CHAPTER-II

The Contemporary Philosopher of Jibran.

The first half of the twentieth century, an important period in modernism in terms of artistic output, was dominated by literary giants such as Kafka, Thomas Mann, Brecht, Maupassaunt, Proust, Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Hemingway, Faulkner and many more. What is common to this avant-garde, committed or otherwise, realist or absurdist, is their distinct aversion for, in fact a virtual revolt against the romantic tradition of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and a Penchant for the special and ironic art where sentimentalization of all sorts is Purged and God and nature are Practically thrown out of the scheme of things. With Nietzsche's bold declaration at the end of the nineteenth century that God was dead, science displaced religion and a whole new set of values emerged. The modern modes of presentation and narrative techniques, however, somehow contributed to the great division between what is described as the highbrow and mass culture, which the post modern writing is trying, albeit pathetically to overcome. At the same time, however there was also a parallel set of writers, poet one should rather say, who, unfazed and unimpressed by the emerging anti-lyrical and anti-sentimental spirit of modernism. The so-called secular age, steadfastly continued with the metaphysical tradition but adapted their poetic forms and techniques to the modern concerns. The category of late-comers to the ideals of the nineteenth century belong to poets such as Hesse, Rlike,

Hofmannsthal, Eliot, Yeats, Tagore, Robert Frost and Jibran who continued to grant lyricism, idealism and spirituality a central place in their works. These poets who reconciled the human with the cosmology of the universe also struck a chord in many readers despite the shift in modern sensibility. They co-existed and continue to exist along with the first set of writers.

During Jibran's Comparatively short life from 1883 to 1931 the Arabic speaking world cane to consider him the genius of his age, while in the west his work has been compared to Blake, Dante, Tagore, Nietzsche, Michelangelo and Rodin.[57]

His popularity too as an oriental writer is unprecedented, and, after the works of T.S Eliot and W.B. Yeats, *The-Prophet* is today the most highly regarded poem of the twentieth century,[58] as well as being the most widely read book of the century. The objective of this chapter is to find out real contemporaries of Khalil Jibran from different parts of the world, based on their Philosophical writings and Arts. After a thorough study, it becomes clear that a number of literary figure who had Philosophical thinking and their name and fame spread worldwide. They are from different languages as Arabic, English, French and Bengali etc. The discussion will go through the distinguish figures who had kept their mind on philosophical area.

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[57] -Martin L. Wolf, Preface to *'Secrets of the heart'*, 1965
[58] -Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenkins, *Khalil Gibran: Man and Poet*, 2009, P-2

2:1(i) Rabindra Nath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore, recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, is internationally known as a great poet. He was born on May 7, 1861, in Calcutta, Bengal. From his earliest days, Rabindranath grew up in a house where all the surging tides of the Indian Renaissance were flowing around his daily life. In Bengal, this Renaissance found expression in three great movements-religious, literary and national and all these three movements found their votaries in the Tagore family.

Rabindranath's Poetic Career kept on flourishing in later years. His book *'Gitanjali'* brought him the Nobel Prize and international fame. Actually his fame as a poet has so much eclipsed his great contributions in literature, education and other aspect of life that the latter have rarely received the attention and appreciation that they really deserve.[59]

Tagore, often described as the first modernist of India, lived all his life of rightly one year in Bengal, wrote in Bengali and English and contributed in his own way to the Indian freedom movement without directly being a part of it, apart from fiction, music, and much later in life, painting were also his fortes. Two of the more than two thousands songs that he composed, along with their music, are today the national anthems of India and Bangladesh respectively.[60] Tagore

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[59] -Radha vinod Jalan-Tagore-*His educational theory and practice and its impact on Indian education*, University of Florida, 1976, P-2

[60] -Rosy Singh, Tagore, Rilke, *Gibran A comparative study*, IIAS, Rastrapati Nivas, Shimla, 2002, P-6

is rightly acclaimed as a synthesis of some of the finest aspects of East and West, and even if we restrict ourselves to what is available in English, five of his books, *Sadhana* or *The Realization of life (1913)*, *personality (1917)*, *Nationalism (1917)*, and *Capital Unity (1922)*, and *The Religion of Man (1930)*, plus a large number of lectures and essays identify him as a major twentieth century thinker.[61]

Other admirers of Tagore rightly emphasis his wise sense of balance-as the Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Vol. 8) puts it-combining "the best insights of humanists- and of other worldly seekers; of naturalist –and extreme partisans of spirit; of determinists and defenders of free will; of hedonists and ascetics; and of romantics and realize" (75) and seek to explain away his reputation as an oriental sage. As Amartya Sen notes, "To some extent, this Tagore was the west's own creation, following a tradition of message-seeking from the East, particularly from India, which as Hegel put it-had 'existed for millennia' in the imagination of Europeans" (Duttta and Robinson xviii) The Qualification "to some extent" is best amplified by Nirad Chaudhuri, who holds Tagore responsible for allowing himself to be seduced by the glamour of guru hood (Thy hand, Great Anarch 87).[62]

His Philosophical works

Amarty a Sen Comments: "some would compare Tagore's position with certain recent Philosophical works on the nature of reality, particularly Hilary Putnam's argument that "truth depends on conceptual schemes and it is nonetheless 'real truth'". But Putnam's "conceptual relativism" is one thing, Tagore's conception of truth

[61] -Asiatic, Vol. 4 No. 1, June-2010, P-27
[62] -Kaiser Haq, *The Philosophy of Rabindra Nath Tagore,* University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. P-28

quite another. The conceptual relativist, quite sensibly, argues that since truth is a property of statements, which are dependent on conceptual schemes, what we may accept as true will vary with the conceptual scheme.[63]

Tagore Philosophical outlook is based on Upanishadic idealism, but moving on from there he arrives at the empirical acknowledgement of external reality. He Quoted from the Upanishads, in "The Realization of the infinite", to prove the immanence of God: "Therefore when the Upanishads teach us to realize everything in Brahma, it is not to seek something extra, not to manufacture something new. I know everything that is there is in the universe enveloped by God..."[64]

Here, it is necessary to discuss one of his famous Philosophical works in particular way. So his *'Gitanjali'* is discussed in brief-

Gitanjali

The English version of *Gitanjali* made by the author himself from original Bengali with an introduction by W.B. Yeats was published in 1912 by the India society in London. It enthralled the literary circle in London and was an instant success in England, earning him less than a year later the Nobel Prize for literature. The poems in *Gitanjali* bear the characteristic oriental opulent imagery. The being and the other are in a dialectical but unequal relationship. The smallness of the being is emphasized by the signifiers such as 'small hands,' 'beggarly

[63] -Asiatic, Vol-4, No. 1, June-2010, P-29
[64] -Indrani Datta (Chaudhuri), *'The Blue Flame': An Elliptical Interaction between Khalil Gibran and Rabindranath Tagore*, Vidyasagar University, India P-114

heart,' 'frail vessel,' 'little heart,' 'little flower: The grandeur of the other is expressed through the signifiers such as "the king of all kings"[65] who possesses a throne, a golden chariot, a golden canopy and infinite gifts. He has a flute of a reed, breathing "melodies eternally new." He is the master, the father, the brother and the bridegroom, all at the same time. The real of the heart is central to this musical narrative charged with dream like sequences, real and surreal.

