springs from her dissatisfaction with life and disdain for it. But these feelings prove to be much weaker than her fear of the silence of the grave and the pain of death. Whereas "faith" is the force which prevents Shukrī from taking his life away, al-Malā'ika is stopped from pursuing the same end by her weakness and fear of death (1981:514-516):

Ha ana fi jibi, fi moyqui
Yifqeq qilibi bilshidi bi-nilheb
Tirdi yisrakh bi-rajmi ar-jami
Lilshur, lila aljaml, fim al-herb?

وخلف نفسى همتة كالمصير
يكاد يفقيها النداء الجديد
تهتف سي! هيا فكفردى
احنى على جرح الحياة المبدد

الليل بدي، ها أنا لم ازل
بين جوابين، ونفسي احتقار
اريد ان أحبب. ولكنني
احسن بالثورة والاحترام

هيا الى الموت، الى صمته

- 143 -
Here I am in my cowardice, and
With a heart pulsating with fragrance and flame.
My hesitation calls me back to
Poetry, dreams - why are you running away?

* * *

There is a whisper like the echo beyond my soul
Which the new call is about to destroy.
It calls me: Come on! The hand of death
Is more kind to life's fatal wound.

* * *

The Night knows! Here I am, standing transfixed between
Two forms of madness. My soul is full of contempt.
I want to live, but
I feel the revolt and contempt (inside me).

* * *

Be off with you! Proceed to death, to its silence!
What is it I fear now! what is this pain!
Shortly, my harsh treatment of life will
Come to an end, and my regret will erupt.

These lines clearly illustrate the state of mind of
the poet. She is unable to make a choice between life
and death, although life is full of miseries and pain and
death will put an end to all that. However, the poet
cannot tolerate the "silence" of death and the pain with
which it is associated. Furthermore, she openly admits
that if she chooses death, she does so out of escapism.
Consequently, she cannot be said to be choosing death
positively. The poet expresses her situation concerning
the issue in hand as follows (ibid:516):
I returned to the temple, not as a borne Corpse but a walking body. Mocking Myself, and what has happened, Showing contempt to my remaining feelings.

The fact that al-Malāʾika accepts life because she cannot choose life positively indicates that she still prefers life to death. This attachment to life on al-Malāʾika's part is mainly related to the fact that life in her eyes is the realm of light and poetry, while death means the world of forgetfulness, dark graves and worms. Al-Malāʾika's position on this issue is clearly expressed in the following lines of poetry (1981:682-683):

weit للعبد، لا جنة
محمولة بل جدًا- ماغًا-
أي خير من نفس محا جرى
وازدي احساس الباقية

إي، نفس ترى يهون عليها
أن توارى في لجة النسيان؟
ولكن هذه الحياة، شقاء-
من شراء، سرحة للإلفان؟
إي، قلب يرضى مغادرة الارض بلا حسرة ولا احزان

145 -
What soul would a
of forgetfulness.
Let this life be a life of misery.
is there any one who feels comfortable in the shroud.
What heart would accept to leave this
earth without distress and sadness.

Shukri often expresses his exasperation with life.
Life for him is full of deception, and there is no
guarantee that what it promises will be any different
from what it doles out to the poet. The poet vacillates
between despair and hope. However, he regards death as
the only refuge from the feeling of boredom which he
experiences (1960:161):

At times, I fall madly in love with life, then I detest it.
O, how man feels lost between hope and despair.
I am madly in love with a life full of deceit,
as I have become sick of a life which will
not materialise.
Nothing can protect me against this boredom
except for a death which separates
the soul from (life's) afflictions.
Shukri does not succumb to the feeling of despair which he experiences in his daily life. He acknowledges that life is a constant struggle against difficulties; nevertheless, he expresses his attachment to life and wishes he could relive his life again with all its miseries and good moments (1960:299):

The act of living is like a war and life is an enormous battle, the life of the inhabitants of the world is like sleep. I am not complaining that I have drunk from life's bitterness would that life could be repeated. I would drink the sweet and bitter of it, for the drink of those who are enamoured with life is sweet.

It is clear from what been said above that both al-Malā'ika and Shukri prefer life to death, albeit for different reasons. Both acknowledge that life is full of difficulties and miseries, and both point out that death can put an end to all these difficulties and miseries. However, Shukri seems to be more positive than al-Malā'ika in his preference of life to death. Unlike al-Malā'ika, he is not frightened by death. His faith and belief in God stop him from taking his life away. Al-Malā'ika is frightened by death. Furthermore, faith plays no part in her deliberation concerning life and
death. The difference between these two poets may be related to the marked differences between their personal circumstances. Al-Malā'i'ika, as has been explained earlier in this chapter, experienced personal grief as a result of the death of her aunt and her mother. There are no comparable personal experiences in Shukrī's life.

The personal circumstances of al-Malā'i'ika are more comparable to those of al-Shābbī's, than they are to Shukrī's, as we have pointed out above. However, al-Shābbī's response to his tragic experiences is different from that of al-Malā'i'ika. Al-Shābbī's hope and zest for life permeated his poetry. He overcomes the tragic events in his life and resumes his quest for happiness, joy, and love in life, as his poem "al-Ī'tirāf" (The Confession), addressed to his deceased father, illustrates, (1972:451-452):

ما كنت أحسب بعد موتك، يا أبي

ومشاعري عميا باللاحزان

أتي ساطما للحياة، واحشي

من شهرا الموجوج النحوان

واعود للدنيا بقلب خافق

للحب، واللافراح، واللاحان

ولكل ما في الكون من صورالمنى

وغرائب الالهواء واللاشجان

- 148 -
I didn't reckon that after your death, O father,
while my feelings blinded with sadness,
that I would be thirsty for life, from whose
glowing and intoxicating river I would drink,
And that I would return to life with a heart beating
for love, happiness and music,
For all the visions of hope,
for our strange inclinations and misfortunes in
this world.

The poet ends this poem with a determined message
addressed to his fellow human beings; he declares that
pessimism and the rejection of life are alien to human
beings, (ibid:452):

 وإذا التناوّم بالحياة ورفضها
ضرب من اليهتان والهذيان
إن أنت أدم في فرارة نفسه
عبد الحياة الصادق الإيمان

Pessimism in life and its rejection is
a kind of slander and folly
Man, in the depth of his heart, is
Life's faithful slave.

This message is reiterated in another poem in which
the poet points out that life's lure for man is eternal
and ever-lasting, (1972:397):

- 149 -
The magic of life is eternal, it doesn't perish.

Al-Mala'ika is notoriously inconsistent in her attitude towards death. While, at times, she is frightened of death on the grounds that it is stronger than man, at other times, she is full of contempt and disdain for it and regards it as weak and wretched in comparison with man. In her poem "Qabrun Yatafajjar" (A Grave is Shattering) al-Mala'ika refuses to accept that her heart will be imprisoned by the dull and solid grave.

In this poem, the poet imagines that she was dead and buried in the dust. She then challenges the grave, telling it that although it had imprisoned her, it could not capture her heart, sensitive soul and feelings. Even her pure and rebellious corpse would escape from the clutches of the grave, (1979:167-172):

شاديت أكادس الرمال تفجري
لن تدفني جسي النقي - الناشرا
وهتفتبا روح الممات: تمرقي
لن تحسي قلبي الجريء الماضي
وصرخت بالحرص الدنيعة: ارفعي
من قلب هذا الطين روحى الشاعرا

- 150 -
I called on heaps of sand 'explode, you will not bury my rebellious pure corpse'.
I called out, 'O Spirit of Death, be torn, you will not imprison my scornful daring heart'.
I yelled at the base earth: 'Raise from the heart of this dust my poetic soul. My heart beats and my blood gushes out its feeling under the dust'.

The poet visits the grave and expresses her dislike for its stillness. The poet's resistance succeeds in forcing the grave to give in.

The grave was reverberating with noise and could not cope under the weight of my feelings. I will not tolerate the stillness of the mud around me.
The poet gains in confidence and expresses her determination to destroy the grave, breaking its rocks into small pieces. She also shows her determination to 'kill death'. Once the battle is over and victory is achieved, the poet continues her journey into the future, with her fears, sighs and happiness. She also resumes her function as a poet, composing and publicising her poetry in the silence of the night. The glittering stars of the night bear witness to her victory, (ibid:171):

**I will cause the small grave to explode, turning it into stones and fly from my near past to my tomorrow, I will slaughter weak Death and return with my fears, happiness and sighs. I will broadcast my music in the silence of the darkness. O, shining stars of the night, bear witness!**
The poet finally achieves her victory. The grave is destroyed and its dust is scattered in the darkness of the night. The poet is glad to be alive again, and offers her poetry as the ultimate proof of her victory (ibid:171-2):

I called on the heaps of dust to explode so they did in the dark evening

O, Earth I am alive! This is my tune!
This is the song of my articulate heart

In this poem al-Malā'ika chooses life. Death here is not regarded as the ultimate remedy for her miseries, but as a repugnant, hateful and oppressive force which seeks to imprison both her body and soul. Al-Malā'ika does not seem to mind the imprisonment of her body, but rejects the imprisonment of her spirit. Put differently, al-Malā'ika rejects the attempt by death to capture and silence her emotions and sensitive feelings and, above all, her burning and unquenchable desire to compose poetry. One often gets the distinct impression that poetry is the prime force which motivates
the poet and moves her to reject death in favour of life.

According to al-Shabbi, death befalls individuals and nations. In the context of nation, death is synonymous with submission and resignation in the face of oppression. Al-Shabbī was living at a time when his country, Tunisia, was suffering from the excesses and oppression of French colonial rule. The degradation, disdain and contempt visited upon his people by their colonial masters and their rulers relegated them, in his opinion, to the status of slaves. The inability of the Tunisian people to gauge the full implication of colonial rule and their political, social and historical obligation towards their country rendered them as good as dead in the eyes of al-Shabbī. This view is expressed in many poems. Al-Shabbī rejects the complacent and submissive attitude which his people displayed towards French rule. In his poem "Ila al-Sha'b" (To the Nation) he scolds the Tunisians for having lost heart in their struggle against the two ills of oppression and colonialism. He considers them to be lifeless and "dead" because they lost their ambition and ability to dream. Real death is more palatable to the poet than the humiliating condition of his people (1972:426-436):

اين ياشعب قلبك الخافق الحساس
اين الطموح، والاحلام؟

- 154 -
O, (my) People! Where is your sensitive beating heart? where are the ambitions and Dreams?

Where is the resolve to live? there is nothing now but death silence, distress and darkness
Wasted life, empty heart
and blood not stirred by the pain

What sort of life is this? ( A life may be less bearable than death)

There he choose to remain with the dead, in a grave of his past, not caring, Accepting the grave as a dwelling place in which the repeated days of his life vanish.

- 155 -
So stick to the grave, for it is a house similar to you in the silence and desolation of its heart.

You are nothing in life, so leave it and head towards death which does not need you.

Al-Mala'ika touches upon the same idea in her poetry, although she approaches it from a different angle. In her poem "Fi wādī al-‘Abīd" (In the Valley of the Slaves), the poet uncompromisingly states her wish not to live with people who are like slaves or people who are as good as dead; she likens such people to corpses or to lifeless people who are in a state of dead slumber,

I don't want to live in the valley of the slaves
Among dead people... even though they have not been buried.  
Among corpses bound by the captivity induced by fetters; 
And statues rejected by onlookers.  
Among ape-like humans 
Ferocious hyenas that can't be trusted.
Forever broadcasting to them my poetry,
While they are in a deep sad sleep.

The difference between al-Shabbi and al-Mala'ika with respect to their rejection of their people's submissive attitude and inertia may be stated as follows. While al-Mala'ika regards her people as good as dead because in her eyes, they fail to respond to her poetry in the manner she would have liked them to, al-Shabbi scolds his people for being politically inactive and unaware of their humiliating conditions. It may be that this difference springs from the different conditions which obtained in Tunisia and Iraq in the first half of this century. It is, however, more likely that al-Mala'ika's position differs from that of al-Shabbi because of her self-centred outlook on life. While one cannot be absolutely certain in offering this as an explanation, still it seems to be a plausible one because it accords with the self-centred nature of the poet, as is clear in the many instances in which she extols her poetic talent in her poetry.

Although al-Mala'ika chooses life over death, she often complains about the meaninglessness of life. In her poem "Ajrās Saudā'" (Black Bells), al-Mala'ika expresses her extreme dissatisfaction with life and its pointlessness. She gives a fairly exhaustive list of the
large number of the experiences that man undergoes in life; triumph, satisfaction, happiness, joy and arrogance on the one hand, and defeat, frustration, sadness, pain and humiliation, on the other. Eventually, Man comes increasingly closer to death as a result of losing his zest for life and his failure to pursue his dreams vigorously. His inertia and lack of drive renders his life meaningless, (1979:106-108):

Let us die. Life has dried up. These empty glasses mock us. Why should we linger here? haven't we had our fill,
become bored and drunk to our heart's content?
Haven't we experienced affluence, tasted the wine of victory
and love pulsating with hope?
Haven't we experienced the most crushing pain
and sleep after a long cry?
Haven't we had enough of the world, and all who are in it,
with contempt, leaving full of scorn.

Why should we remain here? I hear
death calling to us. Why don't we answer.

In "Ajrās Saudā" (Black Bells), al-Malā'ika appears to have been influenced by Shelley in his poem "Death". In this poem Shelley expresses the view that death is inevitable. It is the ultimate experience; it sets its "mark" and "seal" on man's total being: his person, his feelings and all he knows. This process is carried out in stages. First, man loses his search for happiness and pleasure; then he loses his hopes and, finally, his fear, including his fear of death. Once happiness, hopes and fear are gone man's body is claimed by death. Clearly, death, according to Shelley, takes place in two stages: first man dies spiritually then he dies physically, (1907:616):

Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel
On all we knew and all we fear,

First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fear—and when
These are dead, the debt is due
Dust claims dust—and we die too.

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The same process is expressed in al-Malā'ika's poem "Ajrās Saudā'" (Black Bells). However, there is an important difference between Shelley and al-Malā'ika. Shelley regards death as an inevitable conclusion to man's life. Succumbing to it is not regarded as a sign of defeat or as way of escaping from the calamities of life and its drudgery. Al-Malā'ika, however, seems to regard death as the last chapter in a life which gradually loses its meaning. This idea of the meaninglessness of life is not expressed by Shelley who accepts death as an inevitable fact in life.
FEAR OF DEATH

The previous discussion shows that the Romantic poets dealt with in this thesis express different views concerning life and death. We have also seen that they all choose life and reject death, albeit for different reasons. One of the themes which occurs in their poetry, particularly in the poetry of al-Malā'ika, is fear of death, not merely because death puts an end to a poet's physical existence, but because it stops him from composing poetry. Al-Malā'ika, for example, expresses her willingness to try to love life, and to accept whatever misfortunes are visited upon her by the vicissitudes of time, simply because her continual physical existence ensures that she will be able to write poetry, (1981:217):

واحب الحياة ما شئت من عجب
ل نشيدي وإن رمتني السنون

I should love life, as you wish for the sake of my poetry, even though calamities would afflict me.
Clearly, poetry for al-Malā'ika, is the justification of her 'spiritual' existence, in the sense that it endows her life with meaning and purpose. The poet openly admits this fact when she declares that her life is worthless without her poetry, (1981:218):

وإذا ما أتممت لحظي كم هم
وي فإذا أريد من حياتي؟
ليس في الكون بعد شعري ما يعجب
في فؤادي فرحبا بالمات

When I have finished writing poetry, as I desire, what else do I want from life? There is nothing in this universe which appeals more to my heart. So welcome to death!

The same theme is found in Shukrī who appears to view the prospect of death with sadness because he will not be able to achieve the fame he deserves for his poetry, (1960:234):

أنت الموت لم أنبه بشعري ولم يعلم سواد الناس أمري؟

Will I face death, not having achieved fame for my poetry, and the majority of people have not learnt of my position?
This fear of death as a force which puts an end to a poet's career and his ability to discharge his message to fellow human beings is expressed in Keats' sonnet, (1908:303):

When I have fear that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain

Let us now turn to al-Malā'ika and examine her fear of death both on the spiritual and physical level. Al-Malā'ika's fear of death as a force which thre her physical existence is an ever present theme in her early Romantic period, i.e the period during which she composed her collections: Maṣāt al-Ḥayāt, Āshiqat al-Layl and Shaṣṣāyā wa Ramād.

Al-Malā'ika sees the hand of death at work everywhere: in the songs of birds, the darkness of sad night and in the thundering roar of the wind, (1981:211):

ومعانى الفناء الشابة حو
لي في كل ما شراى عيونى
في دوي الرياح في نغم الطيب
ر وفي ظلما المساء الحزين

I sense the meanings of death around me

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in all that my eyes see,
In the reverberation of the wind, the songs of birds
and in the darkness of the sad evening

In another poem, she address 'extinction' and
'nothingness' and begs them to leave her alone and to
stop manifesting themselves in every aspect of her
existence. The poet feels threatened by this ever
present and all-engulfing power of death, (1981:177):

يا معاني الزوال والعدم الرا
شع رحمأاك وأرفقي بصبايأا
لا تطلبي علىي من كل شيء
في وجوئي فقد سكنت آسيا

O, meanings of awesome extinction and
nothingness, be merciful and take pity on my youth.
Don't look at me from every corner of
my existence; I have got bored with my sorrows.

Many critics have tried to ascribe this fear of, and
obsession with, death on the part of al-Malā'ika to the
tragic events which surrounded her early life,
paticularly the death of her aunt and her mother. The
death of the latter, affected the poet very deeply. She
felt mortally wounded by this experience, and her outlook on life was decisively shaped and formed by it. The poet herself mentions this and states its effects in this manner (1981:7) "Death seemed to be life's ultimate tragedy. This feeling, which I had since early childhood, lasted with me until a very late stage in my life". As a result of this al-Malā'ika was completely overwhelmed and consumed by her fear of death. It almost threatened to stop her future career as a poet. This is how she explains this dilemma in her life, (1972:3):

"I kept vehemently rejecting the idea of man's extinction which, like a razor blade, made gashing wounds in my body. I was also tormented by the idea that, after death, we will be eaten up by worms, and that we will become skeletons...these thoughts nearly destroyed my mental faculties and almost threatened to put an end to my future".

Al-Malā'ika claims that her fear of, and pessimistic attitude towards, death was partly as a result of her reading of Schopenhauer. In this respect it is difficult to accept without questioning al-Malā'ika's assertion that she was influenced by Schopenhauer in this manner.
A careful reading of Schopenhauer reveals that there is a subtle difference between this philosopher's views of death, and his attitude towards it, and the views and attitudes promulgated by al-Malā'ika concerning the same phenomenon. On the one hand, Schopenhauer stresses that pain and suffering are more associated with life than with death. In actual fact, he goes even further and declares that pain and death are completely different from each other, (1883; Vol 1:363):

"What we fear in death is by no means the pain, for it lies clearly on this side of death, and, moreover, we often take refuge in death from pain, just as, on the contrary, we sometimes endure the most fearful suffering merely to escape death for a while, although it would be quick and easy. Thus we distinguish pain and death as two entirely different evils."

Al-Malā'ika associates pain and sufferings with life, but, unlike Schopenhauer, she does not consider death and pain to be unrelated. Furthermore, Schopenhauer advocates the view that the difference between death and sleep, if any, is not a qualitative one; (1883; Vol 111:267) "Nature's great doctrine of immortality... seeks to teach us that there is no radical difference between sleep and death, but the one
endangers existence just as little as the other." This view, which is found in the poetry of both Shelley and Keats, is completely absent from al-Malā'ika's poetry.

Al-Malā'ika and Schopenhauer differ from each other in another respect. While al-Malā'ika regards physical existence as a pre-requisite for spiritual existence, Schopenhauer regards death as just one single occurrence in an existential continuum. The difference according to him, between pre-death existence and post-death existence, merely concerns the manner in which one is manifested.

The similarity between al-Malā'ika and Schopenhauer pertains to their over-all pessimism, but not to the content of their ideas concerning life and death. Put differently, this similarity holds between the atmosphere which pervades their works, rather than the intellectual and philosophical contents of these works. Al-Malā'ika relates pessimism to the fact that she has failed to unravel the secrets of life and, also, to the fact that death is unstoppable, (1981:512):

كِنُون سِرِهِ لَدَيِّ
كُلُّ مَا فِيهِ إِلَى الْقَبْرِ يَقُود
مَا الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ لَنَامَنَ اِمْلَأَ؟

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O, fisherman, existence has shrunk in my eyes
What can be done about a universe which does not reveal its secret.

And in which everything leads to the grave
What hope remains to us?

Al-Mala'ika ridicules man's enchantment with life, which springs from his lack of understanding of the true nature of life and of his misplaced hope that the secrets of life can be revealed to us. Al-Mala'ika equates life with darkness, pointing out how death is the supreme and ultimate master in both, (1981:573):

بَا حِيَّةٍ هَمَّةٌ بِهَا وَهُيْ لَيْل
يُذَمّرُ الْمُوْتُ فِي دِيَاجِهِ وَيُنهي

O, what a life we have fallen in love with, although it is a night in whose darkness reigns supreme death.

Al-Mala'ika views man as a target for such natural disasters as storms and volcanoes, (1981:46):

بِنَحْرٍ الْدُّوْدَةٍ مَا نَتَتُّ وَلَدًا تَبَوَّسُ فِي الْبِراَكِينَ وَالرِّيَاحِ عَلَيْنَا

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Worms eat away at what we build,
volcanoes and wind leave no trace of us.

She also refers to the grave worms which will devour our flesh after death. These worms leave no trace of man's body and they mock his previous existence, (1981:528):

لم يبق منه الدود شيئاً يرى
ولم يدرك منه الردى باذياً

Worms have left nothing of him which Can be detected, and death swept away his remains.

As we have mentioned earlier, al-Malā'ika's fear of death, and her obsession with it, are strongly evident in her poetry. In her poem "Unshūdat al-Amwāt" (The Sonnet. . . Dead), she gives a fairly detailed description of the act of burial and then describes what happens to a dead person in the grave. The frightening grave engulfs the corpse and subjects it to loneliness, darkness and punishment. Physically, the world of the grave consists of thorns, dust, sand, stones, rocks and, worst of all, the worms which prey on the dead man's body consuming it with great relish and venom (1981:195-196):
They lay him on thorns and rocks,
under the dust and stones,
And they return, leaving his remains
to a world of hidden secrets.
Left to bitter solitude and darkness
in his awesome and frightening grave,
Under the reign of worms, thorns,
sand and the powers of extinction and punishment.

The poet also describes how, when the corpse
disintegrates it turns into food for the willow and fig
trees. She views this as a great punishment, (1981:36):

وغدا من دمي غذاوك يا صف
صاحب يا ابن أيشار رهيب
Tomorrow you will feed on my blood,
O, willow and fig trees! What a terrible revenge!

The atmosphere of loneliness, coldness, misery and darkness which prevails in the grave is described in several of al-Malā'ika's poems, as the following lines show, (1981:25):

What sort of grave have you prepared for me?
is it a cave completely covered in darkness.

(1979:103)

We ignore the graves stretching out their cold arms to us.
The grave has enclosed you in its cold atmosphere, after my jovial heart had stopped beating.

This dark grave-yard, it is the end of the road. 0, how wretched that is!

Time has shunned him, in his desolate grave, engulfed in winds and darkness.
And (1981:530)

A grave standing on the hill, solitary and forlorn
Covered by the shade of the hawthorn tree.

In her poem "Unshūdat al-Amwāt" (The Sonnet of the Dead), al-Malāʾika compares man's condition in this world with his condition after he dies and is buried in the grave. In life, man experiences happiness, make future plans, nurtures his hopes and dreams and enjoys the sound of the wind, the waves and music. He also builds palaces and arrogantly mocks fate and ignores the cries and pain of nature, (1981:190):

We laughed, while nature was crying with the darkness, wind and rain.
We were scornful while time was angry and grim
and we danced around the edges of fire.

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Al-Mala'ika then describes how none of man's palaces, hopes and dreams can protect him from the terrifying moment of death. Death obliterates not only man's physical existence, but also his memory. While during life, man is normally oblivious of death and its power, it consigns man to total oblivion. During his short and transient life, and in his arrogant moments of triumph and power, man mocks death, but death retaliates by destroying man,(1981:188):

Nothing in our bitter life protects us from the awesome power of the moment of death. The day will come when we will be like memories in the mind of time. And (1981:191)
It is the cold, bitter revenge of nature and the scorn of powerful Time. Man will inevitably face the hatred of life in the world of the dead.

In her poem "al-Maqbara al-Gharīqa" (The Drowned Graveyard), and in many verses in her collection Ma'sat al-Ḥayāt, the poet gives graphic descriptions of a group of dead people whose graves have been washed away by a flood. Al-Malā'ika describes the pale fore-heads of the dead; she also mentions how their limbs and eyes float aimlessly on the surface of the water, (1981:526):

هذي الوجوه النابيات الجياء
وهذه الاشلاء والاعين
طفت حياري فوق وجه المياه
وعض فيها عدم المحن

These faces with pale foreheads,
These remains and eyes floated aimlessly
Or the surface of the water,
Left by sad nothingness.
The poet also describes how the bodies of those who had recently died and the skeletons of those who died years ago fill every dark corner of the graveyard, (1981:527):

في كل ركن من دجى المقبرة
تسبح اجسام وتطفو عظام

In every corner of the graveyard's darkness corpses swim and bones float.

By describing the havoc which the forces of nature wreak on the dead, al-Malā'ika is trying to describe the merciless nature of death. Death strikes again and again. By striking man a second time, it humiliates him and reminds him that there is no escape or respite from its irresistible power.

In her poem "Uyun al-Amwāṭ" (The Eyes of the Dead), al-Malā'ika addresses the remains of the dead asking them about how death treated them. She detects fear and anguish in their eyes, and a hopeless air of expectancy. al-Malā'ika then deplores the fact that human beings seem to be unable to understand what is hidden in the eyes of the dead, (1981:49-50):
O mortal remains of the dead in
the earth, what has death painted on these eyes?
What fear, despair and suffering?
and what meaning in dashed hopes?

Every pair of eyes looks into the horizon,
far away from everything in this universe.
O, Lord O if the living could only understand
what the eyes of the dead impart.

Al-Malā'ika's deliberation and thoughts lead her to
the inescapable conclusion that death is the ultimate
victor, and that human beings are the confused, weak and
vanquished victims of death. Victory, in the real sense
of the word, belongs to death only, with the result that
what human beings call victories are not victories at
all,( 1981:58):

Death will always be victorious
while we will be the slaughtered, the weak and confused.
Victory and glory belong to it rather than to us,
so bewail that which you call victory.

al-Malā'ika regards the wealth and splendour of rich
people to be meaningless since they do not save them from
death, or protect them from suffering the humiliation and
ignominy which death visits upon poor and lonely people.
Death strikes all people, making no distinction between
the rich and the poor, (1981:76-77):
Death will not leave them alone; they
turn into sadness, silence, confusion and cries
-- -- -- --
Even if they spend their day dressed up in
attractive, colourful silk
Time will pass them while they lie dead
on stone, gravel and dust.

Al-Mala'ika's fear and dislike of war made her condemn those who start wars. She brands such individuals as "traders of wars". In her long poem "Ma'sat al-Ḥayāt", al-Mala'ika asks these "traders of wars" to desist from their gruesome actions and calls on them to stop the promotion of death and asks them to return to reason. The traders of death cause death and destruction for selfish reasons. This feeling of repugnance towards war on the part of the poet is related to her belief that war causes unnecessary destruction, suffering, pain and grief. The poet deplored the continuation of World War II and wrote a poem expressing her feelings towards this war. In it, she calls on the 'angel of peace' to descend on the world and remove the cover of darkness which has enveloped it, (1981:45):
O, Angel of Peace! come from the sky,
and descend on this depressed world
Weep for those lying in the silence
of death and shine upon the frightening darkness.

In her poem "Unshūdat al-Salām" (The Sonnet of Peace), al-Malā'ika addresses those who trade in war and destruction, calling on them to consider the result of their wicked actions. She asks them to show sympathy towards their fellow human being and to bewail the passing of the dead, (1981:54):

O, you who are confused in the darkness of
this world, you have had enough misfortune and confusion. Carry, with dismay, the remains of your dead and shed tears, long and hard, over the graves.

This poem echoes some of the thoughts and ideas expressed by Shelley in his poem "Hellas". In this poem, Shelley rejects "hate", "death", and wars (1908:473):

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?  
Cease! must men kill and die? 
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn 
Of bitter prophecy 
The world is weary of the past, 
Oh might it die or rest at last!

Al-Malā'ika returns to this theme in her poem "Linakun Aṣdiqā'" (Let us be Friends). In this poem, she expresses her hatred of death, killing and bloodshed, appeals to the world for peace, brotherhood, love and friendship. She outlines her vision of a world in which mutual co-operation and respect unite people regardless of their role, religion, statutes etc.... (1979:145-146):

لتنك اصدقاء
نحن والحاشرون
نحن والعزل المتعبون

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Let us be friends,
With those who are confused,
And those who are defenceless and tired,
With those who are called 'criminals',
With the wretched,
And those drunk with the wine of hope,
With those who sleep in the wilderness in the open,
And those who wander, without a refuge,
And those who cry to no avail
With the captives,
And with other nations,
With those living in the land of snow,
The lands of the negroes,
In the deserts, and in all inhabited places,
In every land which listened to our pain,
In every land which received the coffins of our dreams
And heard the cries of complaint
Emanating from the victims of Fate.
The poet was therefore delighted when the second World War was finally stopped and the machines of destruction and killing ground to a halt. The clouds of gloom and depression hanging over the world and her life, begin to lift up and disappear, and the poet regards this as a good omen for the resumption of her poetic career, (1981:621-622):

Joy of the Truce, what a good tiding omen for my poetry! Am I dreaming? Or, is my ear lying? Or, is it 'happiness' which has passed before my eyes? The dream of the thirsty and the visions of the hopeful God of poetry, remove the silence which haunts me. It is time I forgot my supplication and sadness, It is time I greeted the hopes and sang With my heart, poetry and songs.
Shukri is similar to al-Malā'i̇ka in that he uses some of the images used by al-Malā'i̇ka when she talks about death, for example: the humiliation to which man is subjected when he finds that his mouth and eyes are filled with dust in the grave. However, the general atmosphere in his poetry with regard to death is radically different from the atmosphere we find in al-Malā'i̇ka's poetry. While al-Malā'i̇ka's poetry on death is full of pessimism and sadness, Shukri concentrates on the lesson to be drawn from the fact that death is an inevitable human experience. One of the lessons which Shukri often mentions is the necessity to abandon arrogance and false pride and to replace them by humility and compassion. Nothing lasts for ever; youth disappears and death overcomes all, (1960:269):

One day you will be interred in the dust, a fallen man earth filling your mouth and eyes.
You will be like a humiliated corpse, which makes the young man vomit if he touches it
So spare your harshness a little and beware, for a young face will not preserve youth.

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In his poem "Ghayat al-Ḥubb" (The Aim of Love), Shukrī asks his friends to come and visit his grave after he dies. He detects some reluctance on their part to do so, and mildly rebukes them for their attitude. He asks them to halt for a while and shed tears for the passing of their friend. He also asks them to show steadfastness and reminds them that their attempts to evade death will totally fail. Death has no regard to its victim's age, wealth and social standing. In a manner strongly reminiscent of al-Malā'ika, he reminds the visitors to his grave of what awaits them in the grave: the worms which will devour their flesh, reveal their bones and fill their graves with revolting odours, (1960:225):

When I die, remember me, and pay one visit to my grave. Is it strange that people do visit graveyards? Stop and consider what your eye can see. Won't every man face the same fate? Perhaps a hot tear you will shed over me death might sound a warning to the young man while he is immersed in life's pleasures. Don't be afraid; death comes and goes;
every beautiful thing will inevitably vanish. Death will execute a pre-determined destiny concerning you, and you will meet that of which you were afraid. The worms will eat what they want of you for a while; your face will be repulsive and your bone rotten. Your odour will be as vile as that of the waste rotting corpse; people will close their nostrils if they happen to smell you.

In reminding his friends that death is inescapable, and that man must always be ready to face the inevitable moment of death, Shukri aims to inform his friends of one way to overcome their fear of death, namely to accept its reality and prepare themselves to face it. In this respect he echoes the idea found in Shelley's poem "On Death", (1907:520):

This world is the nurse of all we know,
This world is the mother of all we feel,
And the coming of death is a fearful blow
To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel;
When all that we know, or feel, or see,
Shall pass like unreal mystery.

Shukri often reminds his readers that man's life is very short and that death is inevitable. None will escape from the clutches of death, no matter how strong they are or how long they live, (1960:304):
Remember the worries of the heart, for all of us will go back to the spring of death. Isn't life but an hour which passes away? isn't eternity but months and short stretches of time.

He also asks his relatives and friends not to bewail his death, because expressions of grief are not always sincere. He goes even further and suggests that hypocrisy sometimes motivates these expressions, (1960:338):

If I die, don't weep grievously over my tomb and don't let my soul hear the wailing of the mourners; Your tears will be the tears of hypocrisy, relations mourn lest they be reproached.

Hypocrisy reveals its ugly face whenever people reserve praise and appreciation for a deceased person until after their death. More often than not, one's reputation is never acknowledged in one's life, (1960:473):
How good fame would be, if the years which fame endures could be added to a young man’s life-span.

The poet returns to the theme of hypocrisy in his poem "Ṣadāqat al-Amwāt wa-l- Aḥyāʾ" (The Friendship of the Dead and the Living). He ridicules people because they forgive the dead but fail to forgive the living. Similarly, people tend to drop their enmity towards the dead, but find it difficult to behave in the same way towards the living. To reveal man’s hypocrisy Shukrī wonders whether the dead would continue to be forgiven if they were to return to life, (1960:233):

We live by deceit all our lives, the deceit of enemies or friends,
Until death appears on the horizon, it would be like a living person was like the dead.
We purge death from sins which are visible in the conscience.
We forget the enmity of those who have passed away, but the living person will be detested for the slightest mistake.
It is sufficient that the deceased is endowed with faithfulness we shed tears over him with great agony.
If the buried man were to return after the resurrection;
He would be considered a hypocrite for his friendliness, and would be tainted with suspicion.
FATALISM

Fatalism does not occupy a dominant place in English Romantic poetry. Generally speaking, English Romantic poets tend to feel that they can defeat and overcome fate, rather than be defeated by it. However, the English poets do acknowledge the role played by 'Fortune' in their lives. This position is most strongly articulated by Byron (1970:108):

"Like Sylla, I have always believed that all things depend upon Fortune, and nothing upon ourselves". He also re-iterates the same view in his memoire which cover the period between October 1821 and May 1822, (ibid)

"I am not aware of any one thought or action worthy of being called good to myself or others, which is not to be attributed to the Good Goddess, Fortune!"

In contradistinction, fatalism occupies a dominant place in Arabic Romantic poetry, particularly the poetry of Nazik al-Malā'ika. The reasons behind the fatalism of the Arab Romantic poets are not very clear. However, they may be related to the personal circumstances of the poets concerned and to the influence of other writers or poets on them.
The presence of fatalism in the poetry of al-Malā'ika is part and parcel of her pessimistic outlook on life. As we have mentioned earlier, this feature in al-Malā'ika's poetry may be attributed to her personal experience in the death of her mother.

Another factor may be her reading of the German philosopher Schopenhauer, although it could be argued that her interest in and reading of this philosopher was the result of her fatalistic attitude towards life and man's destiny in this universe rather than vice versa. Al-Malā'ika admits that she doubted the existence of God in her early years, and her position concerning this question sometimes goes beyond agnosticism, approaching a mild form of atheism.

Be that as it may, the reader of al-Malā'ika's early diwans cannot help but be struck by the strong fatalistic flavour and outlook in her poetry. Her fatalism seems to have a philosophical dimension. It is related to her inability to resolve the mystery of life and death, (1981:26):

هل فهمت الحياة كي أهم الموت وادنمو من سره المكون
لم يزل عالم السنه لعزا
عبر حنا على فؤادي الحزين

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Have I understood life to be able to understand death and come close to its hidden secret.
The world of death is still a puzzle whose solution is unavailable to my sad heart.

This theme is reiterated in many other places as (1981:64):

ما الذي يطلع النجوم على الكوكب مساء؟ ما هو هذا الوجود؟
أي شيء هذا الفضاء وما سر دماغه؟ هل خلفه حدود؟

What is it that causes the stars to gaze over the universe at night? What is the secret of this world? What is this empty sky and what is the secret of its darkness? Are there limits beyond it?

Her attempts to understand life and death fail, and this failure plunges her into despair and a philosophical vacuum vis-à-vis "existence" and the rationale which lies behind it. Al-Malā'ika realises that her effort to understand the essence of life and death is doomed; she gives up and succumbs to fate, allowing it to direct her life in whatever way it wishes. (1981:552)
What lies behind this life? What vagueness? and what secret? 
Why did we come? How do we proceed? 
O my boat, to which sea?

O, my boat I have been baffled for a long time. 
and illusion has submerged my life! 
I proceed as destinies decree 
for me, to a place I don't know.

Having given up the attempt to understand the mysteries of life and death, and having realised that even her hope to unravel the mysteries of the universe is a forlorn one, al-Malā'ika accepts the inescapable conclusion, man is a hostage to Fate and he is doomed to suffer an ignoble and humiliating defeat at the hands of death,(1981:57):
We are captives; blind fate leads us to the night of an unknown world. None of us can break loose; each one of us is but a humble captive.

Fate is everywhere. No one can escape its formidable clutches. In her poem "al-Uf'wan" (The Snake), the poet describes her attempts to escape from this highly elusive but persistent enemy. Her attempts to escape from it are doomed. She tries to seek refuge from Fate, but to no avail because it is everywhere. In the end, she gives up and accepts that there is no escape from Fate, (1979:77-79):

اين امشي ؟ مللت الدروب
وسمت السروج
والعدو الخفي النجوض
لم يزل يقتفي خطواتي ، هاين الهروب ؟

.... لن اتشد الانفلات
من فيودي ،واي انفلات
وعدوي الخيف
مغتاه نج الخريف
فوق روح شريد الربيع

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Where shall I go? I am bored with the paths
And the meadows,
And with the relentless secret enemy
Who follows my foot steps. Where can I escape?
...
I will not try to escape
From my shackles, what sort of escape is this
While the eyes of my frightening enemy
Eject the autumn
Over a soul which wants the spring
Beyond the light fog.
That frightening snake;
That ogre, how do I obtain freedom?

Fate is supreme. It controls people's lives.
People are entitled to have their plans, hopes and wishes, but there is no guarantee that any of these will be realised. People's wish to live long may not be granted by death. Even when people wish to die soon, as a result of a crippling illness for example, Fate may not grant them their wish. By behaving in this way, Fate mocks man's plans, dreams and hopes, playing havoc with him, (1981:28):

إن نصنيتُان أعبيض فما يع
نبع الموت أو بعد السنينا
If I wish to live, death won't listen or agree to extend my life.
If I wish to die, it will not accept my wish and I will not meet death.

Al-Malā'ika's attitude towards Fate colours and conditions her attitude towards 'time'. Al-Malā'ika does not fear the past, because the past has taken place and come to an end. However, her past experiences condition her attitude towards both the present and the future. Al-Malā'ika fears time because there is no way of telling what Fate holds for man. Even if it were to behave in a fairly neutral way, springing no nasty surprises on its unsuspecting victims, time is cyclical and, therefore, is boring and monotonous.

Al-Malā'ika's fear of the unpredictable and inescapable power of Fate forces her to seek refuge in the company of friends. The poet's fear of being left alone is generated by her fear of Fate. In her poem "Khā'ifa" (I am Frightened) the poet expresses this fear and asks her lover to come and rescue her from the chilling noises she hears all around her and from the hungry and ferocious demon which is staring at her.