(The numbers in brackets in the section on *Gitanjali* refer to the numbering of poems in the 1953 English edition.):

My heart longs to join in thy song.[66]

Ah, thou hast made my heart captive in the endless mashes of thy music,

My master:[67]

I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in

Flower, knowing that thou hast thy seat in the innermost shrine off my

Heart.[68]

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[65] - Rabindra Nath Tagore, *Gitanjali,* Poem No.50
[66] -Ibid. Poem No.3
[67] -Ibid. Poem No.3
[68] -Ibid. Poem No. 4

Away from the sight of thy face my heart knows no rest or respite, and my

Work becomes an endless toil in a shore less sea of toil.[69]

When the heart is hard and parched-—[70]

That I want thee, only thee my heart repeat without end.[71]

Inside the realm of the heart is the seat the "inner shrine", the "sacred shrine" of the other. In the first 40 odd hymns God is invoked and the pace of invocation gradually increases in urgency. The poet seeks Him with his songs. It is a long wait and "still no sound of the wheels of the chariot."[72] Then the air is finally filling with the perfume of the promise:

I know not why today is all astir, and a feeling of tremulous joy is passing through my heart. It is as if the time were come to wind up my work, and I feel in the air a faint small of thy presence.[73]

At last, when I woke from my slumber and opened my eyes, I saw thee standing by me, flooding my sleep with thy smile. How I had feared that the path was long and wearisome, and the struggle to reach thee was hard.[74]

You came down from thy throne and stood at my cottage door.[75]

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[69] -Ibid. Poem No. 5
[70] -Ibid. Poem No. 39
[71] -Ibid. Poem No. 38
[72] -Ibid. Poem No. 41
[73] -Ibid. Poem No. 46
[74]- Ibid. Poem No. 48
[75] -Ibid. Poem No. 49

The poet experiences the other in all this pristine glory, in His awe-inspiring splendour. The cosmic music of the moment engulfs him. The heart is, however, not pure and it greedily seeks some wealth from this king of all kings. But it is the other who outstretches His right hand and says: "what hast thou to give to me?" The poet reluctantly makes a parsimonious contribution of "the least little grain of corn" from his wallet. At the end of the day, the poet empties his long on the floor and finds in it "a least little grain of gold." He weeps bitterly at his doubts and foolishness. The poet is bewildered and overcome with ecstasy with this profound existential experience. Strange indeed are the hues of the other, sometimes He reveals himself as the king who rules the world, sometimes he manifests himself as a mendicant begging for alms.

There is another change when the king arrives in the dark of the night, conch shells are sounded, thunder roars in the sky and the darkness shudders with lighting. A tattered piece of mat is spread out in the courtyard. In the morning the poet looks for a "stray petal or two" to keep as a souvenir. This time his humanity pays, ah me, what is it I find? What token left of thy love? It is no flower, no spices, and no vase of performed water. It is thy mighty sword, flashing as a flame, heavy as a bolt of thunder. The young light of morning comes through the window and spreads itself upon thy bed. The morning bird twitters and asks, "Woman, what hast thou got?" No, it is no

flower, nor spices, nor vase of perfumed water it thy dreadful sword.[76]

The poet muses over this strange gift. Why has God left death as his companion? Gradually the answer dawns on him that the sword is a reference to his battle with fears, the fear of failure and above all the fear of dying and death that put Shackles on his mind that need to be done away. God is offering him freedom of mind, a world without fear, a new awakening. The fluttering mind of the poet steadies as he realizes the snares of false metaphysics with its emphasis on religious life based on the trappings and paraphernalia of rituals, priests and sorcerers. With the sword or death as his adornment, he acquires a new confidence. The beauty of the sword (with its curve of lighting like the outspread wings of the divine bird of Vishnu) reminds him of the celestial beauty of death. He decides, this time with unshakeable certitude:

> From now I leave off all petty decorations, Lord of my heart, no more
>
> Shall there be for me waiting and weeping in corners, no more
>
> Eoyuess and sweetness of demeanour. Thou hast given me thy sword
>
> For adornment. No more dolls' decorations for me.[77]

The second set of hymns celebrates the Joy the Poet at the wonderful spectacle and his awakening thereafter. He understands that the path to the development of mind is through humility, purity of heart and love. He also realizes that deliverance lies not in renunciation but in

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[76] -Ibid. Poem No. 52
[77]-Ibid. Poem No. 52

accepting the gift of life, taking delights in sight, hearing and touch and in doing one's task in this world. At this point of the metaphysical encounter, there is the perfect union of the being and the other where the 'me' and the 'thee' become one, the hide and seek is over. The dazzling divine light spreads all over, lilies and Jasmines bloom, butterflies dance and the nature celebrates in a 'flood of Joy':

Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light!

Ah, the light Dances, my darling, at the centre of my life: the; the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love; the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth.

The butterflies spread their sails on the sea of light, Lilies and Jasmines surge up on the erest of the waves of light.

The light is shattered into gold on every cloud, my darling, and it scatters gems in profusion.

Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heaver's river has drowned its banks and the flood of Joy is abroad.[78]

Perhaps the most enduring of all images is a long poem on child as a metaphor of purity. The smallness and innocence of the child is pitted against the vastness and fury of the world the infinite sky, restless, deep and trackless waters, and deadly waves. The lines "on the seashore of endless worlds children meet," like the chanting of a

[78] -Ibid. Poem No. 57

mantra repeats itself four times. The poet wonders at the sacred origins of the sleep that flits on baby's eyes, the smile that flickers on baby's lips when he sleeps, the sweet and soft freshness that blooms on baby's limbs. These are for him the beautiful forms of the formless creator, the reinforcement of His infinite beauty. The grace of God turns seeds into sprouts, buds into blossoms and ripens flowers into fruits.

Now the poet appears to have arrived at some understanding of the mystery of life and death. Accordingly, for him, life and death are "twin brothers"; He recognizes and accepts the ephemeral nature of life. The poet no longer fears death, for this is the servant, the messenger of God. When the play time is over and death knocks at his door, the poet would open his gates, bow to him and welcome him, "oh, I will set before my guest the full vessel of my life-I will never let him go with empty hands." The poet is prepared for the final encounter, described as a sensual contact, with the other. He has a garland ready for the bridegroom whose messenger is death. The human being is the bride who leaves her home for the house of the bridegroom or the Lord, a common motif of Bakathir poetry. The poet loves death as he loves life. The contribution of life in death is expressed by the motif of sucking of a child:

The child cries out when from the right breast the mother takes it away, in the very next-moment to find in the left one its consolation.[79]

[79] -Ibid. Poem No. 95

The last ten or so verses are set on eager wait for death into the 'deathless.' The poet admits that the always sought the other through his songs. He is like a minstrel singing all time at the door steps of the divine other. The complete surrender and tranquility of the poet, the supplicant, concludes the collection of verses as if it were the legendary swan song celebrating the end of the spiritual quest, at the same time wet coming the journey to the otherworld:

In one salutation to thee, my God, let all my senses spread out and touch this world at thy feet.

Like a rain-cloud of July hung low with its burden of unshed showers let all my mind bend down at thy door in one salutation to thee.

Let all my songs gather together their diverse strains into a single current and flow to a sea of silence in one salutation to thee.

Like a flock of homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain nests let all my life take its voyage to its eternal home in one salutation to thee.

So one can see that the narrative, exuding optimism, proceeds at a staggering pace leaping from one existential situation to another, Despite the popularity of the romantic and sacred verses of *Gitanjali* among the masses as well as the intellectuals there are some Tagore critics who consider Tagore's reputation as a mystic a creation of the west. These critics are the children of Enlightenment, trained in secular studies, who believe in the strict cultivation of the mind at the expense of the soul and hence they attempt to downplay the

significance of *Gitanjali* in order to highlight a Tagore who was a patriot, social reformer and educationist, who fought against colonialism and ushered a new era of renaissance in Bengal. But a careful study of the narrative leaves one in no doubt that this image of the Eastern sage is the real Tagore.[80]

The Pen-ultimate poem of *Gitanjali* is a distinct pointer of this confrontation:

I BOASTED among men that I had known you. They see your pictures in all works of mine. They come and ask me, 'who is he?' I know not how to answer them. I say, "Indeed, I cannot tell." They blame me and they go away in scorn. And you sit there smiling.

I put my tales to you into lasting songs. The secret gushes out from my heart. They come and ask me, "Tell me all your meanings." I know no how to answer them. I say, "Ah, who knows what they mean!" They smile and go away in utter scorn. And you sit there smiling.

2:1(ii) William Blake:

William Blake was an English poet, painter and Philosopher like Khalil Jibran, although they were not from a same period and same language and literature, they are very much comparable for productivity and imaginative power. Through his poetry, Blake had the ability to create mental images with words; he also was an

[80] -Rosy Singh, *'Tagore, Rilke, Gibran, A comparative study'*, IIAS, Rastrapati Nivas, Shimla, 2002, P-15

accomplished engraved and painter who created visual images to complement his words. His visual art did much more than simply provide; lustrations for his poetry. From his perspective, his message would be incomplete if his audience were presented with only the poetry or only the visual art. He projected his message using multiple artistic media as if they were one, Blake wrote the text of the poetry, engraved negative images of the designs on copper plates with acid, printed positive images on paper, and then painted the paper to create images of the text of the poetry framed with visual art.[81]

[81] -William Blakes Philosophical legacy in Dalton trumbo's 'Johnny Got His Gun' and Metallica's, "one" available at internet source in 15/12/12


The Tyger.

Blake was also a Philosopher who not only was capable of "Thinking outside the box"- he insisted upon it. He refused to accept the established tenets of Philosophical or theological thought of his contemporaries. His artistic work reveals alternative interpretations of sets of concepts such as love and hate, Heaven and Hell, and good and evil. He did not consider such contrasting concepts to be opposites, but contraries that were both "necessary to human existence."[82]

He not only rejected the Anglican Christianity of his era, he offered an alternative interpretation of the very nature and personality of Jesus Christ that is significantly different than the biblical account.[83]

Blake's Philosophy on "imagination"

In this chapter a discussion will be made on the Philosophical idea of William Blake in general and his concept of imagination in particular. And this assessment completely based on the research paper entitled "William Blake's concept of imagination, Conf. University. Dr. Catalin GHITA, Universitatea din Craiova."

The concept of 'imagination' is central in Blake, and although presented in comparatively simple terms, it affords a multitude of semantic refinements. On the one hand, C.M. Bowra believes that, for Blake, "imagination is nothing less than God as he operates in the human soul. It follows that any act of creation performed by the

[82] -William Blake, *Heaven and Hell*, PP-109, 413
[83] -David Bindman, William Blake, *His Art and Times* (Themes and Hudson), 1982, P-3

imagination is divine and that in the imagination man's spiritual nature is fully and finally realized', on the other hand, as Engell[84] deftly notes, Blake's 'idea of imagination has roots in Philosophical and religious traditions that include both esoteric and popular elements and which extend back through the eighteenth century, the hermeticists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Renaissance, medieval and ancient philosophy, and sacred Hebrew poetry, Moreover, Engell points out that several connections may be established between Blake's imagination and that of Pico Della Mirandola, Meister Eckhart, Jakob Bohme, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, Emanua Kant and Schelling. His English forerunners include Bunyan, Milton, Shaftestbury, Joseph Warton, Akenside, Collins and Christopher smart. Despite all these influences, Blake's idea of 'imagination' retains original features, and is to be discerned and described appropriately. Engell's blunt yet suggestive definition, according to which 'Blake is a protestant revivalist[85] in the radical sense of the word,' is quite fit in the context.

Further on, Engell remarks that Blake's idea of imagination can be closely related to that of both Coleridge and Schelling, although Blake fails to discern amongst various levels of imaginative force. The scholar also notes that the visionary poet restores to its full power the syntagm natura naturans, 'the forming of plastic spirit that works in God and in the human mind', found in Spinoza or in Scotus

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[84] -Engell a philosopher who kept his mind in imagination and asserts that it is in imagination alone that a valuable key to the concurrent understanding of both enlightenment and Romanticism is to be discovered.

[85] -By 'revivalist' one commonly understands a person dedicated to enhancing the strength of a particular religious trends or thought.

Eriugena. Subsequently, Engell draws an interesting parallel between Blake's fourfold vision and the chronological development of Schelling's philosophical thought (the Fichtean incipit the naturphilosophic, the identitats philosophie, and the mytho-theological synthesis.) The scholar's conclusive view on Blake coincides with Coleridge's, in that the visionary is an 'anacalyptic poet', rather than an apocalyptic one, and explanation which the scholar furnishes is satisfactory enough: 'The anacalyptic poet (from Greek anaup, back, again, excessively+Calyptein, to cover, conceal) literally re-covers in order to recover and restore; only when we become initiated to his symbols can he be called "apocalyptic". Thus, Blake's heterodox and confusing language is explained via an intricate network of etymological refinements. The conclusion of the whole study is that Blake furiously and repeatedly attempts to restore the already fully fledged concept of antiquity: he is 'trying to reintroduce the oldest and most mysteriously resonant idea of a divine-human imagination.'

In Blake's thought, imagination ranks as the foremost mental faculty at both immanent and transcendent levels (human and divine), but its ultimate meaning is to be sought in its closely interdependent relationship with inspiration. If one were to give credit to Damon's interpretation, one should say it is Paracelsus who originates the pivotal role of imagination in Blake's art. According to the German physician all alchemist, imagination plays a capital part in all human activities, operating 'through man's spiritual body, which dominates his physical body.' Be that as it may, it is safe to say that Blake

borrows at least a few ideas from the alchemical tradition. Moreover, Leonard W. Deen's careful analysis of the role played by imagination in Blake's poetic thought leads that the artist's aesthetic credo may well originate from the ancient alchemical idea, according to which successful spiritual harmony stems from the conjunction of the masculine, or active, element, and the corresponding feminine, or passive, one: 'In Blake's psychology, imagination is not the ruler over desire and reason but their source, and hence balance they achieve, and hence the balance they achieve when the energy of desire has the initiative.'

In order that he may properly grape the ultimate meaning of imagination, Blake contrasts the latter and the mnemonic faculty in man. Blake reaffirms the nature of imagination as an essentially spiritual mirror of man, and concurrently, marks an already familiar distinction between fancy and memory: "imagination is the Divine Vision not of The World nor of Man nor from Man as he is a Natural Man but only as he is a spiritual Man imagination has nothing to do with memory.'[86]

Thus, memory disrupts vision, and cause an artistic work to be imbued with conventionality, artificiality, and imitative characteristics. Although invoked in poetical sketches, memory is afterwards discarded and even ridiculed by Blake, in a Herculean attempt to purge his work of all philistine, no visionary traits. The poet even comes to conceive of two sets of feminine figures: the

[86] -All Blake Quotations are drown from the compete poetry and prose of William Blake: Ed. David V. Erdman, 1982

Daughters of inspiration, who govern visionary art, and the daughters of memory, who protect mimetic art (fable or allegory.) Frye holds that 'imagination is construction and communicable', whilst "memory" is circular and sterile, Kathleen Raine, in her turn, speaks about the double meaning of 'art' and 'life' in Blake, one pertaining to visionary imagination, the other-to mimetic ratiocination: 'the art and life of imagination, informed by intellectual vision; and the art of the ratio, of the human spectral selfhood, based upon the copying of nature---'. Finally, Damroseih, Jr. underlines that memory is tantamount to fracture and dispersion, as opposed to the constructive unity of imagination: memory is in Blake's view the symptom of a fragmented consciousness that interprets reality as a collection of discrete phenomena instead of a single form.