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Come back, O, can't you hear my weak voice?
I will not remain alone in this mad path.
In this shuttered horizon where the stars are spies,
Where the trees are like the skeletons
of thoughts and suspicions.

Fatalism is not unique to al-Malā'ika, although it
erades her poetry in a way which is not characteristic
of the poetry of Shukrī and al-Shābbī. Shukrī is aware
of the power of Fate; it lurks for him everywhere and it
depri ves man of any sense of security in this world. He
likens man to a ball which Fate kicks in any way and in
any direction it wishes. Man's attempts to resist the
power of fate are doomed to failure, because nothing can
afford him any protection against Fate, (1960: 264):

these al-fadhar Muhadha
ghr mina al-siqq wa al-lina
thann fi Eydama'ah raka
ma lana fi al-'ubsh Tamin

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The destinies are gazing
the tough and the soft have been deluded by them
We are like a ball between its feet,
without any security (insurance) in life,
Don't think of its sources, all this
thinking is suspect.
Don't think of its calamities.
nothing you hope for is certain.

Fate deprives man of choice and free will. It turns
him into a slave who has no power over his destiny. Man
is, ultimately, a hostage of Fate, (1960:69-70):

I wish I were dead before I could deny life, but
I had lost the choice.
I am in the custody of Time,
accepting life only out of necessity.

Although al-Shabbi showed great fortitude in the
face of the many calamities which engulfed his life, and
although he expressed his determination to fight back and
to stand his ground, there is some evidence in his poetry

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We proceed, and around us all these
Planets revolve..., But to what purpose?
We sing with the birds to the sun, while
The spring is blowing its flute.
We recite the story of the universe to Death.
But what is the end of the story?
This is what I said to the winds but they replied
"Ask the consciousness of the universe: How did
the beginning start?"
From what has been said above it is clear that, by comparison with Shukri and al-Shabbi, al-Mala'ika is obsessed with Fate. In her eyes, Fate is allied to death. Man is the captive and hostage of Fate and his attempts to escape from its clutches are doomed to failure. There is no escape from the inescapable. Fate is supreme.
Considering the thematic centrality of death in the poetry of al-Malā'ika, al-Shābī and Shukrī, it is not surprising that these poets dwell on the idea of immortality in their poetry. The immortality of man is not a physical one, a flesh and blood immortality, but a spiritual one. The physical demise of the individual does not necessarily mean the obliteration of all traces of him or her. Human beings survive long after their death through their actions and reputation. Their names outlive them and their enduring reputations become a testimony to their achievements. It is in this sense that human beings can achieve immortality. It is also in this sense only that man can aspire for it.

Immortality thus conceived transcends death. Poets can achieve immortality, and therefore, transcend death through their poetry, particularly if it is of high quality. Great composers can also transcend death through the immortality which their music bestows on them. Immortality through artistic creation is the theme of al-Malā'ika's poem "'Unshūdat al-Abadiyya" (The Sonnet of Eternity). Al-Malā'ika dedicates this poem to the Russian composer Tchaikovsky who achieved fame and immortality through his musical work. Tchaikovsky's name lives on long after the man had died. Al-Malā'ika pours
scorn on death and claims that its power pales into insignificance when it is set against the power and enduring fame of the musician's talent, (1981:635):

O, Death! O, you evil Master, the curse of obstinate Time. How could your hands accept to kill inspiration? what have you left for life?

Your very hands will perish, and that gentle bird will remain.

O, you grey malicious thing! be malicious and live on hatred.
He is now out of the reach of your hatred, on this earth and beyond the reach of extinction and forgetfulness.
Al-Mala'ika returns to the same theme, albeit in a more self-centred manner. She emphatically declares that her name will live on long after she dies. Her poetry will assure her of immortality and will help her conquer death, (1981: 576-7):

Let there be of my plaintive song an abiding echo which rings down the years and ages.

Let it write on my grave what would preserve my youth, even though I was in the dust.

The poet's immortality is not an immortality of the body but that of the spirit. Her soul will ascend to heaven, transcending the physical ephemerality of her body, (1981: 229):
I will see eternity in death,  
when I am rid of calamities and wounds,  
The humble body will lie on earth and  
the soul will swagger in heaven.

Immortality is also achieved by those martyrs who give up their lives in defending their countries against their enemies. The physical demise of the martyr puts an end to his material existence, heralding at the same time, the beginning of a new eternal life for him. This life is characterised by eternal youth, beauty and purity (1979:238-9):

وسن الفجر المعطر
لم يزل منبعثا صوت الشهيد
طيبه آذن من جيش عقيد
جامع لا يتفطر

يا لحمي أغبياء
منحوه حين أردوه شهدا
الف عمر، وشباب وخلودا
جمال د نغاء
From the perfumed tomb
The voice of the martyr will always rise,
His apparition more permanent than an obstinate army.
Which can not be defeated

* * *

O, what foolish and stupid (people they are)!
They bestowed on him a thousand lives
when they made him fall as a martyr;
(They bestowed upon him) youth, eternity,
Beauty and purity.

The idea that the martyr is rewarded by eternal life, of the type described by al-Mala'ika is, essentially, an Islamic one. This is rather remarkable considering the fact that al-Mala'ika was an agnostic in her early years. It is also interesting because it comes from a poet who declares her opposition to war and regards the destruction brought about by it to be a criminal and horrendous act.

Al-Mala'ika's views concerning life, death and immortality may be compared with the views voiced by Wordsworth in his poem "We are Seven". This poem takes the form of a dialogue between the poet, who initially starts with the common view of the finality of death, and a "simple child" - "a little cottage girl" - whose views on life and death fundamentally differ from those held by the poet. As the dialogue between them develops, we discover that 'existence' for the girl is conceived as a continuum. Within her scheme of things, death does not act as a watershed between existence and nothingness.
Its significance lies only in the fact that it draws the boundary between one form of existence and another. Thus, when the poet tries to convince her that her dead brother and sister no longer exist, she fails to understand him, and she insists, innocently and spontaneously, that they are still alive. Her views on the nature of existence explain her strange actions as seen by the poet, (1904:66):

A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
_ Her beauty made me glad, _

'Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be? '
'How many? Seven in all,' she said,
And wondering looked at me .

'And where are they? I pray you tell.'
She answered, ' Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

'Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.'

'You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell
Sweet maid, how this may be.'

Then did the little Maid reply,
'seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.'

'You run about, my little Maid,  
Your limbs they are alive;  
If two are in the church-yard laid,  
Then ye are only five.'

'Their graves are green, they may be seen,'  
The little Maid replied,  
'Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,  
And they are side by side.

'My stocking there I often knit,  
My kerchief there I hem;  
And there upon the ground I sit,  
And sing a song to them.

'And often after sun-set, Sir,  
When it is light and fair,  
I take my little porringer,  
And eat my supper there.

'The first that died was sister Jane;  
In bed she moaning lay,  
Till God released her of her pain;  
And then she went away.

'So in the church-yard she was laid;  
And, when the grass was dry,  
Together round her grave we played  
My brother John and I.

'And when the ground was white with snow,  
And I could run and slide,  
My brother John was forced to go,  
And he lies by her side.'

'How many are you, then,' said I,  
'If they two are in heaven?'  
Quick was the little Maid's reply,  
'O master! we are seven.'

'But they are dead; those two are dead!  
Their spirits are in heaven!'  
'Twas throwing words away; for still  
The little Maid would have her will,  
And said, 'Nay, we are seven!'
The girl is presumably not aware of the fact that she is subscribing to a view of human existence in which the operative and dominating concept is immortality. But this 'immortality', unconsciously adhered to by the child, is not the same 'immortality' which al-Mala'ika talks about in her poetry. For the "little cottage girl", immortality is part and parcel of the human condition. Man is immortal by virtue of being what he is. He does not have to perform poetic feats or musical miracles. His very identity and existence as a human being guarantee him immortality. Al-Mala'ika does not seem to agree with this. Immortality for her is to be achieved through great works and heroic deeds. The common man is denied immortality, for nothing he has or does immortalises him. The little girl's views concerning immortality are consistent with the tenets of Christianity and the other monotheistic and non-monotheistic religions. Islam contains such an idea, but this idea is not reflected in the early poetry of al-Mala'ika with the only possible exception of her views concerning the immortality of the martyr.

Al-Mala'ika's views concerning immortality are far from being consistent. She denies the possibility of immortality for common man. Death and immortality are not compatible within the confines of the 'human condition'. Al-Mala'ika looks for immortality, but instead of finding it, she only finds nothingness,
They said, 'Eternity!',
But I found it to be shadow which stretched out, cold
Over graveyards where life shrinks;
I found a word on some lips,
Which sang it while they were mourning their past, interning it in graveyards.

They said, 'Eternity!', but I found extinction only.

In another poem, the poet flatly denies the possibility of immortality in all its facets. She regards the prospect of human immortality spiritually, and through one's works, to be a myth. The only truly immortal 'fact' is death and pain, (1981:71):

(1979:87):

قالوا الخلود
وجدها ظلل تمطى في برود
فوق المدافن حيث تنكس الحياة
وجدها لفظاً على بعض الشفاء
غنت وهي تنوح ماشيها وتنزله اللحود

قالوا الخلود، ولم اجد إلا الفناء.
O, the myth of eternity!
only the graveyard and pain are eternal.

This inconsistency in al-Malā'ika's views concerning immortality does not reflect intellectual or philosophical untidiness on her part. Al-Malā'ika is not a philosopher and her views concerning immortality are not intended to form part of a wholly coherent philosophy. These contradictions mainly reflect her unsettled emotions and moods. Put differently, al-Malā'ika's poetry seems to reflect her unsettled psychological state and the confusions which abound in her life at the time.

Let us now turn to al-Shabbi. The first thing which strikes us about al-Shabbi in comparison with al-Xala'ika is that he is more interested than al-Malā'ika in the theme of immortality. This, however, does not mean that immortality is not thematically important in his poetry, as the following discussion will illustrate.

To begin with, al-Shabbi expresses the view that man's attachment to the idea of immortality springs from his fear of death which puts an end to man's physical existence. Al-Shabbi also mentions that if man were to
be granted physical immortality, he would dislike life because he would find it dull and boring. Put differently, al-Shabbi believes that man yearns for physical immortality because he knows it is not achievable, but that, were he to be granted immortality, he would find it unbearable because life would be dull and boring. Man always yearns for that which is not within his grasp. Al-Shabbi knows that death is inevitable and, therefore, he sees no point in trying to procrastinate by seeking or dreaming of immortality, (1972:341-3):

I have become dissatisfied with life for fear of death.
were I to remain for ever alive I would get bored with life.

Death had made life dear to us and fear of the grave made it beautiful, Were it not for the painful wretchedness of life, people wouldn't have discerned the meaning of eternal happiness.

If there is no escape from facing death, for those who live in this world, What is the purpose of this life and what is the meaning of this great challenge

Al-Shabbi reiterates the same theme in another poem, (ibid:347):

If we wear eternity and attain the far perfection of the soul, Will we not tire of eternal immortality and will we not desire a new perfection?
Will the soul not desire something beyond perfection and immortality? If the soul's longing for immortality does not cease, this would be, by my life, the hardest misery of all.

In one poem al-Shabbi regards the life of any human being who is immersed in poetry, either in composing or appreciating it and the values it advocates, to be a reflection of the life of the immortals, (ibid:313):

A life of poetry is for me an image of the life of eternal people.

He also regards death as a 'shadow' of immortality, (1972:198):

Death is the shadow of beautiful eternity and the other half of life which doesn't mourn.
Shukri shares with al-Malā'ika the view that immortality can be achieved through good works. Death ends in life, but man's good deeds achieve for him immortality which transcends death, (1960:47):

إنما العيش طريق للردى وخلود المرء في حين الفعال

Life is but a path to death,
Man's eternity only resides in his good deeds.

Shukri yearns for immortality which alone can heal him from his ailments. The immortality he has in mind is a spiritual one. Good works will ensure that man can achieve immortality in Heaven. In one poem the poet talks about immortality in the spiritual sense by using the word "khuld". This is significant because the word "khuld" always occurs with "Jannāt" in religious discourse in Islam to describe Heaven or Paradise. We have previously seen that Shukri is a firm believer in Islam. The use of the word "khuld" provides further evidence of his faith (1960:312)

فمن لي بماء الخلود أرى به الصدي فما الخلد إلا نعمتي وشفاً

Who could provide me with the water of eternity
Shukri shares with al-Shabbi the view that death makes man's quest for immortality meaningful. It is because physical immortality is not given to man that he appreciates spiritual immortality, (1960:457):

وَلَسْ أَعَزُّ الْرَّغْبَةِ صَدًادًا فَأُنَهَيْنَ يُضُنْ بِعِيشِ لَيْسَ فِيهِ سِرُور
ولَوْ أَنْ خَلَدَ كَانَ أَمَارًا مُقْدَرًا أَهَابَ الفَتْيَ بِالْمَوْتِ وَهُوَ فَرِي ر

The dearest desire is not happiness for it is miserly with a life devoid of joy, Had eternity been a decreed matter the young man would approach death with full confidence.

Immortality through good works and, particularly, through poetic achievement, is one of the themes found in Shelley's poetry. In his poem "Adonais", Shelley mourns the death of his friend Keats. However, he refuses to accept that death is final. Keats' material demise does not imply his spiritual nothingness. Shelley declares that Keats is alive. His poetry assures him of immortality. Shelley calls on nature to celebrate Keats' spiritual immortality and defiantly declares that death,
not Keats, is dead, (1907:435):

He lives, he walks—tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais—Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;

He continues, (ibid:436):

He is made one with Nature; there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,

Shelley goes even further and declares that Keats
achieved immortality by becoming one with nature in all
its forms and moods, (ibid):

The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

This theme of immortality through oneness with
nature is also found in al-Shābī who describes how the
mother sees her dead child in all aspects and moods of
nature, (1972:330):
He sees you in natural scenes the beautiful ones and the ugly ones, the sad ones and the joyful ones, the low ones and the great ones, He sees you, in the softness of the gentle dawn, the dreamy nights, the glorious dusk and in the smiling stars.

In her poem "Hal Tarja'īn?" (Will You Return?), which is addressed to her dead aunt, al-Ma'ā'ika expresses the view, albeit indirectly, that death is final, in the sense that man's physical existence comes to an end. The memories remain but they in no way compensate for the material absence of the individual, (1979:385-6):

 وإن نمت اللحى فتصرح ليتي : هل ترجعين ؟

عطى ، اراك ولد اميك ، اين انت ؟ اتسمين ؟

وإذا دعتك من خلال مدامعي ، هل ترجعين ؟

If I sleep, I catch a glimpse of her in my sleep,
and my longing cries: will you come back?

I am thirsty, but I can't touch you; for I can't see you
where are you? Can you hear?
If I call you through my tears, will you come back?

Al-Malā'ika's views in the above poem are similar to
Shelley's in his poem "Death". Shelley declares that
death is final and that the dead will never return,
(1907:542-543):

They die-the dead return not-Misery
    Sits near an open grave and calls them over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye-
    They are the names of kindred, friend and lover,
Which he so feebly calls-they all are gone-
Fond wretch, all dead! those vacant names alone,
Romantic poets often welcome death, associating it with love, passion and peace. This feature is most clear in the poetry of al-Malā'ika, Shukrī and al-Shābbī, amongst Arab Romantic poets, and Shelley and Keats among English Romantic poets. The similarity between these two groups of poets is not surprising, considering that both al-Malā'ika and Shukrī openly admit the influence of Keats and Shelley on their poetry. Al-Malā'ika admits the influence of Keats on her poetry in her poem "'Ila al-Shā'ir Keats" (To the Poet Keats), in which she dedicates her "dreams" to the eternal spirit of this poet (Keats) who lives through his poetry. In this respect, al-Malā'ika's poem is similar to Shelley's poem "Adonais" in which he asserts that Keats' spirit lives on through his poetry, (1981:640-2):

حياتي وأحلامي روحي الحزين
واحلامي المرة الداومة
وموكب اياي الذهبيات
واطياف اياي الآتيت
تجمعن فهمي باقة من عبر
وتخلفنا روحي الفانيت
واهديتها لما خالما
الي روحك الحرة الباقية

- 219 -
My life, the dreams of my sad soul
My bitter withering dreams, and
The procession of my past days
And the visions of my coming days
Have all gathered as a bunch of fragrant flowers
Under which my perishing soul was buried.
I have presented them like a dreamy song
To your free eternal spirit

your sweet and eternal poems
Are my poems and songs

The above poem shows the influence of Keats on al-Mala'ika in a direct manner. For example, the following two lines in the same poem, (ibid:644):

"Honda where youth dies,
And its setting rays wither away.

expresses an idea similar to that expressed by Keats in the following two lines in his "Ode to a Nightingale",

- 220 -
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where youth grows pale, and spectre, thin and dies.

The association of death with love and passion is expressed in her poem "Qays wa Layla" (Qays and Layla). In this poem, al-Malā'ika describes the condition of Qays, one of the most famous lovers in Arabic poetry, and how he spent his time lying near his beloved Layla's grave, requesting death to terminate his life in order to relieve him of the pain produced by his separation from his beloved, and in order to be united with her,

(1981:143):

بِئْسَ الْيَوْمِ الْكَبُرِيَّةِ
بِئْسَ النَّاْسِ وَالْكَبُرِيَّةِ
بِئْسَ الْيَوْمِ الْكَبُرِيَّةِ
بِئْسَ النَّاْسِ وَالْكَبُرِيَّةِ

He yearns for the night of calamities and beckons it to come to him using the sweetest names, Singing to death the sweetest songs of its love in the darkness and light.
The lines reveal the direct influence of Keats on al-Mala'ika. In his poem "Ode to a Nightingale", Keats expresses his infatuation with "death" and how he used "soft names" to call and welcome it, (1908:231):

I have been half in love with easeful Death
Calie'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme.

Al-Mala'ika relates the early death of such poets as al-Hamshari, al-Shabbā, Keats and Brooke to their interest in this theme in their poetry. The early death of these poets make the death theme in their poetry more meaningful, and credible. It is as though these poets practised in their lives what had concerned them in their poetry. As such, the difference between life and poetry ceases to be as sharp as it would otherwise have been. Al-Mala'ika goes even further and suggests that the huge emotional drain suffered by these poets in their capacities as poets was a factor in their early deaths. This view on the part of al-Mala'ika more or less implies that poets, by their very nature, and by the nature of their 'profession', put their lives in danger because of their sensitive natures. In other words, al-Mala'ika seems to think that poets have a monopoly over feelings, or that the feelings of poets, particularly those she calls "poets of excitement", are more sensitively tuned
than those of non-poets. She expresses this view in the following manner in her article "al-Shi'ir wa-l-Mawt" (Poetry and Death; 1981:315):

"A triangle of values consisting of excitement (intense feeling), poetry and death is formed in the life of the 'poet of excitement'. The poet likes intense feeling, because that leads to poetic composition, but he notices that intense feeling, (or excitement) is (synonymous with) death because the former leads to the latter.... From now on, a phase of enchantment with death, corresponding to the phase of enchantment in poetry, begins. (This continues) until the three concepts merge into one. This is a phase in which the means unite with the end to which it leads, forming a strong unity that cannot be severed."

"... يتكون في حياة الشاعر الانفعال مثلث من القيم زواياه الثلاث هي الانفعال والشعر والموت. فا شاعر يحب الانفعال لأنه يؤدي إلى الشعر على أنه يلاحظ أن الانفعال هو الموت لأن الأول طريق مشترك إلى الثاني.... ومن ثم تبدأ مرحلة من الغرام بالموت نفسه مقابل الغرام بالشعر حتى تصبح الانفعال الثلاثة في معنى واحد. إنها مرحلة يندم فيها الطريق بالغاية التي ينتهي إليها في وحدة مشيئة لانفصال لها."

"A triangle of values consisting of excitement (intense feeling), poetry and death is formed in the life of the 'poet of excitement'. The poet likes intense feeling, because that leads to poetic composition, but he notices that intense feeling, (or excitement) is (synonymous with) death because the former leads to the latter.... From now on, a phase of enchantment with death, corresponding to the phase of enchantment in poetry, begins. (This continues) until the three concepts merge into one. This is a phase in which the means unite with the end to which it leads, forming a strong unity that cannot be severed."
We have previously mentioned that al-Malā'ika fears death and prefers life to it. However, she sometimes welcomes death in her poetry. In her poem "Ahzān al-Shabāb" (The Grief of Youth), al-Malā'ika expresses her readiness to "meet death", because, as a poet, she would love the total silence of the grave, and the fulfilment of her hopes of eternal youth if she were to die young, (1981:218):

I shall face beloved death as a poetic spirit which loves the silence of the grave, (I shall face beloved death) as a heart which sees death as a source of youth for hopes and feelings - What youth!

Al-Malā'ika seems to believe that the sincerity of a poet in whose poetry the theme of death is given pride of place, is ultimately judged by his or her early death. Keats, al-Shābī and al-Hamshārī have all demonstrated their poetic sincerity by dying young. It is as though long life stands as evidence of the poetic insincerity of
the poet who concerns himself or herself in poetry with death.

However, later in this poem she reverts to her predominant position concerning death; she views it with awe and welcomes it only because it would relieve her from the miseries of life (9) (ibid:219):

I am not the only one who will die while still young, unwatered by the dew.
How wretched this life is!
many are the poets who died in the prime of youth.

The above two lines reveal al-Malāʾika's true state of mind: she is frightened of death. However, she draws some consolation from the fact that if she were to die young, she would not be the first poet to do so. This, obviously, is radically different from the view she expresses in connection with the early death of Keats, al-Shābbī and al-Hamsharī. Their early death is no longer seen by al-Malāʾika as a 'motivation' for her to
die young. Early death is no longer seen by al-Mala'ika as a 'prize' which would bestow on her the right to be included in the company of such celebrated poets as Keats, al-Shābī and al-Hamshāri, but an event which would put an end to her miseries and suffering, (1981:505:6):

O, beach, the spring of my dreams, farewell!
The oar in the palm of my hand is tired with pushing and struggling.
How do I meet you (now) that the winds have torn the sails.
--- --- ---
O, farewell to the procession
farewell to life.
It is time death snuffed out my happiness and sadness.
It is time my guitar and lute abandon their music.
Hello Death, hello corpse
Death would also liberate her from all the forces which enslave her in this world, limiting her freedom and suppressing her hopes and dreams. This idea is clearly expressed in her poem "al-Rahil" (The Departure: 1979: 357-8):

وفي الغد ، من بعدها ، ان اطل جبين القصر
ولامس ضوء النجوم النشاوى خريـر النـهر
ورن مع الليل صوت بعيد العدي واندثر
كما رن ، يسأل عنها واين رمتـنا البحور
فقولي له اتنا لن نعود
للارض القيود
فقد اشرق الفجر منذ عصور

Tomorrow, (after we have departed), if the forehead of the moon appears
And the light of the intoxicated stars
touches the purling river;
And the voice with a distant echo rings
out at night and, then, fades away -
Asking about us and about the places to which the seas have cast us
Say to it, we will not return to the
Land of fetters,
For the dawn has risen a long while ago. (10)

Clearly, al-Mala'ika does not believe that death is inherently related to peace and security. If she welcomes death, she does so in order to escape from the enslaving clutches of life, and from its horrors and
miseries. Al-Malā'ika prefers life. Death frightens her and threatens her uniqueness as a poet. This is her real position: she prefers life to death, and whenever she welcomes the latter, she does so as an escapist who believes that death would relieve her of the pain, suffering and frustration of life. Rather than being the "poet of death", she is the "poet of life". In welcoming death, she does not whole-heartedly run towards it, but less than half-heartedly runs away from life in the direction of death in its capacity as the only alternative to life.

In this respect, al-Malā'ika differs radically from Shukrī. Shukrī positively and genuinely associates death with peace and security. He refers to death as "God's shade" which offers man refuge from the afflictions which he might otherwise encounter, (1960:438):

\[
\text{والموت ظل الله أبشر إن دنا في ظله آمن من الحسرات}
\]

Death is God's shadow; be hopeful if it approaches; its shadow offers refuge from sorrows.
The idea of seeking refuge and peace through death is expressed in several places in his poetry. The poet declares that death is more compassionate than his friends and acquaintances, (1960:330):

"O, you who knock on death's door, I seek refuge in you; you are more merciful than my friends and acquaintances."

The poet also speaks about the purity of death, and how, in spite of its connotations of darkness and annihilation, it is preferable to life (1960:242):

"Death is purer than life's malice, even though its outward appearances might frighten the graves and darkness."
In a different poem, he likens death to the sea, and human souls to pearls which 'live' in it. Life, as such, is a transient phenomenon; it is like the waves in their transience and tumultuous existence (1960: 439):

Death is like the sea, and souls are like pearls living on top of death like the sea waves.

Shukri's welcome to death is more sincere than al-Mala'ika's. He calls on death to reveal its true nature. As viewed by Shukri, death is not a frightening and bitter force, but something similar to 'sleep', bringing comfort and peace (1960: 406):

O Death, come, but not like those whose taste is similar to that bitter and awesome thing. The taste of life which hurts whoever drinks it, But like the way sleep causes a tired eye to close, or like the effect of wine (on a drinker).
In welcoming death, Shukri asks it to come with a smile on its face. The poet publicly acknowledges his love of death and his desire to quench his thirst byimmersing himself in death. He goes even further, and declares that death resembles God in its compassion and mercy, although it may be harsh at times, (1960:542):

في موتّي قبل باطال الوجه طلقة فان حميم الصحب ما كنت لاقينا
أحبك حب الصب وجه عشيق لينقع تغر منك صديان ظاميا
وانت شبيه الله في خير شعه فإنك رحمن وإن كنت قابيا

O Death, come with a delighted and happy face for it is the most faithful of friends you will meet.
I love you as a young man loves the face of his beloved and quench his thirst with your lips
You resemble God in his best qualities. you are merciful, even though you may be harsh.

Al-Shabbi welcomes death and expresses his desire to experience it. In one of his poems, he declares that life for him has dried up and indicates his readiness to experience death, (1972:354):
"O my weeping heart, the magic of life has dried up
So, let us try death! let us.. !"

Death is the antithesis of life. Life, according
to al-Shābī, is full of miseries, sadness, pain, sorrow,
suffering, deprivation, etc. In contradistinction, death
provides man with comfort and treats him kindly. It is
compassionate and merciful; it is eternal, powerful and
smiling; it grants eternal 'life' by replacing man's
existence in this world with a more pleasant and joyful
one in another more 'real' world. Death is likened to a
luxurious cradle in which human beings lie comfortably,
(1972:196-198):
Let us seek Death, if you want the comforts of life
then behind the darkness of death lies what you want.

Let us seek Death, O wretched son of life
for death contains life's soft voice,
Let us seek Death if Time punishes you,
for death contains the merciful heart of Time.

Let us seek Death, for Death is a cup which
quenches the thirst of one who was made
thirsty by the poisons of the waterless desert.

Let us seek Death, for death is snug cradle
in whose bosom lie living creatures.

Death is the vision of beautiful eternity
and the half of life which doesn't mourn,
There, beyond the distant horizon,
lives powerful bright Death.
It presses hearts to its chest
to comfort the suffering it has caused
To release the spring of life in it,
and make it happy with the joyful morning.

In the above poem, death is viewed positively. It
is associated with peace and safety, and al-Shabbi talks
about it, using words which express ardent belief and
commitment to it. Furthermore, the above lines evoke an
atmosphere of passion and love. The poet addresses death
in a manner approaching the way one might address the
beloved. Death is described as though it had human qualities: it is compassionate, powerful, smiling, comforting, etc.

Death does not imply discontinuity. In his poem "al-Nabī al-Majhūl" (The Unknown Prophet), al-Shābī imagines the location of his future grave under the pine trees. He describes how the birds will flutter over his grave, singing their songs, and how the cyclic movement of the seasons will continue as it had done in the past. The poet, declares that he will not be separated from nature after his death, nor will nature change its course, (1972:250):

 ثم تحت الصنوبر الناضر، الحلو
خط السيل حفرة رمي
وسيطر الطيور تلغو على قبري
ويبدو النسيم فوفي بهم
وسيطر الفصول تمشي حولي،
كما كنت في غضارة أمس

Then under the beautiful fresh pine trees, floods make out the plan for my grave
Birds will sing over my grave and the breeze will sing in a whispering fashion.
The seasons will go round me as they used to do in the freshness of my yesterday.
The thematic association of death with sleep is a characteristic feature of the poetry of Keats and Shelley. Shelley regards death as the brother of sleep in his poem "Queen Mab", (1907:754):

   How wonderful is Death
   Death and his brother Sleep.

The same thematic association is also expressed in his poem "Stanza Written in Dejection, near Naples". Death, like sleep, stealthily overcomes man and puts an end to the cares he experiences in his life, (1907:557):

   I could lie down like a child,
   And weep away the life of care
   Which I have borne and yet must bear,
   Till death like sleep might steal on me.

Shelley imagines death to be calm and peaceful, and even calls it "sweet death", as we see in his poem "Epipsychidion" (1907:408):

   She met me, stranger, upon life's rough way
   And lured me towards sweet death/as Night by Day,
Keats addresses death using words which express love and passion. He refers to death as "easeful Death", and in his poem "Ode to a Nightingale" declares that he is half in love with it. The poet is also hypnotised by the Nightingale's song, and expresses his desire to die, in the full belief that death would be devoid of pain, (1908:232):

Now more than ever seems it rich to die
To cease upon the midnight with no pain
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy

In "Endymion", the hero mentions the anxiety and disappointment which humans experience in life. These experiences give meaning to life. More importantly, however, they show "how quiet death" could be, (1908:87):

the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,
All, human; bearing in themselves this good,
That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, and to show
How quiet death is.
Sadness and grief are often experientially associated with death. Love of sadness and grief is a major feature of Romantic poetry. These feelings are often depicted as sources of spiritual purification and cleansing. Shelley encapsulates this view in the following two famous lines of poetry (1907:598):

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Love of sadness and grief is a major feature of al-Malā'ika's poetry, particularly in the poetry which she wrote immediately after her mother's death. Al-Malā'ika had a special relationship with her mother, who was not only her friend but her mentor too. Umm Nizār, as Nazik's mother was known, was a poet in her own right and, thus, she played an important role in shaping her daughter's poetic ideas in her early days. The death of Umm Nizār affected al-Malā'ika on the personal level, as well as on the level of a poet.

Umm Nizār's death was a water shed in Nazik's life. It marked a change in her attitude towards life. Instead of responding to this crushing event by writing poetry which condemns death and the cruelty of fate, as she had done after her aunt's death for example, al-Malā'ika composed poetry which eulogises pain. She welcomes pain
for its purifying and cleansing effect. She also treats it as though it was a child, comforting and pampering it. The poems which best illustrate this attitude are "Ughniya llt-L-Huzn" (Song to Sadness), "Maqdam al-Ḫuzn" (The Arrival of Sadness) and "al-Zahra al-Sauda'" (The Black Flower).

These three poems express the poet's love of, and deep affection for, sadness. She befriends it and welcomes it as an essential ingredient in her life. Pain and sadness are her constant companions. Initially she tried to combat them, but when she realises that it is not possible to do so, she befriends them and tries to control them through love.

Al-Malāʾika describes grief as a "sensitive youth" swimming in a sea full of perfume. She welcomes it with open arms and acknowledges the purity of its feelings, (1979:311):

افتحوا الباب له، للقادم الصافي الشعور،
للعلم المرهف السابق في بحر أريح،

Clear the pathway for it, the visitor with pure feelings, To the sensitive lad swimming in a sea of fragrance.
Al-Mala'i'ika dedicates everything to sadness. She imagines it to be a visitor for whose arrival the most meticulous preparations are made. She describes how she will meet it with love and a feeling which recognises its sanctity, she also states that she will pray to it as she would pray to a God, (1979:313):

كنت نحن مهيأنا للقاء عيونك وشفاءك
وس新闻 مصلين كما نلقى الهدا
وستدعي انجاز الادمع العذبة سلوي
وستحوه اسي اقوى وأقوى
وستعطي عيونا وجباهنا

We have prepared for its arrival with love, reverence and secret talk.
We have prepared to meet it, all eyes and lips.
We will meet it praying as we meet a God.
We will present it a torrent of sweet tears for solace.
We will present it with distress increasing in strength;
We will give it eyes and foreheads.

The purifying and cleansing qualities of pain and grief are openly acknowledged in her poem "Ma'sāt al-Shā'īr (The Tragedy of the Poet). Al-Mala'i'ika also regards pain and suffering as pre-requisites for understanding the meaning of life and its full
Life will not grant the serious poet anything if he doesn't taste life's cares.
Souls will not be exalted if they aren't purified by the meanings of tears and sighs.

Keats glorifies pain and melancholy, linking the latter to beauty and joy. In his poem "Ode on Melancholy", Keats makes just such as association,

(1908:248):

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
And Joy: whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu, and aching Pleasure nigh,

Keats compares death to poetry, fame and beauty and declares that it is more intense than any of its partners, (1908:348):
Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,  
But Death intenser---Death is Life's high meed.

For the poet the most comfortable and enjoyable hour in his life is when he remembers the loveliness of his beloved and the anticipation of the hour of his death. In one of his letters he writes, (1958:133): "I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death."

The association of death with beauty and happiness is not unique to Keats. Al-Shābbī expresses the same view in his poem "Unshūdat al-Jabbār ʿaw Hākadāh Ghanā" (Prometheus) (The Sonnet the Giant or Thus Sang Prometheus). Here he states that death will provide him with the opportunity to experience eternal beauty and happiness (1972:443):

اذا إذا خمدت حياتي ، وانقضى عن عالم الائام والبغضاء 
فانا السعيد بانتى متحول للدروب في فجر الجمال السرمدي وارتوي من منهل الاضواء

If my life slowsdown and passes away,  
and death makes my flute to stop playing  
I am the one who is happy for turning away from the world of sin and hatred  
To melt in the eternal beauty of the dawn and to drink my fill from the spring of light.

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(1) Al-Shābī reached his height of his poetic career between 1929-1934. This maturation period coincided with the period during which his health was at its worse.

(2) Al-Shābī suffered from 'Retrecissment Mitral', so the blood circulation to his lungs was inadequate. Al-Shābī had been of a delicate constitution since early childhood. Throughout his childhood he could not breathe normally. He often got tired after the slightest physical exercise. Doctors advised him to refrain from doing any physically demanding work, including such sports as running and swimming. Al-Shābī refers to his poor health in his poetry, see, for example, his poem "al-Janna al-Dā'ī'a" (The Missing Paradise). He also mentions his poor health in his memoirs.

(3) For more information about Al-Shābī's love life and marriage, see Kerrou (1984:pp 119-126).

(4) Al-Shābī's love of, and admiration for, his father can be seen in the dedication to his father of his first book al-Khayāl al-Shī'ī 'inda al-'Arab (The Poetic Imagination Among the Arabs) which was published posthumously.

(5) Al-Shābī's father fell ill in the middle of summer 1929. He wanted to return to his home town of Tozeur, so Al-Shābī remained with him in Tozeur until his death in September 1929. After his father's death Al-Shābī wrote a poem entitled "Ya Mawt" (O, Death) complaining about the cruelty of death and describing his feelings following his father's death. See Al-Shābī (1972:234-238).


(7) Al-Malā'i'ika's poem "al-Kūlīra" (Cholera) represents one of the early attempts at writing free verse in Arabic poetry. This poem describes the poet's feelings when she heard about the cholera epidemic in Egypt in 1947. Al-Malā'i'ika reports (1981:346-7) that she first started to write her poem in traditional Arabic verse, but soon found that she could not express her feelings effectively within the format of the Arabic qasida. This impelled
her to write her poem employing free verse.

(8) Al-Malā'ika, owing to her knowledge of English was the only member of her family to accompany her mother on her medical trip to London in 1953. For detailed information about this trip and Al-Malā'ika's psychological state at this time, the reader may refer to Al-Malā'ika (1974:9-10).

(9) This view is expressed by Bin al-‘Abid (1984:143) who states that "the poet does not truly welcome death......nor does she find comfort in it in any way".

(10) Al-Malā'ika's fear of death in her early collections gives way to a more positive view of it in her later collections including Qarārat al-Mauja (The Bottom of the Wave). In this collection, the poet appears more realistic and more optimistic in her attitude towards life.
CHAPTER FIVE

NATURE IN THE POETRY OF AL-MALĀ'ĪKA, AL-SHĀBBI, SHUKRĪ AND THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS.

Section One     Nature and the Romantics
Section Two     City and the Countryside
Section Three   Nature as a Teacher
Section Four    Nature and the Social issues
Section Five    Night
Section Six     The Sea
Section Seven   Nature and Childhood
Nature and the Romantic Poets

Nature in all its aspects and moods is given pride of place in the poetry of English and Arab Romantic poets. For these poets, the countryside came to represent simplicity, innocence, goodness and truth. In all these respects, it was regarded as different from the city with its crowds, noise and social and economic problems which limit the individual's freedom and imprison his healthy instincts and aspirations. The beauty of nature was thought to have a beneficial effect on man; in its presence man can be spiritually purified.

Two things are worth pointing out here. Firstly, not all poets, whether Arab or English, to whom the label "Romantic" is applied have the same attitude towards nature. For example, in spite of the fact that Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats are all keen observers of nature, as reflected in the symbolism and imagery found in their poetry, they by no means display the same interest in nature thematically or adopt the same attitude towards it philosophically and emotionally. While Wordsworth concentrates on the enormous and the everlasting element in nature, Shelley concentrates on its everchanging nature. Put differently, nature is a dynamic 'being' for Shelley, while, for Wordsworth, it is a static and constant entity. The difference between
these two poets may be explicated by means of an example. While Shelley would concentrate on the constant movement and change in a river, Wordsworth would observe only its static constancy.

Secondly, no Romantic poet adopts a rigidly fixed attitude towards nature which he uniformly displays in all his poetry. The attitude of each one of these poets is characterised by its fluidity and flux, although there is a specific flavour to the attitude of each poet towards nature. Romantic poets from many countries describe the magic of nature, its greatness and how it is the source of creation and inspiration. Poets as disparate as Rousseau and Jibrān extol the virtues of life in the countryside and comment with admiration on the simplicity and unpretentious character of the lives of the people who live close to nature. Such poets also advise people to listen closely to the sounds of rivers and lakes, to the singing of birds; they also call on them to absorb the calmness and serene atmosphere of the forest. At other times, these writers rebel against the ambivalence of nature and deplore its insensitivity to man's feelings.

Romantic poets personalise nature and describe its different facets and moods. They also deal with the beauty of nature, and dwell on the theme of "union" with nature. The relationship between man and nature is seen to be a dynamic one, reflecting in the main the
ever-changing moods and attitudes of the poets themselves.

Of the English Romantic poets it is perhaps Wordsworth who is best known for his love and admiration of nature, a feature of his poetry that has been remarked upon by many writers and critics. Wordsworth describes himself as a worshipper of nature and declares that his love of it is 'holy love', (1904:165):

and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
of holier love

Wordsworth loves nature in all its manifestations. He loves the meadows, the mountains, and the woods, etc. He loves all aspects of nature as he himself declares in "Tintern Abbey" (1904:164-165):

A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—

Concerning this feature of Wordsworth's poetry, Bloom (1970:132) states that Wordsworth "loves nature for its own sake alone, and the presences of nature give beauty to the poet's mind".
Wordsworth contrasts the permanence of nature with the man's short life on this earth. However, Wordsworth does not see any inconsistency between the ephemerality of man and man-made things, on the one hand, and the permanence of nature, on the other.