Imagination---has no need of memory because it perceives everything as simultaneous unity. Nevertheless, Damon contends that 'there was more memory in Blake's vision than he admitted', implying that any poet, however biased to words theoretical originality he may be, falls victim to the acquired artistic instruction, as well as to the literary conventions of his age.

Subsequently, imagination is simply equated with the body divine, residing within each and every living individual. In Annotations to Berkely's 'Siris', this idea is thrice reiterated, each time with only slight alterations: 'imagination or the human eternal body in every Man', 'imagination or the divine body in every man', 'The All in Man The Divine image or imagination'. The same definition is

repeated in (the Laocoon): 'The eternal body of Man is The IMAGINATION (capitalization in the original), and in Blake's last letter to George Cumberland 'The Real Man The imagination which Liveth forever. At one point in his Annotations to Berkeley's 'Siris', Blake attributes God's anthropomorphization to the theological conceptions of Jesus, Abraham and David, whose views are in Sharp contrast with the abstractions of Plato and Aristotle: Jesus as also Abraham and David considered God as a Man in the spiritual or imaginative vision. This naturally induces the idea that it is Jesus himself who identifies imagination with the real man: 'Jesus considered imagination to be the Real man---. Finally, once the poet has attributed his own ideas to an illustrious biblical tradition, there by accrediting and even ennobling them, he can draw the conclusion that 'Man is All imagination' and that man and God are one, of course Greek philosophy is pernicious and must be dealt with quickly and harshly: 'what Jesus came to Remove was the Healthen or Platonic philosophy which blinds the eye of imagination The Real Man', Trapped in his own flam boyant convictions, Blake seems to forget that, in his own writing, he felt free to borrow from Plato and Aristotle more than once, and that the Gospel of John which he much admires has a purely Platonic idea at its heart, i.e. the pre-eminence of the Logos.

The primary function of imagination in actual life is to establish an empathic connection between the individual and the cosmos. According to Blake, the self can escape formulaic depictions and emotional Shallowness by using a certain imaginative trope: the

prsopoeia.[87] The exterior universe can only be loved by means of the latter's personification. A human presence ennobles an otherwise static vista, and allows the imaginative beholder to experience love divine, as Blake holds in his Annotations to Swedenborg's 'Divine Love and Divine Wisdom': 'Think of a white cloud, as being holy you cannot love it but think of a holy man within the cloud love springs up in your thought, for to think of holiness distinct from man is impossible to the affections.' Moreover, according to Blake, it is through the incessant exercise of this foremost faculty that the creative self apprehends noumenal reality. Phenomenal contents of the world can exert a pernicious function on the unfolding of imaginative components, in the sense that the former may be able to Slacken the activity of the latter: 'Natural objects always did and now do weaken deaden and obliterate imagination in Me.'

At a purely aesthetic level, imagination acquires a prominent status. That Blake attributes not only the inchoate stages of creativity but also its final ones to imagination becomes transparent if one examines the artist's Annotations to words worth's poems: one power alone makes a poet-imagination The Divine vision. Imagination is converted into the epitome of the aesthetic process, the regulating force that is able to fashion a work of art according to the artist's own convictions, beyond the confines imposed by the inspiring agents. Imagination also accounts for the perfection of forms as a result of the poet's mental activity, nature playing no part in their generation. Here

[87] -Prosopoiea may be equated with anthropomorphism. It is worth mentioning here that John Ruskin is the originator of the 'Pathetic phallacy' syntagm, aimed to describe the metaphorical anthropomorphization of in animate objects.

in lies the active principle of an anti-naturalistic consciousness, refusing any involvement of nature in the aesthetic field, and placing human activity above all other values. Man's intellect is to be extolled mainly because it is capable of projecting flawless worlds, rather than perfectible natural universes, as Blake points out in his Annotations to the works of Sir Joshna Reynolds: 'All Forms are perfect in the poets mind, but these are not abstracted nor compounded from nature (but are from imagination.)

As he composed---

> When you enter into their
>
> Their Bosoms you walk.
>
> In Heavens and Earths: as in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven.
>
> And earth and all you behold, tho it appears without it is within.
>
> In your imagination of which this world of morality is but a shadow.[88]

2:1(iii) Rilke and his Philosophical deeds

Jibran, Tagore and Rilke were contemporaries of the fin-de-siecle generation but there is no evidence of one being influenced by the other although their worlds sometimes intersected through common acquaintances, Rilke's fifty-two years were marked by a sense of physical and metaphysical homelessness. Officially he had an Austrian passport. After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the way for some time stateless and then he became a Chech

[88] -The complete poetry and prose of William Blake, Ed. David V. Erdman 1982, P-225

citizen. But early in life he had already turned his back to his hometown, the beautiful but provincial Baroque city of Parague, preferring to stay elsewhere in hotels or remote and deserted castles placed at his disposal by his friends and admirers. He was never apologetic about his preference for the European aristocracy Vis-e-Vis the bourgeois boarding houses. But he never really had a place he could call his home. Writing poetry in German and French and a few poems in Russian and Italian, he was always on the move-Russia, Denmark, Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, with his longest stay in Paris, about ten years. It is an interesting although a little known fact in the narrative of his life that in his last four years Rilke wrote as many as three hundred eighty poems in French. His epitaph bears the lines:

'Rose, oh the pure contradiction, delight of being no one's sleep under so many Lids.' He was buried according to his wishes in Raron, Switzerland.[89]

Rilke, Tagore, Blake and Jibran wrote a great deal of poetry and prose (short story, play, novel, essay) and Tagore, Blake and Jibran were also pictures but ultimately it is as poet that all of excelled. Jibran met the Legendary Auguste Rodin in Paris, the capital of fine arts, and Jibran is said to have been influenced at least to some extent by Rodin in his paintings of nudes, Rilke's association with Rodin is well known. It is under Rodin's tutelage that Rilke wrote the celebrated poems like 'Der Panther' and 'Archaischer Torse Apollos.' He wrote Rodin monograph and some more articles on his works. Despite some

[89] -Rosy Singh, *'Tagore, Rilke, Gibran A comparative study'*, IIAS, Rastrapati Nivas, Shimla, 2002, P.P-6.7

unpleasantness between them, Rilke continued to hold the again maestro to great regard and dedicated his 'Neue Gedichte' (New Pomes) to him.[90]

DAS STUNDENBUCH (The book of Hours)

The book, whose title is inspired by the French medieval tradition of livres d' heures, devotional breviaries for lay use, is divided into three parts. Part-i, the book of a Monastic life, has a collection of 67 poems. According to Rilke, the cycle of poems 'came' to him as a 'Diktat.' These poems are, at one level, intensely in ward and private conversations with the divine, at another they are love verses where the sacred and the secular intertwine perhaps in the context of his close relationship with low, a married woman, thirteen years older to him and intellectually his match who apparently inspired and guided him in his life. Part-ii, the book of pilgrimage, was composed after a break of a year or so in 1900. It coincided with the birth of his daughter, Ruth, Part-iii, the book of poetry and Death, again a cycle of 34 poems. It mirrors terrifying images of urban poverty Rilke confronted in Paris.[91]

The book of a Monastic life, part-I:

This book explores the reciprocal relation of the being and the other with the being in the image of a monk addressing the divine other. The narrative beings with the invocation of hour signifying a new day. The monk feels that they must gather the strength to carry on

[90] -Ibid. P-8
[91] -Ibid. P-17

with another day for 'things' are far from 'Vollendet' or complete. None is too small to be loved; one can always paint it with a graved golden background and transform the same into something magnificent and who knows whose soul it would set free. So divinity is present in all things in equal measure and thus the dual nature of being God is transformed into a non-dual relation of being-thing-God. 'Thing' in all probability, refers from the point of view of the poet, to a work of art. The circular movement of life is emphasized. One ring leads to another and the days and years add up although no one can predict the last ring. The poet says that he has been revolving around the tower of God for millennia without ever being sure of his stature, is he a falcon a storm or a great song.