Wordsworth does not display a uniform or consistent attitude towards the relationship between man and nature. At times man and nature are depicted as separate entities; at other times the two are closely related to each other, so much so that the poet tries to understand man through his understanding of nature. He even expresses the view that love of nature leads to love of man. Nature also brings pleasure and inspiration to man, and this, in turn, leads him to a deeper understanding of nature and its secrets as well as life and its mysteries. Nature is a healer and a giver. The sight of a meadow full of daffodils is sufficient to fill the poet with pleasure and to excite his emotions and feelings.

Another English Romantic poet who loved and admired nature is Byron. Byron found happiness in the forest and was often attracted by the beauty of the sea. He declares that his love of man, great though it is, is not as strong as his love of nature, (1936:201):

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:
In the eyes of many critics such as Beach Coleridge is a better student of nature than Wordsworth. Coleridge's views concerning nature are more philosophical and thought-provoking. One may express the difference between Coleridge and Wordsworth in this respect by saying that the former poet is the idealogue, the latter the propagandist of nature.

In his famous poem "The Ancient Mariner", Coleridge links morality to nature. The albatross in this poem symbolises the beauty of nature, as well as love and innocence. By killing the albatross, the Mariner invites disaster on his co-mariners who are punished with death. Their fate, however, proves to be less drastic than his fate. He is consumed by remorse for having killed the bird, and learns, albeit too late, the simple lesson that no one has the right to kill any living creature. This is the way the Mariner describes his punishment, (1907:171-172):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{And now there came both mist and snow} \\
\text{And it grew wondrous cold:} \\
\text{And ice, mast-high, came floating by,} \\
\text{As green as emerald.} \\
\text{And through the drifts the snowy cliffs} \\
\text{Did send a dismal sheen:} \\
\text{Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken-} \\
\text{The ice was all between}
\end{align*}
\]
The Arab poets whose poetry forms the subject-matter of this thesis concentrate on different aspects of nature. Al-Mala'ika, for example, is most interested in "night" and such associated phenomena as the "stars", "moon", etc. This is reflected in the title of her second diwan 'Āshiqat al-Layl (The lover of night). Al-Shābbī, on the other hand, is most interested in "the forest", so much so that he is called the "forest poet". In contradistinction, Shukrī does not concentrate on any one phenomenon or aspect of nature.

These Arab Romantic poets are similar to their English counterparts in that they do not display a uniform attitude towards nature. This is especially true of al-Mala'ika who changes her attitude towards nature in a manner which accords with her mood and the state of her mind. For example, al-Mala'ika's love of the peaceful ambience in the mountainous region of Arbil, in northern Iraq, is strongly mixed with a gripping fear of the isolation and deafening silence of the area (1).

Nature, in all its aspects, figures prominently in al-Mala'ika's poetry. It is by virtue of this feature of her early diwans, i.e. 'Āshiqat al-Layl, Ma'sāt al-Hayāt and Shāzāyā wa Ramād that she is regarded as a "Romantic poet" by some Arab critics. For example, al-Ḥamdānī (1985-313) observes that the "poems of this period (that is, the Romantic period) are all about nature; thus she can be considered as one of the Romantics". The same
view is adopted by al-Sāmarā'ī (1975-61) who points out that "among the 'romantic' features present in al-Malā'ika's poetry is her love of nature and her longing for it". Al-Malā'ika expresses this attitude towards nature as follows (1981:181):

أحب الطبيعة حب جنون
أحب النخيل أحب الجبال

I love nature madly
I love the palm trees, I love the mountains.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān Shukrī is also generally claimed to be one of the nature poets in modern Arabic poetry. Shukrī's stay in England heightened his appreciation of nature. He fell in love with the English countryside, with its meadows, hills, woods, rivers and lakes. He also appreciated the difference between the English countryside, and the life style associated with it, and the countryside in his country. In his poem "al-Shitā' fi Inglīṭrā"—(Winter in England), Shukrī describes how the snow, resembling cotton wool, beautifully covers huge areas of the countryside. He also describes the fires which burn in English homes and imagines the warmth they spread around, causing the inhabitants' cheeks to glow (1960:615):

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Cotton-like flakes of snow have covered the earth with a white cloak, wiping away the dust of the earth. Striving in the full light of the day as the young man walks in a moon-lit night.

As though the fireplaces in the homes were laughing because of the intensity of the blazing fire. I imagined the spring coming to you celebrating and the fire is the flower of fragrant paradise. Its flames lighting the cheeks as though they were two embers blazing in the darkness.

It is generally agreed that Shukri was strongly influenced by the English Romantic poets whom he avidly read during his stay at the University of Sheffield. However, the influence of these poets does not seem to have played a crucial role in stimulating Shukri's interest in nature. This point is discussed by al-Shawā (1982:93) who declares that "Shukri's love of nature did not come about because of his reading of the English Romantic poets, in spite of their influence on him. On the contrary, his reading of these poets might have been
stimulated by his love of nature..."

Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbī is considered by many critics as the poet of love, beauty, revolution and nature par excellence in Arabic poetry of the first half of this century. A pioneer in the Apollo group, al-Shābbī is famous among Arab poets for the romantic atmosphere which permeates his poetry.

Al-Shābbī's attitude towards nature and his appreciation of its beauty seem to have been stimulated by several factors. Firstly, al-Shābbī was born in the city of Tuzeur which is found in a region renowned in Tunisia for its beautiful valleys, hills and mountains. This city also enjoys a temperate climate, being on the edge of the desert. Kerrou, a scholar who devoted a great part of his academic career and scholarly effort to studying al-Shābbī's works, describes Tozeur, as follows (1984:37): "Tuzeur is the biggest city of the Jarid region in the South West of Tunisia. This region is famous for its palm tree oases, flowing water springs, beautiful orchards, clear sky and its dry weather."

Secondly, al-Shābbī moved with his family from one part of the country to another owing to the nature of his father's job as a judge (2). This gave al-Shābbī the opportunity to see different parts of Tunisia: the sea, the mountains, the plains, the oases, the desert, etc. This experience heightened his appreciation of the
different manifestations of nature which remained with him until his death.

Thirdly, following his doctor's advice, al-Shābbī spent a few years of his life in one of the hilly regions of Tunisia, recuperating. Al-Shābbī's doctors thought that the humidity of the coastal areas and the heat of the desert, would have a detrimental effect on al-Shābbī's health. The beauty of this area and its peaceful atmosphere had a profound effect on the poet, strengthening his love of nature and his appreciation of its beauty and majesty. In his letters to his friends al-Ḥelēwī and al-Bashrūsh, al-Shābbī describes the beauty of the hills and the woods, and dwells on the enchanting songs of the nightingales which are found there. The language in these letters has a poetic quality which reveals a sensitivity of spirit unrivalled by any other nature poet in the same period.

In his mountain retreat, al-Shābbī was away from his friends and from the hustle and bustle of city life. His isolation brought him closer to nature in which he saw a friend and a companion who would listen to his inner thoughts and understand his feelings. This may be shown by the following quotation from a letter al-Shābbī sent to his friend al-Ḥelēwī from Tūzeur, on April 10th, 1932 (1960:52-53): "I am now in an isolation dear to myself, but this doesn't mean that I have run away from the city and taken refuge in nature's bosom in which I find an
expression of beauty, kindness and sympathy that I could not find in the hearts of the men."

It is clear from this letter that al-Shābbī's love of nature surpassed his love of man. This attitude on the part of al-Shābbī may be related to the fact that the people of Tunisia at the time accepted the rule of their colonial masters without any resistance. Their apathy seems to have degraded them in his eyes and to have deprived them of his respect and love.

Al-Shābbī's love of nature may also be related to the influence exercised on him by Jibrān, a leading member of the Mahjar group, with whose works al-Shābbī was well acquainted (3). Like Jibrān, al-Shābbī felt the awesome presence of nature, whose existence is independent of man's existence. Furthermore, the way al-Shābbī projected his feelings, thoughts and emotions on nature shows Jibrān's distinct influence on him. For both men, nature represents beauty, simplicity, purity, innocence and childhood (4).
During his long stay in the country, al-Shābbī often turned to nature for solace whenever he felt forsaken by fellow human beings. He saw the loftiness of beauty and the purity of life in the forest. In his poem "Quyūd al-Āblām" (Chains of Dreams) (1972:288) al-Shābbī expresses his wish to live the life of a poet, pointing out that this is only possible if he lives in the forest away from the stifling realities of the outside world; as such, he would live the life of a hermit who is not tainted by the unsavoury realities of life, (1972:288-9):

I wish to live like a poet getting to see that the world is too small for my dreams
Except if I sever my connections with the world and live for my loneliness and gloom
In the forest, on the mountain far away from people where natural scenery and fine beauty exist
To live the life of a pious ascetic
unsullied by any blame

He contrasts this type of life with life in the city in which he is forced to live. He describes how, in the city, he faces his destiny with a bleeding heart, and how he is forced to live his absurd life in a state of self-delusion and deception (ibid:290):

أنا الذي سكن المدينة مكرها
ومشي إلى الاتي بقلب دام
يعمي إلى الدنيا السفيفة راغما
ويعيش مثل الناس باللاوهام

I am the one who lived in the city against his will and marched forward facing the future with a bleeding heart grudgingly listening to this stupid world living on illusions, like other people.

Al-Shābbī does not hide his contempt for life in the city. In his poem "Aḥlām Shāʾir" (Dreams of a Poet) he extols the virtues of life in the countryside, where one can hear and enjoy the sound of water flowing in the streams, the songs of birds and the stillness of nature. In contrast, life in the city is characterised by deception, lies and meaningless gossip which fills the clubs and coffee-houses, (ibid:287):

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Away from the city and people,
away from the foolish talk of those clubs,
For it is made of empty and false conversation
and of ordinary idle talk
How could it compare with the purling of the stream
running in the wadi or with the reverberation of
the echo and the song of the singer.

According to al-Shābbī, the city has a corrupting
influence on people's characters and, therefore, is
responsible for their evil behaviour. A decent and
honest person may try and live his life decently in the
city, but so-called civilised people will corrupt him.
It is these unscrupulous and uncaring people who awaken
the dormant evil which is latent in man's inner self,
thus turning him into a killer and a criminal,
(1972:300):

ويتفي غاف المدينة، يستجي لحيتا، مخيبو، إجتثاراتا
بسطوا فيه نورة الشر، مانقض على الناس فانس، كبارا
بذر الرب في القلوب وثاني، حبها حل في الجواثم نارا

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A wretched person roamed the city, begging in order to survive but they contumaciously disappointed him. They awakened in him the tendency for evil, so he attacked people savagely and ferociously, spreading fear in the hearts of men, rekindling flames in the souls wherever he stayed.

Considering this corrupting influence of the city, its cruelty and the harshness of life in it, it is not surprising that the poet disassociates himself from the city because it fails to offer him anything constructive, (1972:189-190):

عمااااااااااااااااااااااااااادات من المدينة ، وهي عارفة

بماور الدم الممهدور ؟

عمااااااااااااااااااااااااااادات من المدينة وهـي لا

تعنو لغير الظلم الشريء ؟

What do I want from the city when it is submerged in blood shed in vain?

What do I want from the city it only submits to the oppressor and evil ones?

Al-Shābbī sees life in the countryside as the antithesis of life in the city. He also sees the countryside as the perfect place to which he could resort
in order to escape from the state of "apathy" and complete resignation which reigns over his people. He reckons that his life in the countryside would be completely devoted to poetry and to the appreciation of beauty, (1972:285-287):

Would that I were able to live in this world happy in my lonely and solitary existence. Spending my life in the mountains and forests in the midst of the swaying pine trees.

To sing with the nightingales in the forest and secretly converse with the stars, the moon and the birds, the river and the tranquil lights,
I want a life of beauty and art which I wish to spend away from my nation and my country,
Divorcing myself from the sadness of my people,
who live their lives like inanimate beings.

Al-Shabbi's desire to take refuge in nature in order to get away from the "apathy" of his people may be interpreted as a form of escapism. This interpretation loses its force, however, when considered against the background of al-Shabbi's involvement in the affairs of his country at the time. As a student, al-Shabbi was active in student politics, and he regarded it as his duty to try and open his people's eyes to the problems facing them and their country. Al-Shabbi saw the personal problems of the ordinary Tunisian to be intertwined with his problems as a member of a nation which suffered from exploitation by, and over-dependence on, the colonial French power. Consequently, al-Shabbi's seeming 'escapism' is, essentially a desperate expression on his part of his exasperation with, and anger at, his people's inaction. It is not an expression of his desire to dissociate himself from his people and their destiny, but a call for his people to rise against their colonial oppressor. This interpretation of al-Shabbi's love of the countryside is more consistent with al-Shabbi's reputation as the 'poet of revolution'. It is in the light of this background that we must interpret the immediately preceding lines of poetry, as well as the following lines, (1972:241):
O my people, I am going to the forest
to spend my life alone with my despair,
I am going to the forest, perchance I may
bury my unhappiness in the heart of the forest,
Forgetting you as much as I can, for you
don't deserve my wine and boon companionship.

The yearning to live in the countryside, with
shepherds and simple people, is found in al-Malā'ika's
poetry. Al-Malā'ika finds that such people live simple
and natural lives which are free from the complications
which clutter up the lives of so-called sophisticated
people in the city. Furthermore, al-Malā'ika expresses
the view that such people are true to themselves because
they have the time which enables them to pursue their
emotions and desires. In her poem "Fī Aḥḍān al-Ṭabīʿa"
(In the Lap of Nature) al-Malā'ika considers life in the
countryside to be infinitely 'richer' than life in the
city where noise, dust and dirt prevail (1981:148-9)
The shade of the willow trees is more beautiful than that of the palaces and balconies.
The singing of the shepherds is purer in tune than the din of the car horns and wheels.

The fragrance of the orange is sweeter and more fresh than the accumulating dust of the city.
O, how I wish I had a poetic hut there, amidst the meadows.

The life of the imaginative shepherd at the foot of the hills, where the delightful flock grazes near the banks of the stream is more pleasant than that of the rich man in his palaces.

In a manner reminiscent of al-Shābbī, al-Malā'ika considers the city as a symbol of cruelty and injustice. In her two poems "al-Nā'ima fī al-Shāri" (The Sleeper in
the Street) and "Marthîyya li-umra'a lâ Qîmata lahâ" (An Elegy to a Worthless Woman) al-Malâ'ika attacks city people and society on the grounds that they are devoid of kindness and humanity. In the city, 'humanity' has no place and people behave in an unnatural manner. In the city, people's main interest centres upon the seeking of enjoyment and pleasure as well as the search for illusory dreams, (1979:272):

Who should you complain to? No one listens or cares, humanity is a word without meaning.

People are like a deceitful mask with an artificial colour, behind its gentle manner hide a burning sense of hatred

The human race is slain by dreams and wine cups, and mercy remains as a word which one looks up in the dictionary,
They sleep in the street, without a refuge, neither their fever nor their suffering can intercede with people

This savage oppression in the name of the city, in the name of feeling. Shame on Humanity!

Although al-Mala‘ika opposes the artificiality of life in the city to the naturalness of life in the countryside, she is aware of the fact that life in the latter is not devoid of certain harsh realities, such as poverty and ignorance which affect people who live in the countryside. In this respect, she is more similar to Shukrī than to al-Shābbī. Her views of the merits and demerits of the countryside are more realistic and, therefore, more ‘reasonable’ than al-Shābbī's idealistic views. Shukrī's view concerning the countryside may be illustrated by the following lines, (1960:320):

I wish I were in the countryside, nothing in life occupying my attention except for the harvest and the pastures for my livestock! Were I in the countryside, grief wouldn't spare me. My soul wouldn't be pure and my sleep wouldn't be sweet.
Of the English Romantic poets, Wordsworth stands out as the most determined rebel against city life and the industrial growth which was threatening to overrun his society. He envisages the city as a force which corrupts people's true nature and threatens the purity of people's feelings and emotions. This idea is found in "The Prelude" (1904:548):

With deep devotion, Nature, did I feel,  
In that enormous city's turbulent world  
Of men and things, what benefit followed  
To thee, and those domains of rural peace  
Where to the sense of beauty first my heart Was opened; tract more exquisitely fair  
Than that famed paradise of ten thousand trees,

Perkins (1959:23) recognises this feature of Wordsworth's poetry; he observes that the city "reveals both the natural state, the burden, push and blind riot - and also the inevitable disease that human passion will create itself when unprotected and unredeemed by nature."

Wordsworth's rejection of city life is based on his experience of life in the Lake District in which he spent a great portion of his life, an experience which opened his eyes to the magic of the lakes, hills and turbulent skies. His preoccupation with the countryside in his poetry frequently extends to the people who are ordinarily associated with it. Thus, the people he
describes in his poems are often drawn from those who live in the countryside. This may be exemplified by the 'solitary reaper' in the poem of the same title (1904:230):

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

The Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain'
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;
I listened, mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.
Wordsworth describes the lives of country people in his poetry, and he tries to understand and express their emotions in his poetry. His choice of people of this type is based on the conviction that their lives reflect the simplicity and purity of nature, as he explains in the "Preface" to the 'Lyrical Ballads' (1904:734-5):

"The principal object proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life ... to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them ... primary laws of our nature ... Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity."

Byron also expresses his dislike for city life in his "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage". He mentions how life in the city is as bad as physical pain and torture (1936:100-111): 

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me,
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loath in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshy chain,
Class'd among the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.
Keats is less radical in his position concerning city life. Although Keats does not reject city life, still he calls on those who are imprisoned in it to take the time to observe nature and enjoy the sweetness of that experience, (1908:38):

To one who has been long in city pent, 
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair 
And open face of heaven, - to breathe a prayer 
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.

It is clear from the preceding discussion that the Arab Romantic poets discussed in this thesis share with their English counterparts a great love for nature which, on the whole, is seen as the antithesis of city life. Romantic poets show a great appreciation of the countryside, with its mountains, valleys, hills and brooks. The countryside is generally regarded as an inexhaustible source of pure thoughts, emotions and feelings. Unlike the city, the countryside is thought to be free from all the demeaning chores which inhibit man's freedom and individuality - two things which are highly regarded by all Romantic poets, whether Arab or English.

Of the Arab Romantic poets dealt with in this thesis, al-Malā'ika is the most similar to Wordsworth in terms of her choice of characters in her poetry. Her characters are mainly drawn from ordinary life. The
concerns of such characters, particularly women, constitute the main subject-matter in the following poems: "Marthiyya li-Imra'a la Qīmata lahā"(An Elegy for a Worthless Woman), "Al-Nā'ima fi -l-Shāriʿ" "Ghaslan li-lʿĀr"(To Wash away the shame),"Al-Khayṭ al-Mashdūd ilā Shajarat al-Saru" (The Line Tied to the Cyprus Tree), and "Yuḥka anna Ḥaffarayn" (The Story of the Two Gravediggers).

The last poem describes the life of two gravediggers, and how their never-ending work covers all seasons. She describes their feelings, what goes on in their minds, their fears and how their livelihood is dependent on the demise of other people, (1979:322-323):

وَحْدَنَا، وَحْدَنَا في سُوُّون
صَمَّمْتَنَا نَرَائِبَ كِيفْ تَمْتُت
في بَيْدِنَا، وَفِي مَقَلَّتِنَا العَرَوق
وَهَناَكَ يَنْتَظِرُ الحَيُّ خَلفَ التَّرَاب
في أَسِى وَعَذَاب
أَن بْيِلْل شَرْق
أَن يَرَاهَا أَخِيرًا بَأَعِينَتَا الكَابِية
نُعَبَر الْهَاوْيَة
لَنُعَيْدُ الْيَهُ الشْيَب
ذَلِكَ الحَيُّ فِي الْظَّلَمَات
أَهْ لَوْ لَمْ تَحْتَ في بَيْدِنَا العَرَوق
لَنُعَيْدُ الْيَهُ الْحَيَاة

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Alone! Alone on our own in silence
Watching how the veins die in our hands
and our eyes.
And there the living one awaits under the dust,
in despair and agony,
For the rising of a dawn,
To see us at last with our depressed eyes,
crossing the chasm
To restore youth to him,
To the one living in darkness,
O, would that the veins did not die in our hands
to restore life to him.

In "Marr al-Qiṭār", al-Malā'ika gives a detailed
description of the feelings, hopes, fears and aspirations
of an ordinary man travelling on a train. The man
observes, and is observed by other passengers who are in
the same position. The picture painted by al-Malā'ika is
a familiar one, involving ordinary people in ordinary
situations doing ordinary things.

Wordsworth, al-Malā'ika and al-Shābbī use the
character of the 'shepherd' in their poetry, albeit that
the 'shepherd' in the poetry of the latter poet is
al-Shābbī himself. However, while Wordsworth and
al-Shābbī treat the shepherd as a symbol for happy life
in the bosom of mother nature, al-Malā'ika uses the
'shepherd' as a symbol to articulate the misery and
sadness which surround her life.
Al-Shābbī's portrayal of the sheep returning home at sunset in "Min `Aghānī al-Ruʿāt" (From the Pastoral Songs), is one of the most touching scenes in his nature poetry. In this poem, al-Shābbī describes the beauty of the countryside in his native land (6). The poet, who is the shepherd in this poem calls on his sheep to follow him; he asks them to fill the valley with their bleating to express their happiness and pleasure. He also asks them to listen to the sound of the brooks, to enjoy the smell of the flowers and to see the valley being engulfed with mist, (172:373-4):

Follow me, my flock of sheep amidst the flocks of birds, 
And fill the wadi with your bleating, with happiness and joy, 
And listen to the whispering of the streams, and smell the scent of flowers 
And watch the wadi being covered with illuminated mist.

The shepherd-poet asks his sheep to listen to the sound of his flute which expresses his inner feelings, he likens the music produced on his lute to the song of the nightingale, (ibid:374):

Follow me, my flock of sheep amidst the flocks of birds, 
And fill the wadi with your bleating, with happiness and joy, 
And listen to the whispering of the streams, and smell the scent of flowers 
And watch the wadi being covered with illuminated mist.
And graze on the grass of the earth, and its new pastures
And listen to my flute, producing the most pleasant songs
tunes which ascend from my heart
like the scent of flowers, rising like
the happy singing nightingale.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this poem is
the contrast between "zamān al-ghār" (the time of the
forest) and "zamān al-nās" (the time of the people) (5).
The former is described as being ever young and youthful,
and is associated with sweetness and beauty, while the
latter is likened to an old, stooping man, with a sullen
face, (1972:376):

O, my sheep, you will not get bored in
the sanctuary of the shady forest,
The time of the forest is young, playful,
sweet and beautiful
The time of people is old, with a gloomy face,
reluctantly marching in a bored fashion over those plains.
This poem is not unlike Wordsworth's poems "The idle shepherd boy" and "The pet lamb". In the former poem, Wordsworth describes the beauty of nature in May (1904:66):

The valley rings with mirth and joy  
Among the hills the echoes play  
A never never ending song,  
To welcome in the May  
The magpie chatters with delight;  
The mountain raven's youngling brood  
Have left the mother and the nest;  
And they go rambling east and west  
In search of their own food;  
Or through the glittering vapours dart  
In very wantonness of heart.

In talking about the shepherd and his flock, Al-Shābbī and Wordsworth intend to describe the beauty of nature, its glory and nobility. They both idealise life in the countryside and emphasise the spontaneity of its people. However, these poets are not unaware of the sometimes harsh and destructive power of nature.

Wordsworth's view towards nature underwent a discernible change later in his poetic career. Whereas nature was initially seen by Wordsworth as the prime mover and motivator, later he claimed that his vision of nature was, probably, more perfect than nature itself. In his poem "Elegiac Stanza" (1904:452-3), Wordsworth relinquishes his mythical view of nature as a perfect
'being'. Years brought him wisdom which led him to have a more realistic view of nature, (ibid:453):

I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanised my soul.
Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

The same attitude towards nature is displayed by Byron in his poem "Lara". In this poem, the poet talks about nature's indifference to man's destiny; he mentions how, when man's time comes to an end on this earth, neither the earth nor the sky would shed a single tear over him (1914:301):

Immortal man! behold her glories shine,
And cry, exultingly "They are thine!"
Gaze on, while yet thy gladden'd eye may see:
A morrow comes when they are not for thee:
And grieve what may above thy senseless bier,
Nor earth nor sky will yield a single tear;
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall.
In her collection *Ma'sāt al-Hayāt* - *The Tragedy of Life*, al-Malā'ika frequently describes the life of the peasant and shepherd, using language which reveals her melancholy. In poems of this type, she begins by describing the beauty and simplicity of the countryside. She then describes the realities of nature and life in the countryside pointing out that it is far from idyllic. Poverty, drought and insecurity beset the life of the shepherd. The shepherd may be killed by wolves, which represent the threatening and destructive power of nature, (1981:103):

Brilliance and beauty?! O, how confused the shepherd is! How painful is the loss of brilliance and beauty!
Shortly, the wind will attack the willow trees and the flowers on the mountain sides.

The same idea is expressed in other poems, (ibid:100):

السنة والجمال؟ يا خيبة الراحة
عيا ويا ضيعة السنة والجمال
بعد حين ستصفح الريح بالصين
صاف والورد في فروع الجبال

إيه راعي الاغنام يا ابيها المقنع
كيف مات الراعي ولم تمت الاغنام
توى فوق العشب الندي النضر
نام يا للمقدر المسطور

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O, shepherd! You who is slain over the lush wet grass!
How is it that the shepherd died, but the sheep did not? O, it is all fate and destiny!

At times, nature is said to evoke sadness, fear and boredom. At other times, the very beauty of nature is regarded as awe-inspiring. This may be illustrated by what al-Mala'ika says concerning her visit to the northern mountains of Iraq (1979:413): "In my lifetime, I have visited many mountains in Turkey, Italy, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. But I have never seen any mountains whose beauty approaches that of the magical and wondrous beauty of the mountains in North Iraq: their beauty takes my breath away and makes me swoon..."

However, in her poem of "Fi Jibal al-Shamal" - (In the Mountains of the North) (1979:126), she explains how the beauty of the mountains in the north of Iraq fails to enchant her. She expresses her fear of staying for a long time in the area, as she imagines the ferocious sound of the howling wolves and the frightening sound of the rushing and ferocious winds.
Take us back, O train
Darkness is awesome here; the stillness is heavy
Take us back! The distance is great
and the nights are short.
Take us back, for the winds are wailing
behind the shadows
And the wolves are crying behind the mountains: its cries
Resemble the cries of despair in the hearts of men.

A similar attitude is expressed by Shukrī who
complains that the wind shows no sympathy or kindness to
man, it ignores the miseries visited upon him by destiny,
(1960:402):

بِاَرِيحَ مَالِكَ مِن غَطٍفُ وَلَا مَنْهَا
فَمَا حَنْوَى لَقُمْسِ القُلْبِ جُبَانَ
لَدَّ شَالِٰلِينَ عَنَّ الْحَادِي وَحَكْمَتِهِ
وَلَدَ شَنْحَوينَ مِنْ مُؤَدَّاتِ إِقْدَارِ
وَلَيْسَ بَعْنِكَ لَ سُوْل وَلَا سَبَبَ
فَلَيْتَ مَلكٌ إِبْرَادٍ وَإِسْدَارٍ

O wind! You are devoid of compassion and hatred
so, what compassion can I offer a harsh and
tyrannical person?
You don't ask about God and his wisdom
and don't mourn the assaults of Fate,
Questions and Causes should not concern you
I wish all that I receive and give were like you.

Even al-Shābbī, who is renowned for his love of
nature, sometimes expresses his disappointment with it.
In his poem "Shakwā al-Yatīm" - (The Orphan's Complaint),
al-Shābbī deplores nature's indifference to man's
miseries and his suffering, (1972:95-7):
On the beach, wherever the cries of the morning and the mourning of the evening raise a clamour I issued forth a sigh, released from the a heart filled with the tears of wretchedness and the thorns of despair.

The sighing was lost in the clamour with all the anguish in its heart So I moved on and called out: "O, Mother! Come to me! Life has got bored with me!"

I went to the forest, pouring out the pain in my heart, a pain like the burns
caused by a blazing fire,  
The wails rushed in my heart, oozing  
the din of the soul's mourning.

The forest didn't understand his anguish.  
But he continued repeating his songs,  
So I moved on and called out: "O,  
Mother! Come to me! Life has tortured me."

Then I stood by the river-side shedding tears  
which flowing out from the deluge of my painful sadness.  
Running silently down my cheeks, sparkling like the tears of Hell.

But the river did not slow down  
And the river did not stop its songs  
So I moved on and called out: "O, Mother!  
Come to me! Life has irritated me!"
English Romantic poets regard nature as a teacher. A source of goodness, nature can exercise beneficial moral influence on man. This view is manifested in Shelley's poetry. Shelley accepts that nature has an objective existence which is separate from man's. Nevertheless, nature can impart many lessons to man which, the poet states, only the "wise, great and good" can understand, (1907:530):

The wilderness has a mysterious tongue;  
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,  
So solemn, so serene, that man may be  
But for such faith, with nature reconciled;  
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal  
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood  
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good  
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

Wordsworth expresses a similar position in his poem "The Table Turned". In this poem the poet asks his friends to leave behind him the world of books and formal instruction, in favour of the lessons which nature can impart, (1904:377):

Up! Up! my friend, and quit your books;  
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! Up! my friend, and clear your books;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshning lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your Teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless-
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can.

Wordsworth also views nature as a truthful and trustworthy teacher who never betrays whoever genuinely seeks to learn from her (1904:165):

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her

However, this requires an active will on the part of man to try and understand what lessons nature can impart to him, (1904:206):
The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours;
and are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

This view is similar to the one expressed by Coleridge in his poem "Dejection". Coleridge declares that nature is a "giver", but in order to receive what nature can give, a reciprocal act of giving, on the part of man is required. Man must be prepared to listen and understand, (1907:323-4):

O Lady! We receive but what we give
And in our life alone does nature live.

This theme of nature as a teacher does not figure prominently in the poetry of the Arab Romantic poets dealt with in this thesis. Shukri, however, deals with this theme in his poem "Dars min al-Tabi' a" (A lesson from nature). In this poem, Shukri talks about the truthful character of nature and its trustworthiness. He does that by pointing out how the "Sunflower" can recognise the natural light of the sun, and how it is not fooled by any alternative source of artificial light (1960:562):
The sunflower worships the sun, not deceived by the flash of other light sources. It follows the direction of the sun immediately wherever it moves and sees light as a delightful ornament and a god. But we see hypocrisy as perfection, and purity as deception and foolishness. Have you (ever) seen the thirsty orchards being misled, reckoning the mirage to be water.

Nature can also stimulate man's intellect and curiosity, (ibid:514):

You woke me up while I was in a slumber, thinking all the universe to be my garment, A cry in your purling waters reminded me of my determination and my past keen energy.

One of the lessons which nature can teach man is that of forgiveness. This theme is most effectively articulated in al-Malā'ika's "Shajarat al-Dhikrā " (The Tree of Memory). In this poem, al-Malā'ika describes how she is reminded of her lover by the sight of a tree she
passes by. She stops, recalls her painful memories and cries over her past love. Depressed and sad, she leans against the tree and, with a small spike, she inadvertently scratches one of the branches, causing its flowers to fall to the ground. The poet regrets this incident, and she feels that by her wounding the tree, she has wounded the whole world. However, when she returns to the same place after a few years, still filled with vivid and painful memories of the incident, which took place during their first encounter, she feels a sense of elation when she sees that the tree has produced fresh branches and that the old wound has left no scars on the tree. The tree, which represents nature here, is a survivor: it forgets and forgives all transgressions committed against her, whether intentionally or not. Forgiveness is a lesson which man can well afford to learn from "mother nature", (1981:595-6):
I returned to it, as though the years and
Their destinies have not passed me by,
My heart was still captivated,
And the fire of my soul still blazing
Its shade covering me afresh,
And its flowers gently embracing my soul,
O, how noble it is! It has forgiven me,
although vengeance against my hand is still due to it.

I went round inquiring about its wound,
Haven't the hands of Fate healed it?
I have seen nothing but the freshness of life,
For the wound has left no trace.
As for the wounds of my sad heart
They still complain about the enduring misgivings
O, how amazingly transgressing time is
When will it ask forgiveness for its transgression.
NATURE AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Romantic poets use aspects of nature as a means of expressing their views concerning social and political reform. This is particularly clear in the poetry of Shelley and Wordsworth, on the one hand, and in the poetry of Shabbi and Shukri, on the other.

In his poem "To Toussaint L'Ouverture", Wordsworth celebrates the death of Francis Dominique Toussaint who led a rebellion against the French, in his capacity as Chief of the African slaves. Wordsworth declares that Toussaint's legacy continues after his death, through mother nature, (1904:243):

Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind.
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

In his poem "Ode to the West Wind", Shelley asks the wind to make him its "lyre" so that he could spread his revolutionary thoughts and ideas amongst mankind in an attempt to generate new ideas which will herald "a new
birth" for humanity, (1907:574):

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of the mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Al-Shābbī, who is generally known as "The Poet of Love and Revolution", sees himself as the bearer of a message he wants to divulge to the world and to his people through nature. In his poem "Irādat al-Ḥayāt" (The Will to Live), Al-Shābbī stresses the view that nothing can stand in the way of a people who are determined to live a decent and honourable life in their homeland (1972:406):

إذا الشعب يولا راد الحياة
فلبعوان يستجيب الفدر
ولبد لليل ان ينعي
ولبد لقيد ان يكسر
If a nation desires life one day, 
Fate will inevitably respond, 
The night will inevitably clear away 
and the chains will inevitably break.

He then spells out the message of freedom which he wants to relay to his people with the wind, exhorting them to take full responsibility for their future and destiny, (1972:407-8):

The wind growled in the mountains, 
on their summits and through the trees:
"If I ever have a noble ambition
I overcome all calamities, and forget caution"
I wouldn't avoid the difficult
terrain of the wadis, or the ball of raging fire"
He who does not like to ascend mountains,
will live in ditches for ever.

In his desire to rid his people of their apathy and overwhelming sense of resignation in the face of the tyranny of their colonial masters, the poet wishes he was as strong as the flowing stream, the wind, the
thunderstorm and the hurricane, in order to put an end to
their apathy, (1972:246-7):

I wish I were like the floods, destroying graves
in their course: one by one!
I wish I were like the wind, enveloping
everything which chokes the flowers with ill fortune.
I wish I had the strength of storms, O my people
unloading onto you the revolution in my soul,
I wish I had the strength of the hurricanes,
inviting you to life when they erupt.

Similarly in his poem "ilā al-Rīḥ" (To the Wind),
Shukrī wishes he were like the wind, so that he could
eliminate all evil from the world and spread goodness in
the same way in which the wind carries seeds from one
place to another (1960:407)
Would that my soul was a wind whose burning
gusts purify the universe from all evil and evil people,
Spreading abundance like tiny particles
which the breeze carries with flowers and fruits,
Or, would that I had an ever-free spirit in you,
would that the universe was my home, and that which
I yearn for my abode

The idea that the poet has a message to convey to
other people is also present in al-Malā'ika's poetry. In
her poem "Shajarat al-Qamar" (The Moon Tree), al-Malā'ika
describes a young man's love of the moon. He often
dreams of stealing it, and one day his dream becomes a
reality. He keeps the moon in his possession for a while
before he realises that everyone loves the moon and is
searching for it. To resolve the conflict between his
interests and those of other people, he comes up with the
ingenious idea of planting the moon in order to grow
other moons which, in turn, will multiply, thus spreading
happiness and beauty across the universe. This is how
al-Malā'ika describes the boy's reaction when he first
discovers that 'his' moon has multiplied into many moons,
(1979:436-9):
The young boy rose from sleep, refreshed, intoxicated. What did he see? O, dew! O, fragrance! O, sky!

There in the mossy yard, where the morning got accustomed to see nothing but grass grazed by the wind.

There, where the lotus tree used to stand, extending into the air with plaits clothed in green, rich in colour and luxuriant.

In this poem, the young man may be seen as a symbol of the poet who, by the very nature of his 'profession', cannot but share his thoughts and ideas with other people, together with all the pleasure which these thoughts and ideas give. Al-Malā'ika regards herself as the bearer of a message which she wants to impart to her fellow human beings.
'Night' occupies a prominent position in the poetry of English and Arabic Romantic poets. It is frequently dealt with in the poetry of Al-Malā'īka, Shukrī and al-Shabbī, particularly the former who called her first collection of poetry ʿAshīgat al-Layl (The lover of night). She refers to night as her friend who has the power to ease her pains and ease her sadness, (1981:546):

O darkness of the night! O, you which conceals the sadness of the heart,
Look, now! This is a ghost whose paleness is clear.

Al-Malā'īka also utilises the 'night' theme in order to express her feelings towards a host of issues. In the following lines, al-Malā'īka likens life to darkness which hung over a desolate and depressed place, (1981:568):

مَرَّتِ الْحَيَاةُ كَهَذَا السَّمَاءُ
ظُلْمًا وَوَحْشَةٌ جَوْهَةٌ كَكُيْبٍ
Life appeared to me as though it was similar to this evening: dark, desolate and depressing. Its sons dream of lights, but they live in a terrifying pitch-dark night.

This feature of al-Malā'ika's poetry is commented upon by al-Hamdānī (1980) who points out that night evokes an intense feeling of fear and loneliness in al-Malā'ika, reflecting her profound melancholy and her unsettled attitude towards life.

Al-Malā'ika, however, does not display a uniform, or rigidly fixed, attitude towards night and evening. Her attitude towards evening varies with her moods. While, at times, evening represents melancholy and sadness, at other times, it is the epitome of beauty and peace. In addressing her lover, al-Malā'ika paints a picture of a beautiful, star-studded evening in which they are wrapped. When she sees the moon, she imagines that she and her love are ascending the mountains on the face of the moon, to be away from all distractions, (1979:234-5):
Come! Let us dream that the beautiful evening is near,  
And that the tenderness of darkness and the cheeks of  
the stars call to us,

We will dream that we have ascended  
to roam its moon,  
And that we are playing happily away from people and free  
from the distraction of time.

In this poem, as in many others, evening is thought  
to have a dreamlike quality. This is clear from the  
preceding poem which describes the beauty of the stars  
and the moon and of the peaceful atmosphere of night  
which the poet loves and cherishes. In another poem,  
al-Mala'ika refers to the night as "an echo of  
ispiration" and as the "vision of a hopeful person",  
(1981:547-8):

إيه يا عائفة الليل وواديه الدغن  
هو ذا الليل مدى وحي ورؤيا متمي  
تstück الدنيا وما انت سوى آهة حزن  
مختدي العود عين العشب وغبني  
وصفي ما في السماء الخلو من بحر وفن

O, you lover of the night and its luxuriant wadi  
The night is similar to the echo of inspiration and  
the visions of one in hope  
Life burts out in laughter, but you are only  
a sigh of sadness  
So, lift the lute off the grass, embrace  
it and sing,  
And describe the magic and beauty in the sky.
Day is seen as the antithesis of night. In her poem "Thaura 'Ala al-Shams" (A Revolution Against the Sun), al-Malā'ika addresses the sun asking him not to shine on her world. She also regards the day as an unwelcome visitor who fails to excite her feelings, although they can be easily excited by the sight of the stars glittering in the sky, (1981:488):

Do not spread lights over my thicket;  
If you shine, this is not for my poetic heart, 
Your lights no longer excite my emotions, 
It is sufficient for me that the stars of night inspire my mind. 
They are my friends who stay up in the darkness 
Who understand my soul and the explosion of my feelings 
And gently extend the silvery rays in my eyelids 
In the magical evening.

A similar attitude is displayed by Shelley in his poem "To Night". In this poem, Shelley contrasts the day with the night and strongly indicates his preference for the latter over the former which he refers to as an 'unloved guest"
When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Languishing like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

Shelley also associates night with death, calling the latter the "brother of night"; he also calls sleep the "child of night". The poet calls on death to "Come soon, soon", (1907:631):

Thy brother Death came, and cried
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep; the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied
No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, Soon!