Ich Kreise um Gott, um dea uralten Turm,

Und ich Kreise jahrtausedelang;

Und ich weip uoch nicht: bin ich eim Falke, ein sturm

Oder ein grober Gesang. (SWI, P-253)

I revolve around God, the tower of the ages,

Along my millennia way; am I a falcon in Flight, am I a storm as it

Ragges, or a mighty song? None can say.

Hymn number 6 is about the complementary relation of the being and the other. They are 'neighbours', both need each other and hence derive their being from each other. God also needs someone to remember him and take care of him, pour him a drink when he is groping for it, for he too is stands between them and it is very much

possible that one call from either side of it would be enough to cause its collapse. In any case, this wall is artificial, comprising of images of God, be it Priests, idols or church. The monk laments that these images with their frames frustrate his view of Him; the light within him is able to only illuminate the frames for the middle men block the actual view.

Nur eine schmale wand ist zwischen uns.

Durch Zufall; den es konnte sein: ein Rufen deines oder meines Mund

Und sie bricht ein.

Ganz ohne Lorm und Laut.

Aus deinen Bildern ist sie aufgebaut. (SWI P-254)

A thin partition's all there is between. That's change; for it might be perhaps a sudden call from you or me would mean its quick collapse.

Quietly, without ado

That wall is made of images of you.

Rilke creates binary oppositions in many sections to make his point. This poem laments the unnecessary construction of God with concrete images as opposed to an abstraction of God. The poet laments the futility of constructing grand places of worship, for who can ever construct or reconstruct His perfection. Just as the great Roman Empire is no more, one day the world would also be no more, but His glory expands in infinite space in his spacious dreams from the low foundations to the golden heights. It is with his senses that monk

builds His topmost final. So clearly the poet's God dwells inwards and not in intuitions.

Part-ii, The Book of Pilgrimage

It is the being praying again after a long break. He hopes he can be heard through the wind for his prayers are powerful. He reminds God that he is the same one who on his kness prayed in Monk's robes. He repeats in the first few prayers that he is the same one who sometimes timidly used to ask him about his identity. In this absence he had been fragmented and dispersed into pieces, distributed among adversaries and laughed at. The monk compares himself to a house after it is burnt down, where only murderers sometimes sleep; he was like a city on the sea shore where an epidemic breaks out and the children have death wrapped on the hands. Painfully he collects the bits and pieces from garbage and old glass, puts them together and with hands outstretched offers himself to the other whom he needs like daily bread. He counts himself and God has the right to spend him. There are many references in the text to God's gestures. Relevant idea of Rosy Singh flows now as she mentioned that the reciprocal relation of being and the other is articulated in this section in terms of the father-son relationship. The father yearns for the return of the prodigal son, whom he no longer understands. The son is more than the father for he is everything the father was and that which he did not become. He is the future and the return, the womb and the sea. The poet says, in a marked departure from theological and popular discourse that he is the father and God the son.

Du bist der Erba.

Shone sind die Erben, den vater sterben

Slhne stehn and bluhn

Du bist der Erba. (SWI P-314)

You're the inheritor.

Sons are inheritors,

Since fathers die perforce.

Son's blooms the seasons through you're the inheritor.

Attending to the title of this section, there is a long description of a procession of pilgrims-bearded old men and children, pregnant tired women, blind men and even dogs all drinking water from the same river of life. The streets would never be empty of those who seek Him like the search for a rose that blooms once in thousand years. It is indeed a long way and the pilgrims always talk in terms of possessions, (my wife, my house, my---) but who can ever possess Him. Caught in the trap of possessions, they invariably get exhausted before they reach their goal; so God remains alone and lonely. In the end the poet raises his bleeding hands which he writers, in the wind towards heavens and the soft spring rain falls on him another gesture of God.

Part-iii, The Book of poetry and Death:

Rilke lashes out at the rich of the day whose wealth is nothing compared to that of goatherds in deserts of earlier times. The poor and

the wretched are skeletons covered with all the dust and soot of the cities. They are like broken pitchers thrown away or calendars of the year gone. But they are still purer than the precious stones, pure as a newly born animal still blind, they are simple like goatherds who wish to be nothing but what they are. Unlike the alienation and estrangement in cities, the shepherd is involved with his landscape and is at home in his environment and with his vocation. The solitary shepherd in communion with his environment is the ideal figure in Rilke's discourse. The poetry of shepherds is the same as that of the Buddhist monks, Hindu Sadhus, Sufi saints. This poverty as described by Rilke is at the same time a kind of aristocracy, after all, the poet's God is also poor.

Du bist der Arme, du der Mittellose,

Du bist der stein, der Keine statte hat,

Du bist der fortgeworfene Leprose,

Der mit der Klapper umgeht vor der stadt. (SWI P-356)

You are the poor one, of all wealth denuded,

You are the stone for which no place is found.

You are the leper, outcast and excluded,

Rattle in hand, outside the city's bound.

The poet's God is naked, poor and helpless like a newly forming foetus about to be aborted by an unwed mother; he is poor like the spring rain wasted on city roods, poor like a wish made by a convict or poor like sad flowers along rail road's, poor as the hand into which

we weep. He is called the "rose of destitution." The poet prays to God not to abandon the non-rich so that they do not get trampled or hounded.

Many critics argue that young Rilke of 'The Book of Hours' is different from the nature Rilke of 'New Poems', Malte Novel or the 'Duino Elegies'. Depending on their individual tastes, some are disappointed whereas others consider his later works more secular and refined and hence an improvement from the eclectic early writing, the so called a pen pres. His work is a continuation of the same discourse of beauty, love and pacifism even if the forms differed overtly and became, with time, more subtle and sophisticated. In an essay on the appreciation of the beauty of Rodin's sculptures, Rilke says: "Sie stehen nichtauf der Erde, sie Kreisen um Sie". It is as if his sculptures were celestial bodies revolving around earth, like Rilke's Russian monk encircling around the tower of God.

2:1 (iv) Ameen Rihani:

Life and contributions:

While Jibran is the most celebrated Arab American writer and most familiar to U.S. readers, Ameen is "the father of Arab American Literature". He was the first Arab American to write a novel in English and hence the first to address himself to a western audience and an international audience at large. He is regarded as the founder of 'Adab Al-Mahjar' (immigrant Literature) and one of the pioneers of the movement of modern Arabic literature and thought.

Among readers of Arab American literature, Rihani is indeed known for being "the father of prose poetry". Through his Hutaf-ul Awdiya (Hymn of the Valleys), he was the first Arab poet to introduce free verse to the traditional Arabic poetic canon, although with less imaginative and emotional intensity, than Jibran's poems. This new free verse style of poetry reached his fellow Arab poets both in the U.S and the Arab East, and continued to have an impact on modern Arabic poetry throughout the 20th century.[92] Rihani also had an impact on the development of the art of the essay in modern Arabic, which built his reputation as a forward thinker and a visionary.

During Rihani's lifetime, Arab American literature gained in prosperity and strength, by 1919, there were nine Arabic-language news-papers, many of them doilies, supported by 70,000 immigrants. Arab American literature witnessed a more sophisticated stage in which writers were more familiar with western thoughts.[93]

Rihani can be classified as both a Romantic idealist and a Realist. He was a rebel who dealt with the abstract and the spiritual, but was at the same time socially committed. As a political analyst and activist, he advocated East-West understanding, particularly a dialogue of peace between the U.S. and the Arabs, and worked for the liberation of Lebanon and Syria from the Turkish rule, as he was an opponent of the Ottoman regime.

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[92] -Sana Mecharek, *'Khalil Gibran and other Arab American Prophets'*, The Florida State University, 2006, P-36

[93] -Nada Najjar, *"The space in between: The Ambivalence of Early Arab-American writers"*, University of Toledo, 1999, P-154

Rihani had a keen knowledge of both East and west and constantly talked about the virtues of both. In 'The path of vision', for example, Rihani celebrates intercultural exchanges and emphasizes East-West synthesis that unifies the spirit of the East and the mind of the West. According to Najjar, Rihani once said; "the most highly developed being is neither European (including the American's) nor oriental, but rather he who partakes of the finer qualities of both".[94]

Among his many accomplishment; Rihani was the one to revive a tradition of travel works in Arabic literature in the twenties and thirties. He was the first Arab traveler of modern history to present a counter Orientalist perspective. He potrayed the realities of Arabia including the spiritual and intellectual heritage of his land.

In fact, Rihani, remained faithful to his Arab roots. He reconciled his Christian and Muslim Arab background and believed in a rich synthesis of Christian and Muslim heritage, a synthesis that rejects fanaticism and extremism. As a person with a bicultural identity, as both an Arab and an American, he brought Western ideas, such as personal freedom and cultural accomplishments, to his Arab audience, and applied Western literary concept to Arabic themes. In return him enriched the English language through his translations and transmitted elements of Eastern spirituality to his English speaking readers.

For example, 'The Path of Vision', reflects a Western discourse that values individual freedom, Rihani writes:

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[94] -Qtd. In Najjar, Ibid. P-133

"If we are concerned in breaking the fetters that are fastened upon our bodies

> And souls by external agencies only, we are doomed to failure. But if we become aware of the fetters, which we, in the sub-consciousness of centuries of submissions, have fastened upon the spirit within us and strive to free ourselves of them first, then we is certain to triumph. For freedom of the spirit is the cornerstone of all freedom. And this can be attained only by realizing its human limitations and recognizing its divine claim. It might be said too that freedom is to spirit what gravity is to matter. It is inherent in it and limited, yea, fettered by it. To know and recognize this truth is to rise to highest form of freedom."[95]

Rihani's American education and readings of Western culture had an impact on his literary career. Like Jibran, Rihani's family immigrated to the United States for a better living. According to Walter Dunnavent, the twelve year old Rihani was sent to a church school in New York City for one year, and then was taken to help in the family's bookstore, while working there for the next four years; Rihani devoted a big part of his time for his readings. He became familiar with Shakespeare, Rousseau, Victor Hugo, Washington and Carlyle. He later added Emerson, Whitman and Thorean to the list.[96]

At the age of 19 Rihani joined a touring stock company and played various roles including Hamlet and Macbeth. Then after the failure of company he started law studies in the New York Law School. A long

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[95] -Bushrui, *'The path of Vision'*, New York,1990, P-8

[96] -Sana Mechrek, *'Khalil Gibran and other Arab American Prophets'*, The Florida State University, 2006, P-38

infection, however, interrupted this new direction.[97] He returned to Lebanon in 1898 where he taught English in a Church school and had a similar experience to Jibran's four Year break in Beirut, studying Arabic and discovering the richness of the Arab heritage.

After he went back to New York City in 1899, Rihani started contributing to Arabic-language news papers like al-Hoda, al-Islah and al-Ayyam where he wrote about social traditions religion and politics in Lebanon. He later joined several literary, artistic and political associations.

In 1905 Rihani returned to Lebanon during which period he met with Arab writers and journalists.[98] He also developed an interest in political activism mainly in regards to the issue of Syria's independence from the Ottoman Empire, a cause which Jibran strive for.

During his early acquaintance with Jibran, he wrote to the Al-Mahajer news paper praising one of Jibran's articles which criticized Arab writers for imitating their traditional predecessors and for using poetry for financial gains. In 1910, Rihani and Jibran planned to have an opera house built in Beirut for the promotion of the arts.

Along with the Romantics and the transcendentalists, the Sufis influenced much of his style, Sufism, or Islamic Mysticism, focuses on an inner spiritual experience of a union with God and the unity of existence. His Sufi poetry included in "A chant of Mystics" and other

[97] -Walter E Dunnavent, "Ameen Rihani in America; Transcendentalism in an Arab American Writer, Indiana University, 1991, P-14
[98] -Ibid. P-20

poems sings of the spiritual oneness of all things. The following is an extract:

"We are not of the east or the west;

No boundaries exist in our breast;

We are free

Nor crescent nor cross we adore;

Nor Budha nor Christ we implore;

Nor Muslim nor Jew we abhor;

We are free".[99]

Rihani wrote about a wide a range of topics like Arabic Renaissance, political and social issues, modern American painting, Russian ballet, etc. he produced 26 volumes in Arabic (poetry, short stories, criticism, and historical and political analysis) and 29 in English disclosing different subject matters including Philosophical views also.

The most distinguished of his writings are his novel *'The book of Khalid (1911)'* which influenced many of his successors like Jibran and Naimy and his translations of the Arab poet Abu'l-Ala-Ma'arri which appeared in 'The Quatrains of Abu'l-Ala (1903)', then in a revised version under the title 'The Luzumiyat of Abu'l-Ala (1918)'.

Also notable are his 'A Chant of Mystics and other poems (1921)', his social and reformist essays in 'The path of Vision (1921)', and his

[99] -Ameen Rihani, *'A Chant of Mystics'*, and other poems, 1921, P-106

travel triology, Ibn Saond of Arabia: His people and His Land (1928), around the coasts of Arabia (1930), and Arabian peak and Desert: Travels in Al-Yamen (1930).

In the early 1920'S, however, Rihani shifted from his mystical themes in *'The Book of Khalid'* and 'A Chant of Mystics and other poems' towards a more overtly political literary approach. His image of the exotic mystic disappeared in favor or another, image of a Spokesman for the Arabs and their causes.

Rihani indeed chose to vcturn to his homeland where he started dis travels throughout the Arab world. He continued to write in English but interestingly, his writings were Arab in their culture and issues. Rihani developed his interest in Pan-Arabism and the situation in Palestine, while Jibran and Naimy continued their transcendental course which focused on the imaginative and the lyrical and went beyond the real world.