Al-Malā'i'ka's attitude towards the night may be related to her position as a woman in a male-dominated society which controls her freedom and inhibits her from spontaneously expressing herself. It seems that al-Malā'i'ka regards the day as the world of men, in which their male-inspired values dominate and take precedence over those of women. Daytime resembles a jail to al-Malā'i'ka, and men are seen as her jailers. In
contrast, the night symbolises freedom. It hides al-Malā'ika, the woman, away from the offensive gaze of men and shields her from their tyrannical and rotten values. Al-Malā'ika feels that she can divulge her innermost feelings to the night without any constraint or restriction. In other words, al-Malā'ika feels at one with herself during the night, as she explains in the following line, (1981:489):

الليل الحنان الحياة وشعرها

تهفو عليه النفس غير حبيبة

Night is the tune of life and its poetry

The soul rushes to it freely

This feature of al-Malā'ika's poetry is discussed by al- Başrı (1971:19) who points out that al-Malā'ika "does not welcome sunrise because it destroys her beautiful dream world, and because it opens the door to the world of housework in the service of men."

In other parts of her poetry al-Malā'ika talks about herself by reference to night. Thus, she is as calm and serene as the night; her inner thoughts and feelings resemble the invisible, deep and anxious secrets of the night, as well as its rebellious silence, (1979:100):
Like the night I am: tranquility, depth and open horizons

Also (1979:114):

The Night asks who I am!
I am its deep, black and anxious secret,
I am its insubordinate silence,
I have masked my true nature with tranquility
And enveloped my heart with suspicion.

Night in al-Malā'īka's poetry is amenable to many interpretations. For example, 'Uṣfūr (1985) associates the night in al-Malā'īka's poetry with the poet's overwhelming melancholy. Al-Sāmānī (1975) associates night in al-Malā'īka's poetry with her desire to love the world, which love turns into sadness and melancholy because it remains unfulfilled.

These, however, are not the only possible interpretations of night in al-Malā'īka's poetry. The poet sometimes refers to the night as "al-Layl al-ḥazīn"
(the sad night), still, at other times she refers to it as "al-Layl al-qharīb" (the obscure night). In view of the multiplicity of the descriptions of the night which one finds in al-Malāʾika's poetry, it therefore, would be unwise to give a fixed and rigid interpretation of night in her poetry. It seems, however, safe to speculate that al-Malāʾika's attitude towards the night and the dependent multiplicity of interpretations which emerge from it, reflect the poet's state of mind. Put differently, 'night' in al-Malāʾika's poetry is not merely a physical phenomenon, but the externalisation of the poet's thoughts and moods at different times in her poetic career. This view is more or less accepted by ČUṣfir (1985:536) who points out that" night functions as a mirror which reflects the different states of the poet's consciousness". As such, night is created in the image of the poet's inner self. This personification of the night is one of the most pervasive features of al-Malāʾika's poetry. Night is her only friend when her sadness reaches its extremes, (1981:539):

\[
\text{ليس الذ الحزن يعتني في كياني}
\text{وانا في ظلامة الليل الصديق}
\]

Nothing but sadness runs through my being, while I am in the darkness of my friend the Night
Al-Mala'ika ridicules people who blame her for loving the night. Such people are themselves open to criticism because they are, to their loss, unaware of the effect night has on man: it purifies and inspires him, (1981:483-484):

إن اكن عاشقة الليل فكاسي
مشروق بالضوء والحب الوريق
وجمال الليل قد ظهر نفسي
بالدجى والهمس والصمت العمق
ابدا امللا اوهمامي وحسى
بمعاني الروح والشعر الرقيق
فقدوا لي ليل احلمي وياسي
ولكم انت تبشير الشروق

If I am indeed the lover of the night,
My cup is shining with light and budding love,
The beauty of the night has purified my soul,
With darkness, whispering and deep silence,
Always filling my illusions and feelings,
With spiritual matters and fine poetry,
So leave me the night of my dreams and despair,
And keep to yourselves the first rays of sunrise.

Night is also seen as a refuge from the cares and anxieties of life, and from the sadness and melancholy which strike man from time to time. It is the poet's secret companion who listens to the outpourings of her soul. As Bin al-‘Abid (1980:52) points out: "Nothing less than throwing herself into the arms of her friend,
the night, can relieve the poet from her loneliness, sadness and depression." However, this attitude changes to "hatred" and disillusionment when the poet sees a drowned corpse cast by the waves on the sea-shore and left to lie there beyond mercy, (1981:510):

آه يا فيترشي، أي الماضي
قد كرهت الليل أضواء وضد
أيها الصياد، قد ألقى المراسي
إن تحت الليل جسما مضحلا

O, my guitar! What calamities:
I hate the lights and darkness
of the night.
O, fisherman! Stop, and put down your anchor,
For there is a shrinking corpse covered by
the night.

Al-Shabbi's poetry is also full of references to the night. In his poem "al-Layl" (Night) al-Shabbi refers to the night as the "father of misery and terror"; he also describes it as the abode of the "sweet brides of hope". He, further, likens the night to a "precious stone" or to a "beautiful tune". Obviously, night for al-Shabbi represents disparate things, (1972:137 and 48):

أيها الليل! يا أبا الهوى والهو
ل، يا ميكل الزمان الرهيب
فيك تجتو عرائس اللامع العد
ب، تعلي بعوتها المحبوب

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O, night! O, father of despair and terror!
O, you skeleton of terrifying time!
The brides of sweet hope rest on their knees before you, praying in their delightful voices.

O, night! You are but a speck, which has ascended to heaven from the foothold of the angry Hellfire.
O, night! You are a moving tune on the lips of time, amidst mourning.

Al-Shabbi personifies night in his poetry. Thus, the song which vibrates in the still and solemn heart of the night conveys to the soul the tune of truth and the reality of awesome beauty, (1972:138):

The song of tranquility which is shaking in your still and solemn heart
Makes the soul, listen to the echo of truth and captivating beauty in the calmness of hopes.

In his poem "Ilā Qalbī al-Ta'īh" (To my wandering heart), al-Shābī likens his heart to the night: both are dark and full of sorrow, (1972:228):

أنت ليل مظلم، تنزب فيه البكاءات

You are a dark night, in which the weeping women mourn.

Night in al-Shabbi represents depression and terror on the one hand, and beauty and wondrous things on the other, (ibid:80):

فسألت الليل، والليل كئيب، ورهيب
شاخصا بالليل والليل جميل، ورخيب:

I asked the night, but it was depressed and awesome
I stared at the night: it was beautiful and strange

يا ليل! ما تصنع النفس التي سكنت
هذا الوجود، ومن أعدائها القدر؟

O, Night! What will the soul which has inhabited this world do, when Fate is one of its enemies?
Al-Shābbī also often links the night with love. In "al-Saḥira" (The Enchanting Woman), al-Shābbī (1972:360) asks love to recite its poetry to the night, which will be thankful for that, (1972:307):

Let love sing poetry to the night
how often does its tune intoxicate the night
A night passion draped with
the grace of its soft, penetrating magic.

Al-Malāʾika's treatment of the night in her poetry differs from that of al-Shābbī in that whereas the former predominantly uses the night as a vehicle for externalising her states of mind and feelings, the latter employs the night as a symbol for the political and social oppression of his people at the hand of the French colonial power. Thus, the darkness of the night for al-Shābbī symbolises the gloomy conditions of his people and his country. Consequently, morning and sunlight symbolise for him freedom and liberty. In this respect, he differs from al-Malāʾika who associates freedom with the night, and lack of freedom and oppression with the
day.

Shukri glorifies the beauty of the night, and even goes so far as to regard those who fail to appreciate its beauty as having denied the existence of God, (1960:422 and 423):

\[\begin{align*}
\text{An hasn al-nil mukarram} \\
\text{fi shimer al-koun jadann}
\end{align*}\]

The beauty of the night is a noble thing whose hatred amounts to a denial of God.

This sign in the beauty of the night in conscience of the world is an emotion.

Shukri goes even further and equates night with magic and dreams, or a utopia which, however, do not last, (ibid):

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Ya nil bil ya surr bil}
\end{align*}\]

O night, nay! O magic, nay O dream would that you did not vanish

In his poem "Al- Layl" (Night) Shukri explains his relationship with the night. He likens the night to a precious stone or gem of which his soul is a reflection; both are dear to him and are to be protected and

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cherished. The curtains of the night envelop the poet who cries like a little child, (1960:448):

O gem, of which my soul is a picture in my possession you are kept in a well-protected place

My heart cries under its curtain like a child listing to the call of his playmate
As if these curtains are hung over the ultimate certainty

However, Shukri sometimes expresses his exasperation with the night which seems to last for a long time, thus extending his sorrow and feeling of despair, (ibid:66):

Why doesn't the mourning of the night disappear and why does not the eye of the horizon sleep peacefully It might be afraid of my awesome presence, to remove the wetness from my tears stealthily, Many a night whose darkness got bored with me,
were it to pass by the evil-doer, he would not flinch
I entertained it with sighs wrenched from my inner most being,
Why doesn't this night feel satisfied.

In "Laylat Naḥsin wa Laylat Saʿdin" (An Unlucky Night, a Happy Night), Shukri describes the less pleasant elements of the night as well as its more sublime qualities. In "Ṣaut al-Layl" (The Voice of the Night), Shukri describes how the doors of his inner soul and conscience open up to the night, (1960:118):

You filled the universe with deep breaths,
so everyone with a beating heart,
You spread glory over tranquility which, like sighing, floods your darkness.

You are the comfort of the great soul
if it listens to you it enters into the hidden secret,
The sound of the night is the same as the voice of the conscience with solemn messages like a guide carrying a warning
Whose echoes cause sighs to reverberate in the deep of the heart,
covering the soul with a dress of humility.
However, unlike al-Malāʾika, Shukrī welcomes the sunrise which puts an end to the long tiring night, even though he acknowledges that the night has the ability to understand the secrets of the heart. In "Tahiyya li-l-Shamsi 'ind Ghurūbihā" (Greetings to the Sun when it Sets), the poet calls on the sun to rise, describing the role it plays in man's life, (1960:33-35):

O sunrise shine and spread your light over the world, You are life for the young trees and jewels for the blooming garden. How could a soul not derive comfort from your brilliant beauty.

As though the sun unveiled itself in a veil of fire It inched away from the distant horizon as though it was an approaching lover,

Night is best privy to the secrets of the heart, it is the cloak of the lover, the thief, and the terrifying enemy.
Let us now consider the views of the three English Romantic poets: Shelley, Wordsworth and Coleridge towards the night, for the purpose of trying to show how their treatment of this phenomenon differs from that of the preceding Arab Romantic poets.

Shelley presents two contrasting views of night. To him, night may be a source of joy as well as a symbol of fear and terror. This view may be found in the following lines from his poem "To night", (1907:630):

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
   Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone day-
   Light,
Thou wovest?? dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,
Swift be thy flight !

Wordsworth extols the beauty of the night, but does not best upon it the same significance as al-Malā'ika or even Shelley. Wordsworth believes that one can appreciate the beauty of the sky, clouds, birds, stars and moon most clearly at night. This attitude on part of Wordsworth may be illustrated by the following lines from his poem "The sun has long been set", (1904:359):
The sun has long been set,
   The stars are out by twos and threes
The little birds are piping yet
   Among the bushes and trees;
There's a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes,
And a far-off water that gushes,
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
Fill all the hollow of the sky,
   Who would go 'parading'
In London, and 'masquerading'
On such a night of June
With that beautiful soft half-moon,
And all these innocent blisses?
On such a night as this is!

Wordsworth returns to the theme of night in, for example, "An evening walk", "A night piece" "I love upon a stormy night" and "It is a beautiful Evening calm and free". In the latter poem the beauty of the evening is said to enrich the poet's imagination and to make him see nature in an aesthetically pleasing way, manner (1904:205):

It is a beautiful evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
In sinking down in its tranquility;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Images relating to the moon and its light are often found in English Romantic poetry. Coleridge makes numerous references to this in his poetry, and he often associates the moon with creativeness; he calls it
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
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Images relating to the moon and its light are often found in English Romantic poetry. Coleridge makes numerous references to this in his poetry, and he often associates the moon with creativeness; he calls it "mother of wildly working visions", (1907:2):

Mild Splendour of the various-vested Night!
Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!

The moon and its light are describe in the following poems by Coleridge: "Ancient Mariner", "Christabel", "Kubla Khan", "The Nightingale", "Cain" and "Dejection", particularly the first two poems are bathed in the moon light.
Most Arab and English Romantic poets are fascinated by the sea, rivers, streams, and brooks. This is particularly true of Shelley as well as Shukri and al-Mala'ika. One of Shelley's idiosyncrasies was that of making paper boats. He had almost died trying to swim, and yet his interest in water sport continued, as is evident from the fact that he sailed with his friend Edward Williams across the Gulf of Spezia. For him the sea represents life as well as change and renewal. It also represents destruction and annihilation. Thus Shelley's fascination with the sea was combined with nightmarish terror.

It is worth mentioning here that Shelley's life ended at sea when, in 1822, he and his friend Williams set out from Livorno and were both drowned.

Shelley mentions these two sides of the sea, in his poem "A vision of the sea", the sea is regarded as a symbol of love and beauty, on the one hand, and fear and death, on the other (1907:594):

Death, Fear
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
Shukri's infatuation with the sea is reflected in his prose and poetry. His article "Ala Zahra al-Bahr" (On the Sea Surface) describes his journey from Egypt to Britain in 1909. In this article, Shukri talks about the majesty of the sea and how it separates places as well as people from others. Shukri admires the greatness, silence, and power of the sea. The changing shapes of the waves, and their enormous power reminds him of his vulnerability and weakness as a human being.

In his poem "Bahar al-Hasad" (The Sea of Jealousy), Shukri likens life to a sea full of jealousy in which people swim. He asks people to arm themselves with patience and fortitude against the forces of jealousy. The sea provides man with lessons which he would do well to heed. One lesson is that of humility, as the following lines illustrate, (1960:616):

People swim in a sea of jealousy
so protect yourself against it with patience and fortitude
Riding on its back with hope,
swimming amidst its wave and foam.

Look at the sea waves on the beach, and
you will see that their tail ends retreat and scatter
If a wave of hatred ascends, be patient
what wave has remained in full swing for ever?

Shukri wishes that he was as boundless, free and immortal as the sea. The sea is likened to "time" in its eternal nature; the sea is also free from the forces which affect man such as age and physical weakness, (1960:118-9):

I wish I were as deep as you, full to the brim. drinking from you as I wish

You are like time: You will not grow old, or decrease, or be a loser.

Shukri personifies the sea. Thus, the sea in its different moods is said to resemble man in his different moods. Shukri likens the sea breeze to the breath of a human being and its waves to the pulses of his heart, (ibid:119):

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Throbbing, pushing, gusting, and blowing as though you were alive, having a sensitive and feeling heart.

Your breeze is like breath, and your waves beat like the beating of a heart stirred by harbingers.

And also (ibid:650):

As though the sea was alive, with a heart, and the sea waves were the heart beat of all whose hearts beat.

He also likens the lover to the sea with its quiet and tempestuous moods, (1960:342)

You see the lover in his anguish like the sea vacillating between calmness and clamour.

Love has a majesty like that of the sea.
Shukri likens man's soul to the sea in its fullness and richness. Further, he likens poetry to the sea waves. (1960:335):

والنفس بحر زاخر والشعر من موجاتها

The spirit is a rich sea and poetry is one of its waves.

Shukri varies his "water images" extending them to include the river. In one poem, he mentions the feeling of solemnity which man undergoes when he sees the river at sunset. He also likens the river to a sheet of mercury. In the summer, the river might have been said to resemble pearls, or run like liquid, (1960:638):

كم خضع الغابرين من قبلنا على ضافر النهر وقت اللاتصال

والنهر كالزئبق في لمعة وركدة ما إن بها من سبيل لو أن بالنير سيل يسيل

Many a time has the passer-by who went before us displayed humility on the river banks in the late afternoon.

The river is like mercury in its sparkle; it is like still water which doesn't gleaming I reckoned it to be like diamonds in the summer.
if diamonds could run like liquid.

In his poem "al-Shallāl" (The Waterfall), Shukri considers the waterfall to be the brother of silence in its majesty, glory, and tempestuous moods. He likens immortality to the tumbling water of the waterfall, and his soul to the fine dust which is immersed in that water. He also wishes that life was as constant in its progression as the waters of the waterfall, (1960:512-513):

O, you brother of silence, in majesty and beauty

O, you twin-brother of calamity and recklessness.

I thought eternity flowed like your waters
and my soul like fine dust in it.

Would that life was like you, unabating
unlike lazy horses.

Perhaps life runs like water
between the earth and the sky.
There are numerous references to the sea and the river in al-Malā'ika's poetry. It is, however, given a symbolic value in al-Malā'ika's poetry, in that it often refers to the insecurity and vulnerability of the poet. Thus, she sometimes describes herself as a lost person in a remote and deep sea. She also talks about forces which play havoc with her life, comparing these forces to the surging waves of the sea which claim human life everyday, (1981:551):

I am lost, and life is a sea whose beach is far and very deep.
O, my boat, the sea is in a state of madness its waves raging and surging Everyday it claims the life of a slain man who won't wake up

Al-Malā'ika likens her feelings and emotions in their strength and vigour to the river in its predetermined and unhindered course; both are unstoppable, (1981:638):
O River, I could not conceal my emotions and feelings,  
Who can stop the flowing stream from maintaining its course.

Al-Mala'ika treats the river as a friend in whom she confides, telling it all her secrets and divulging to it all her sad and melancholic experiences. She asks the river not to reveal any of these secrets and heartaches, (1981:636-7):

O River, do not save my tears or the terrifying sadness of my heart,  
Hide your kindness from those tears of mine which have fallen in your waters,

Have mercy, you who privy to people, secrets and who treats those in pain kindly,  
And may the anguished heart which your kind waves have enveloped
I got rid of the sorrows of my heart, all of them, at your banks, I revealed the secret of my soul, all of them under the cover of darkness

As has been noted above, al-Malā'ika treats the sea and the river as symbols of the forces which reveal man’s vulnerability and weakness. This is clear in her poem "Marthīyyat Gharīq" (An Elegy to a Drowned Man) in which she talks about the body of a drowned person, being tossed about by the sea waves, (1981:508-10):

A skeleton, drowning for a while, then floating lost in the sad darkness of the night, Is it a human being or an apparition? I wish I knew, O night, what this might be. -- -- --

O, my poetess, this is a drowned person Feel sad for the rotten dismembered corpse, lying, in the dark, unable to wake up, And the high terrain surrounding it like a sleepless eye.
This theme also occurs also in "Al-Magbara al-Ghariqa" (The Submerged Graveyard) and "Qaṣīdat al-Bahr" (The Poem of the Sea), which, incidentally close affinity to Byron's poem "Child Harold's Pilgrimage". It is also found in "al-Fayadān" (The Flood), especially in the section entitled "Sawt al-Tashā'ūm" (The Voice of Pessimism).

In "al-Maghbara al-Ghariqa" (The Submerged Graveyard), al-Malā'ika describes an isolated grave standing on top of a hill, next to numerous other graves containing the bodies of poor people, as is evident from the layers of dust which cover these graves, (1981:524 and 526):

في ظلّة الليل المنيف الرميب
وتحت هول العاصف اللاهج
قبر على التل وحيد غريب
رانا عليه ظلة الموسيج
مقبرة اودعها الناسون
اشلاء الاموات الغانية
يا جتنانا ما كفنتها الموت
بعير اطباق الثرى الفانية

In the darkness of the terrifying and awesome night
And in the midst of the violent storms,
Stands a lonely and forgotten grave on the hill,
In the shade of the boxthorn tree.
A graveyard in which the wretched
Deposited the perishing corpses
of their dead,
O, corpses which calamities deposited in coffins,
Under layers of ephemeral dust.