Rihani's Arab nationalism was a "departure from the mahjar literary tradition he himself initiated".[100] In contrast Najjar argues that his Arab nationalism actually fostered the literary path he had already taken.[101] This seems consistent with Nash's argument that while maintaining his bi-cultural identity, Rihani focused on Arab unity in a

[100] -Nadim Naimy, *'The Lebanese Prophets'* of New York, Beirut: 1985, P-30
[101] -Nada Najjar, *'The Space in between; The ambivalence of Early Arab-American writers'*, University of Toledo, 1999, P-132

World where the orient and occident have a reciprocal relationship".[102]

Rihani's Arab identity was not an enclosed one but had a universal dimension. He articulated Middle Eastern issues to western figures and remained faithful to the cause of East-West understanding and the liberation of the Arabs from foreign dominance. Bushrui asserts that that Rihani "firmly believed in his country, Lebanon, and saw it in the context of the great Arab heritage, as he saw the Arab World in the wider context of the family of nations".[103]

Rihani is a thinker who envisioned a revived Arab world that reaches out to the western world. He dreamt of building Arab unity through a confederation and urgew the Arabs to reform their political system and build a true democracy in addition to a new interpretation of the Quran. He attributed the decay of Arab societies to sectarianism, fatalism, and stagnation. Rihani also wrote much about Palestine Vis-à-vis the growing Zionist movement. He believed that spiritual Zionism could proper peacefully in Palestine but warned that political Zionism would lead to violence in the region.

Here an effort will be made on the spiritual and mystical concerns of Ameen Rihani as reflected in his master piece, the first novel written in English by an Arab American; The book of Khalid.

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[102] -Geoffrey P. Nash, *The Arab writers in English*: Arab themes in Metropolitan Language, 1908-1958, 1998. P-78

[103] -Suheil Bushrui, "*Arab-American cultural Relations in the twentieth century*". The thoughts and works of Ameen Rihani, 1990, P-2

Rihani wrote *'the book of Khaild'* in his mountain solitude back in Lebanon. It was later published in 1911 after he returned to New York. The novel reflects Rihan's Philosophical thought and his spiritual and sentimental tendencies. Though written in English, it is predominately Arab in its themes and concerns in addition to the fact that it borrowed many words and expressions from the Arabic language.

Critics view *'The book of Khalid'* as a book of ideas. Dunnavent, for example, notices that story becomes a vehicle for introducing the ideas.[104]

The book is an account of the immigrant experience and of the liberated Arab mind in its quest of spirituality, reconciliation of East and West, and of reform.

The plot is divided into three parts, each one called a "book" and each representing a different stage of Khalid's spiritual quest. "Book the first: in the exchange" tells the story of Khalid from his boyhood bin Lebanon to his tiredness from materialism in American as well as his intellectual, emotional, and spiritual confrontations (his readings, his realization of the existence of the soul or his 'inner divinity'--)

Khalid's hope that American is the Promised Land where the spirituality of the East and the prosperity of the West coexist ends in disappointment. He understands the need for American and the old

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[104] -Sana Mechrek, *'Khalil Gibran and other Arab American Prophets'*. The Florida State University. 2006, P-4

world to build a cultural bridge and decides to go back and do something for his home country.

Book the second: in the Temple tells the story of his return to Lebanon and his experience of spiritual rebirth in the woods. Khalid retreated from the world after being excommunicated due to his problems with the Churs. "Book the third: in Kulmakan" covers Khalid's life from his one year hermetic life in the hills of Lebanon to his flight to Egypt and his eventual disappearance.

After his return to society, Khalid decides to be reformer and founder of an Arab empire that would blend the best of both East and West, the soul of the East and the mind of the West. He was, however, chased by authorities and forced to flee, a final tragedy, the death of his lover Najma and her baby, stops Khalid's dream and causes his disappearance.

'The book of Khalid' is thought to be semi-autobiographical, many critics relate Khalid to Rihani's personal growth in the U.S. and his post-immigration experience in his homeland. The book, however, has universal dimensions as well in the sense that it expresses universal thoughts. It was actually dedicated; it must be emphasized, to 'my Brother Man, my Mother Nature and my Maker God".

In New York, Khalid realizes his Prophet Hood and talks about the spiritual values of the East. He considers himself as his country's "chosen voice". He says: "For our country is just beginning to speak,

and I am her chosen voice. I feel that if I do not come to her, she will be dumb forever".[105]

Khalid believes in the power and potential of the soul. In order for spirituality to become fuller, the soul has to be free from social order and restrictions. He says: "There is an infinite possibility of soul-power in very one of us, if it can be developed freely, spontaneously, without discipline or restraint".[106] During his transcendentalist retreat to the woods, he rejoices in the beauty of nature which he sees as a projection of the spiritual and the invisible. He hears "the voice of the dawn, the dawn of a new life, of a better, purer, healthier, higher spiritual kingdom".[107]

'The book of Khalid' paved the way to a new trend within Arab American literature, a trend toward a discourse of prophecy and sageness, reconciliation of matter and spirit, and the unification of East and the West to a larger unified universe. Nash notes that through *'The book of Khalid'*, Rihani, had invented a fictive messiah, and produced and appropriate prophetic discourse for him.[108] Also Ameen Rihani points out to the achievement of *'The book of Khalid'* in terms of being a spring board to *'The- Prophet'* as another major Prophetic work in Arab-American literature.[109]

Ameen Rihani was a mentor and an inspiring example to Khalil Jibran. The later seemed to have the image of the Prophet in mind

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[105] -Ameen Rihani, *'The book of Khalid'*, New York: Dodd, 1911, P-128
[106] -Ibid. P-71
[107] -Ibid. P-236
[108] -Geoffrey Nash, *The Arab writers in English*: Arab themes in Metropolitan language, 1908-1958, 1998, P-29
[109] -Ameen Rihani, *Critiques in Art*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban Publishers, 1999, P-1

when he did the illustrations for *'The book of Khalid'*, some of the drawings represent such images as a sphinx with wings, a person carrying a touch and human bodies followings a leader.

The Prophetic aspect and vision of Khalid reminds the reader of Al-Mustafa and his teachings in *'The- Prophet'*. His lifelong aim to balancing the material and the spiritual is dictated by wisdom. He speaks with a Messiah tone like when he says: "Light, love, and will-with corals and pearls from their seas would I crown thee, o my city. In these streams would I baptize thy children, o my City.[110]

Both Khalid and Al-Mustafa dealt with topics such as truth, human existence, knowledge, love, friendship, democracy—and they both had their disciples (Shakib and Almitra respectively) who play the role of pupil and interviewer. Also interestingly, both Khalid and Al-Mustafa preached Eastern spirituality among the people of a foreign land.

Suheil Bushrui and Joe Jenking (1998) support this comment by driving attention to the image of the wise man coming from the East which we encounter in both works: "the idea of a sage dispensing wisdom among the people of a foreign land no doubt appeated to him (Jibran)". They elaborate, saying that: "Rihani's book may be said to have foreshadowed Jibran's *'The-Prophet'* in that it conveys the teachings of the East in the language of the West, and was written by an Arab who appreciated the best of both worlds".[111]

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[110] -Ameen Rihani, *'The book of Khalid'*, New York: Dodd,1911, P-247

[111] -Bushrui and Jenkins, *'Khalil Gibran Man and poet'*. Oxford: one World 1998, P-99

In another place, Bushrui has this to say about Jibran and Rihani: "it is no exaggeration to say that these two men made the most important intellectual and literary contribution to the revitalization of Arab intellectual life in the first quarter of the 20th century".[112]

2:1(v) Mikhail Naimy (1889-1988):

Mikhail Naimy, it can be argued, might be added to the list as another major pioneer, in bringing about a revolution in Arabic literature. He is widely recognized in the Arab world as one of the most important figures in modern Arabic literature. Like Jibran and Rihani, Naimy's work and though are a blend of East and West. In addition to Eastern Christianity and Eastern Mysticism, his language is evocative of the Russian mystics and American transcendentalists.