The poet then addresses the river running in the vicinity asking it to be merciful towards the dead who have done nothing to deserve further punishment. The river is seen as an unreasonable force here while it uses its power indiscriminately, (ibid:526):

ُيا نهر لا حقّ على الميتين
حسبك ما سبته من نقاء
حسبك ما شرد من بائعين
وارفق بسكان الامراء

O, River, do not be harsh on the dead!
You have caused enough misery,
You made many wretched people scatter.
Be kind to the innocent inhabitants of this earth.

In her "translation" of Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", al-Malā'ika describes the power of the sea and the weakness of man in the face of nature's forces. The sea is said to be stronger than man; it is even
Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean-roll!!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stop with the shore,— upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

In "Marthīyyat Ghariq" (The Elegy to a Drowned Man),
al-Malā'ika asks a fisherman to remove the body of a
drowned man out of the water. The fisherman seems to be
unaware of man's weakness and vulnerability. The
fisherman acts as a predator, but he himself will end up
being a victim for the forces of time, (1981:511):

ما الذي تمتد في بحر الزمن
وقد يصطادك الدهر العتي
نحن يا صياد ابناء الشجن
عفا في محيانا النقاء اللافي

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What is it you are fishing for in the sea of time
Mighty destiny will catch you tomorrow.
We, O fisherman, the sons of anxiety
In whose faces eternal wretchedness had dried up.

Al-Malā'ika dwells on the theme of man's weakness in
the face of nature's powerful forces. Man's position in
this respect is likened to that of the body of a drowned
man which is completely at the mercy of the sea waves or
the currents of a river. She compares man to a corpse
which is violently tossed about by the sea waves or
irretrievably swept along by the river waters. This
theme of the weakness of man in the face of the forces of
nature represented by the sea and the river, is also
dealt with in al-Malā'ika's poem "al-Fayādān" (The
Flood). The (Pessimistic Voice) in this poem addresses
darkness, spelling out the poet's problems. It also
describes how the poet stood near the bank of river and
listened to the heaving sound of its waters. She also
describes how she is overwhelmed by the forces of nature,
comparing herself in this respect to a field completely
covered by the flood of the river, (1981:646-647):
O Darkness: Here is the Lover of the Night
staring persistently in the cover of darkness.
She stopped at the river bank to listen
to the sighs of the winds and waves
Feeling the deep sadness for a field, behind
the fence, sunmerged under water.

Man's helplessness in the face of the destruction
and carnage unleashed by the flood is effectively
described by al-Mal'ika, (1981:647-8):

The abyss of death came to them at night,
so they became the victims of the powerful void of the sky
And they proceeded to roam about in the darkness of the night
but there was no one to rescue them from the tragedy
Cries ascended in the darkness,
carried by the winds to the tree
It is the voice of the living, held in the clutches of death,
slain by the waves and destinies.
Al-Malā'ika's attitude towards the sea differs from that of Shukri's. It also differs from Wordsworth's attitude who sees the sea and the river as sources of inspiration through their beauty and calmness. This attitude on the part of Wordsworth may be exemplified by the following lines taken from his poem "By the Sea Side", (1904:356-7):

The sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest;
Air slumbers—wave with wave no longer strives,
Only a heaving of the deep survives,
A tell-tale motion! soon will it be laid,
and by the tide alone the water awayed.

Wordsworth acknowledges the power of the sea in his poem "Address to the Ocean". However, he does not view the destruction it wreaks on man with the same pessimism and despair which one finds in al-Malā'ika's poetry (1982:160-161)

How long will ye round me be roaring?
Once terrible waves of the sea?
While I at my door sit deploring
The treasure ye ravished from me.
When shipwreck the white surf is strewing,
This spray-beaten thatch will ye spare?
Come—let me exult in the ruin
Your smile is put on to prepare.
Wordsworth also compares the immortality of the river in comparison with man's transient existence in his poem "After Thought", addressed to his sister Dorothy after her death. Wordsworth here describes how the fact the river will run for ever, while man, notwithstanding his wisdom, bravery and youth, will vanish, (1904:303):

I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away-Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Man, who in our morn of youth defie
The elements, must vanish:-be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
We feel that we are greater than we know.

In his poem "Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds" Keats, talks about the power of the sea as well as about how the big waves feed on the smaller ones. This may be taken as symbolic of the conditions which obtain in human society, in which strong people always victimise weaker fellow human beings. The poet also talks about the beauty of the sea without, however, failing to recognise its destructive power, (1908:317):

The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave
An untumultuous fringe of silver foam
Along the flat brown sand; I was at home
And should have been most happy,—but I saw
Too far into the sea, where every maw
The greater on the less feeds evermore.—
But I saw too distinct into the core
Of an eternal fierce destruction,
And so from happiness I far was gone.
English and Arabic Romantic poets are similar to each other in that they postulate a strong link between nature and childhood, perhaps because of the presumed sense of freedom which prevail in both. Children, by virtue of their innocence, are generally thought to be closer than adults to nature. As far as English and Arabic Romantic poets are concerned, Nature and childhood seem to represent the innocence and the purity which they lost as they had grown older. Because of the cruelty, bitterness and disillusion experienced by the poet as an adult, he yearns for the innocence of childhood and seeks refuge in 'beautiful' and 'pure' nature in an attempt to recreate an 'ideal' world free from the oppression of the arbitrary rules, restrictions and prejudices which predominate in the adult world.

The Romantic poet tries to remember his childhood perceptions of the beauty of nature. This helps him relate to nature in his adult life in a manner reminiscent of his relationship to it in his childhood. In what follows, we will deal with this issue as presented by al-Mala'ika, al-Shabbi and Shukri in their poetry.
In her poem "ʻAla Tal al-Raml" (On a Sandhill) al-Mala'ika wishes she were still a young girl playing in the sand on the beach. The poet also believes that maturity made her less, not more, wise. This view is a reflection of the romantic idea that the child knows things instinctively without the need for formal instruction, and that the older one gets the less instinctively wise one behaves, (1981:30):

The place on the ancient hill where I used to sit still listens to the songs of my past I am still a child, except that I am more ignorant of the essence of my life and soul.

As she remembers the hills, her childhood seems to her to be like a paradise which has been taken away from her by an evil hand, (1981:33):

آه يا تلها أنا مكلما كنت فارجع فردوسي المفقود كيف أشيمة سبت رمك هذا جمال المعبودا

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O, hills, here I am still the same!
So give me back my lost paradise
Which sinful hand has usurped
the captivating beauty of your sands.

The poet's realisation that her childhood and early happiness had gone for ever, makes her bitterly aware of the frustrations of adult life. She declares that everything in her adult world causes her pain and suffering; she then describes how she tries to remember her carefree childhood to help overcome the frustrations of adult life, (1981:34):

My past and childhood had gone
my sensitive feelings compensated for the pleasures of my yesterday
Everything in this universe hurts me now,
this life wounds my soul.
The poet remembers when, as a child, she used to play with her friends in the hills, building sand castles. She likens her childhood to a story or a melodic tune, (1981:421):

I pass through life heading towards my past
and my feelings take me back to the hills
To where I used to sit alone on my beautiful hill
and to my wandering in the midst of the sweetly scented trees and their shade
In the company of a young girl
building on the face of the sand a throne of fantasy,
Our life is like a story and a song we sing,
it is like two hearts drawn on pure sand.

Like al-Malāʾika, al-Shābbī associates the purity of nature with the innocence of childhood. For example, in "al-Jannāh al-Dāʾah" (The Missing paradise), al-Shābbī remembers the time in his childhood when he fell in love with a little girl, and spent some time with her without
being watched or reprimanded for his behaviour. Such pleasant experiences in the poet's life are said to have taken place in the midst of beautiful natural scenery. He compares the beauty and magic of such experiences to the beauty of the flowers and the morning, (1972:361-2):

How many sweet days we spent on the slopes of the blooming wadi,
With silvery mornings, golden sunsets and dawns.
They were finer than flowers and bird songs
And sweeter than the magic of childhood
in the smile of the babe.
I spent with my beloved, without
anyone to watch or warn us
Except for childhood, all around us,
spending pleasant time with young love.

In another poem the poet compares his childhood with his adult life. Childhood is depicted as a period of simplicity and purity spent close to mother nature. In contrast, adult life is said to be a time of anxiety and undue concern over one's future, (1972:367):
During the time of childhood, simplicity and purity,
I used to live like nightingales, streams and flowers
Not caring whether the earth revolves around its orbit or not.
But nowadays my nerves are frayed and my feelings agitated,
My emotions burning, paying attention to the great and the contemptible.
Life tramples on my heart, and the vast universe crawls over it too.
This is my destiny, O human race! How wretched is the destiny!

This idea is re-iterated in his poem "'Alḥān al-Sakāra' ("The Melodies of the Drunk"). The poet imagines himself to be with his beloved, as if they both were just two happy young children spending their time playing in the mountains and valleys, (1972:400-1):
We amuse ourselves in the shade, like two happy children in the simplicity of childhood. On the beautiful rock of the wadi, experiencing unknown fears.

We go forth in the morning amidst the meadows walking and singing with the tuneful breeze, holding conversations with the spirit of nature listening to its singing heart.

In his poem "Ṣalawāt fi Haykal al-Ḥubb" (Prayers in the Temple of Love), al-Shābbī associates love and nature with childhood. The poet's beloved is said to resemble childhood, dreams, music and the sweetness of the early morning. She is also compared to a smiling sky, a moonlit night, a flower or the smile of the innocent new-born baby. The poet weaves a picture of innocence, beauty, youth and vitality which is said to characterise both nature and his childhood, (1972:303):
You are as sweet as childhood, dreams, songs, new morning
Bright sky, moonlit night, roses, and the smile of the new-born babe.
O, how astonishing is this gentleness, beauty, and tender luxuriant youth.

Shukri also associates childhood with innocence and purity. In one of his poems, he explains how people wish to return to childhood, as this period of man's life is characterised by innocence, peace, trust, purity and kindness. Childhood is said to be as pure as a Temple or 'place of worship' or as 'chaste' as life in paradise, (1960:571):

ورد كل رجح العقل مكتهل
ان لو يعود وليدا امره امم
وليس يبصر ان الشر مختل
يعود منه الهم والهرم
لكنها مهلة للقلب ينشدها
حيث الصفاء وعيش مؤه شيم
Every wise old person wishes he could become a child again, safe in his endeavours. But he doesn't realise that evil is approaching giving him anxiety and old age again. This is only a respite the heart longs for where there is purity, and life whose water is cold, with no enmity, deceit, trickery, grudge, treachery or crime. Where life is as pure as a house of worship, in the presence of childhood, the sanctified temple, flowers and children are the same whenever they combine; the purity of their beauty embraces all things.

Wordsworth often speaks of childhood in his poetry. He expresses his yearning for his childhood and for the pleasant times he spent in the countryside. He believes that a child can see nature around him with greater moral purity than the corrupted adult. Furthermore, the child can see God in His creation. Thus Wordsworth seems to regard childhood, nature and God as different aspects of one and the same 'reality'. However, man loses his innocence and purity as he grows older, as well as his ability to perceive eternal truths.
In "The Prelude", the poet remembers his school days and his childhood, and recalls the joy he derived from his association with nature. The poet talks about the beauty and freedom found in nature, associating the freedom of the lakes and the wind with the freedom man experiences in his childhood. He recalls the impact which the sight of rivers and hills had upon him as a child, (1904:498):

Was it for this
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song
And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a
voice
That flowed along my dreams? For this,
didst thou,
O Derwent! winding among grassy holms
Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,
Make ceaseless music that composed my
thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me
Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills
and groves

Wordsworth's views concerning childhood are also vividly set out in his poem "Intimations of Immortality". Here, Wordsworth explains how the child loses his innocence as he grows older. The separation of man's soul from God is likened to the loss of innocence on the part of the child as it grows older in a world full of
anxieties and worries, (1904:460):

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die a way,
And fade into the light of common day.

During childhood a person is free from the demands imposed upon him by social conventions and norms,

(Ibid:461):

Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might,
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!
It is clear from what has been said above that there is a great similarity between al-Malā'ika and Shabbi, on the one hand, and Wordsworth, on the other, vis-à-vis their views concerning the connection between childhood and nature. Childhood represents innocence, spontaneity and purity. In this respect, it is similar to nature which defies man's attempts to control it. Childhood is a time of freedom, while adulthood is a time of cares and anxieties which deprive man of his freedom and spontaneity. Love in its purity is also associated with nature and childhood. Wordsworth, however, differs from al-Malā'ika and al-Shabbi in that he regards God as one element in a triad of relationships involving nature and childhood. This, not surprisingly, is absent from the poetry of al-Malā'ika and al-Shabbi who, as Muslims, would be reluctant to "downgrade" God to the level of his creations, be they nature or childhood.

In conclusion, we can say that nature constitutes a major ingredient in the poetry of the Arab and English Romantic poets we have dealt with in this thesis. These poets describe the physical beauty of the mountains, lakes, rivers, flowers, night, stars, etc; they also use nature as a 'vehicle' through which they express their emotions and philosophical concerns on such issues as man's vulnerability and weakness. This is most clear in Al-Malā'ika's poetry. Al-Shabbi regards nature as a refuge to which he resorts in order to escape from his
cares and anxieties, both personal and national. Shukri articulates different views concerning nature and its relationship to man.

Clearly, the works of these poets do not present a uniform picture of nature. This is also true of English Romantic poets. For example, Byron treats nature both as a great lover and as a rebel. Coleridge regards nature as a source of deep moral and philosophical meaning, while Wordsworth is most concerned with the beneficial influence which nature can have on man.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

(1) See al-Malā'ika's poem fi Jibal al-Shamāl (1979:126-132)

(2) Al-Shābbī's family constantly moved over a period of twenty years. During this period al-Shabbi travelled to many places in Tunisia, including: Qābis, Tāla, Sīyāna, Qafṣa, Majāz al-Bāb and Ra's al-Jabal. For more information about the location of these places, the reader may refer to Kerrou (1984:4)

(3) For more information about the major poets' influence on al-Shabbi see Kerrou (1984; pp 97-99).

(4) In spite of the similarities which exist between Jibrān and al-Shābbī's attitudes towards nature, there are certain dissimilarities. For more information see Jayyusi: (1974:414)

(5) Another reason behind al-Shabbi's hatred of city life and his preference for life in the countryside may be owing to the fact that French colonialism was most effective in the city. The city is not merely a place of crime and human misery but also a place where one could see the manifestations of colonialism.

(6) Al-Shābbī was inspired by the beauty of the mountain region and valley of ʿAin al-Drāhim (20 KI north of Tunis) to write this poem.
CONCLUSION

Nothing is stronger than an idea whose time has come. This maxim aptly applies to the potent force with which Romanticism was unleashed in Arabic literature.

The impact of Romanticism on Arabic literature, with its emphasis on freedom of content and form in poetry, coincided with a feeling for the necessity of political and socio-economic independence in most Arab countries. Romanticism thus found a favourable atmosphere in which to flourish in Arabic literature, and was perceived to be in tune with the spirit of the times in most Arab countries.

Romanticism, to a certain extent, freed Arab poets from the clutches of a long entrenched classicism in Arabic literature. The simplicity, naturalness and spontaneity which the Romantic movement demanded of, and gave to, literature, enabled Arab poets to relinquish formal and over-confined speech. The language of poetry was popularly supposed to become more akin to the vernacular, though this did not always materialise.

Being relatively free from the shackles of classicism, the poet felt enabled to express personal feelings, desires and passions in a less formal and stereotyped fashion, employing for this purpose
accessible language and simple style which brought poetry within the reach of the majority of educated people and not only within the grasp of the chosen few.

From a comparison of the attitudes towards Death and Nature displayed by al-Malā'ika, al-Shābbī and Shukrī, with those of certain English Romantic poet, one can therefore conclude that while the foundations on which they build differ, there are similarities in their motivations.

The most fundamental points of coincidence of views can be seen in the expression of feelings of 'love' and 'passion' towards nature. Both Arab and English Romantic poets see the 'countryside' as symbolic of innocence and beauty. Both groups of poets contrast the innocence and beauty of nature with the oppressive force and artificiality of the city they loath. The English Romantic poet that most vehemently expressed this view was Wordsworth. He constantly called for a return to the countryside. Similar attitudes are taken by al-Malā'ika and al-Shābbī, although the reasons behind their views are not always the same as those expressed by their English counterparts.

Nature 'gives', but the extent of the giving depends on the readiness of man to receive. According to Coleridge, for example, man must be prepared to
appreciate the beauty of nature; if he is not, then he may find her a source only of sadness. This theme is echoed in the poetry of al-Malā'ika.

The idea of nature as moral guide often appears in the poetry of Wordsworth. Man can learn lessons of love, morality and forgiveness from nature more easily than from his fellow man or from books.

Though there is no evidence that al-Malā'ika was especially influenced by Wordsworth in this respect, the idea is echoed in her poetry, most especially in her poem "Shajarat al-Dhikra" (The Tree of Memory).

The attitude of the Romantic poets towards nature was not always a positive one. A number of these poets rejected the idealised picture of nature found in Romantic poetry at certain times, on the grounds that nature does not always respond positively and sympathetically to man's feelings, or to the turbulence which periodically engulfs his life.

The centrality of 'night' in both English and Arab Romantic poetry has been discussed in this thesis. For most Romantics, 'night' was seen as a source of beauty, peace and inspiration as well as a time when man's spirit becomes free from any limitations. In this context, we have stressed the special importance which the night occupies in the poetry of Nazik al-Malā'ika, so much so that al-Malā'ika can be called 'Poet of Night' par
excellence. Indeed, this is an apt description considering that she referred to herself as "The Lover of the Night". However, it is not easy to say that al-Malā'ika was influenced in this respect by the English Romantics.

The Sea is also a popular theme in Romantic poetry. Generally speaking, the Romantic poets, both Arab and English, regard the sea as a symbol of unbounded, unfettered, freedom and power. Arab Romantic poets who dealt with this theme seem to have based their interest on their innate romantic ideals rather than to have developed it as a result of English influence. One of the themes which is expressed in this context and which is particularly clear in the poetry of al-Malā'ika is the weakness and powerlessness of man in comparison with the strength and power of the sea.

Romantic poets often associate childhood with nature, seeing both as a source of innocence and beauty in their natural states. This association is particularly strong in the poetry of Wordsworth, al-Malā'ika and al-Shābbī.

Death is a major topic in Romantic poetry. Regarded by most Romantic poets as both a source of inspiration, and as a world of calm and peace. In this respect their infatuation with death is similar to their infatuation
with nature. They viewed death as a refuge from life's miseries, sorrows and frustration. As such, death serves a function similar to that of nature, in that nature, nature, provides those who can understand and listen to her with succour, releasing them from troubles and sorrows associated with city life. This infatuation with death is most clearly and strongly expressed in Nazik al-Malā'ika's poetry. Unlike her fellow Romantic poets, al-Malā'ika cannot strike a balance between life and death in her poetry. Her attitude towards death, typically, vacillilating between love and hate. At times, she talks about the ability of death to end her life's miseries, and at others she describes it as a voracious being, 'helt-bent' on destroying man.

Another theme dealt with by the Romantics is immortality. Al-Shabbi relates man's quest for immortality, and longing for as motivated by his recognition of the impossibility of achieving it. This realisation, and the inability of Arab Romantic poets to come to terms with it, endows their poetry with a sense of fatalism. It is therefore not surprising to see that the three Arab Romantic poets, dealt with in this thesis, all welcomed death in their poetry. In this regard they are somewhat similar to Keats whose poem "Ode to a Nightingale" seems to have exercised some influence on the Arab Romantic poets. In fact al-Malā'ika wrote a poem entitled "Ilā al-Shā'ir Keats" (To the Poet Keats)
which is directly inspired by Keat's Ode. Furthermore, the similarity between al-Shabbi and Keats manifests itself in the richness of the imagery with which they deal with death, and their strong feeling, even premonition, that they would die whilst still young. Shukri's treatment of death is the strongest romantic feature in his poetry, and it is mainly because of this that he is regarded as one of the Arab Romantic poets.
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