His name is connected with many Arab American periodicals, especially Al-Funun (1913-18) which he referred to as "the beautiful and fragrant journalistic lily".[113] He was a regulator contributor and, along with Nazmi Nasim and Raghib Mitraj, he helped Nasib Arida, the editor, administer the journal. After its demise, however, only Naimy's name became well-known to the Arab American readers. Richard Popp attributes this to Naimy's many contributions to *Al-Funun* which reached 28 in total.[114]

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[112] - Suheil Bushrui, *'Arab-American cultural Relations in the twentieth century'*, The thoughts and works of Ameen Rihani, with reference to his works in English, Fifth Annual Philips Lecture, University of Maryland, 1990, P-6

[113] -Mikhail Naimy, *Khalil Gibran A Biography*, Beirut: KHAYATS,1964, P-153

[114] -Richard Popp A. *'Al-Funun The making of an Arab-American literary Journey'* Georgetown University, 2000, P-96

Naimy was also a secretary and active member of the Arab American literary society *Al-Rabitah Al-Qalamiya (The Pen association)*. He also composed the manifesto at the time of its formation in 1920. The following is an extract:

"---Not everything that parades as literature is literature; nor is every Rimesster a poet. The literature we esteem as worthy of the name is That only which draws its nourishment from life's soil and light and Air—and the man of letters is he who is endowed with more than The ever age mortal's share of sensitiveness and taste, and the Power of estimation and penetration together with the talent of Expressing clearly and beautifully whatever imprints life's constant Waves leave upon his soul--".[115]

The sources on Naimy's education and background are limited. But it is known that when he was a law student at Washington state's University and before even he met Jibran, the 24years old Naimy was sent a copy of Jibran's 'The Broken wings'. He wrote a long review of it in which he criticized the simplicity of the plot and characterization in the sense that the book conveys a passive attitude and does not give solutions to the problems, but saw it as a departure from the approved canons of Arabic literature and appreciated the fact that it dealt with "native" social issues. The publication of the review

[115] -Ibid. P.P-155-156

by *Al-Funun* marked the beginning of Naimy's carrier as writer and Philosopher.

Naimy developed a close relationship with Jibran through 'Fatat-Boston' and *Al-Funun*. Jibran lovingly called him 'Mischa', and in his letters he addressed him as "My dear Mischa" or 'Beloved Brother Mischa'. Naimy also admired Jibran and became influenced by him. In the introduction to his biography, he emphasizes the fact that Jibran sought to make his soul "as beautiful as the beauty he glimpsed with his imagination and so generously spread in his books and drawings."[116]

Naimy produced a significant body of literature: novel, short stories, drama, poetry, critical essays, but his most familiar works are his biography of Jibran (1950), *Al-Ghirbal (The Sieve) (1932)*, and *Muzakarat Al-Arkash (Memoirs of a vagrant soul) 1949*. Also famous is his *'The book of Mirdad' (1946)* which was written in English, and in which Naimy picked up on his predecessors by adapting a Prophetic tone in conveying timeless wisdom.

Most of his essays are collected in *Al-Ghirbal (The Sieve)*. *'Al-Habahib' (The fivefly)*, for example, severely attacks Arab culture, including its literary conventions. He describes Arab society as a society of stagnation and resignation which hopes make progress by prayer rather that education and hard work. In the beginning of his career, indeed, Naimy expressed a negative attitude towards Arab culture and a firm belief in Western cultural superiority.

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[116] -Ibid. P-XXX

Again in *Al-Ghirbal (1932)* he claims that Arab classic poets and Philosophers are insignificant compared to western figure such as Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, Hugo, and Tolstoy.[117] Because he considered Western literature to be the highly admired prototype of literary excellence,[118] Naimy advised Arab writers to translate it. In let us translate he writes: "our contact with the west has alerted many of our spiritual need--- that our writers and intellectuals can't satisfy—let us translate and exalt the translator who introduces us to the bigger human family".[119]

Naimy's earlier realistic literature dealt with the situation of the Arab woman Vis-à-vis the repressive old traditions. This is evident in "Her New Year" and "The Barren Women". Also his earlier play 'Fathers and Sons' (1917) addressed the issue of social expectations and the generation gap in Lebanese society. More importantly, it is considered one of the first attempts to introduce drama into Arabic literature.

Naimy then close a more mystical approach to life. His writings became grounded in Eastern Philosophies and metaphysical experiences. Like Jibran's, they emphasize the importance of individual spirituality and embrace the doctrine of the unity of being and the power of universal love. Naimy advocated a universal

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[117] -Sana Mechrek, *'Khalil Gibran and other Arab American Prophets'*, The Florida State University, 2006, P-46

[118] -Nadim Naimy, *'Mikhail Naimy: An introduction'*, American University of Beirut, 1967, P-55-56

[119] - Mikhail Naimy, *A-Ghirbal (The Sieve)*, Egypt: Mathba'ah al Asriyah, 1932. P-127

mystical Philosophy which, in Najjar's opinion, helped him harmonize his bi-cultural identity as was the ease with Jibran".[120]

Also interestingly, later in his career Naimy rejected his former belief in western superiority and started to criticize Western civilization and its neglect of spirituality. This is best represented in a poem written in 1922 where he says:

> "Who are you and what are you to rule over mankind.
>
> As if even the sun and the moon were under your control".[121]

Next Naimy's *'Sa'at al-cuckoo' (The cuckoo clock)*, a short story in a collection entitled *'Once Upon a Time'* and also on his novella *Muzakarat A-Arkash (Memoirs of a vagrant soul)* since they both reflect Naimy's Shift to a more contemplative universal message and spiritual discourse.

"Sa'at al-Cuckoo" (The Cuckoo Clock)

In *'The Cuckoo Clock'* Naimy rejects western civilization and embraces the spirituality of the East symbolized by his native Lebanon, 'Khattar Mas'ad', a Lebanese farmer was to be married to 'Zumurad' but 'Ferris', an immigrant from America, Charmed her and the whole village with his western clothing and English language, and specially with his Cuckoo clock he brought from America. Khattar becomes confused and convinced that a better life awaits him

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[120] - Nada Najjar *'The Space in between: The Ambivalence of Early Arab American Writers'*, University of Toledo, 1999, P-150

[121] -Ibid. P-149

there. So he immigrates to America where he becomes rich but realizes that his wealth did not bring him happiness.

He finds out that his wife married him for his money, but more importantly that his wealth drove him away from the spiritual Qualities he used to have Khattar is now aware of the value of a simple spiritual life style as opposed to a materialistic one. He imagines himself working in the fields again and enjoying the clean and fresh air. He becomes disgusted with the city which he describes as a "Monstrous tower of Babel on wheels descending, with demonic speed, a mountain whose top is hidden in the clouds and whose base is a bottomless pit" and gets deceived by the "grand clock from which a large mechanical bird emerged periodically crying our "Cuckool Cuckool".[122]

He eventually returns to his village and develops a strong relationship with his people who name him 'Abu-Maroof', He advises them to love their land and village and preaches his belief that "in the soil is an aroma that is absent in the performer's shop".[123]

From an autobiographical standpoint, Khattar Mas'ad foreshadowed Naimy's eventual return to his homeland where he strived to educate his people against the mechanical and artificial western urban culture.[124] Naimy's 'Memoirs of a vagrant Soul' also echoes his love of simplicity, freedom, and the pursuit of spirituality.

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[122] -Naimy, *'The Cuckoo clock'*, P-39
[123] -Ibid. P-14
[124] - Nada Najjar *'The Space in between: The Ambivalence of Early Arab American Writers'*, University of Toledo, 1999, P-148

Memoirs of a Vagrant Soul or the Pitted Face:

Pitted Face is a thirty years old Argentinean of Lebanese origin. After three years of working as a waiter at a Syrian restaurant in Manhattan, he disappears leaving behind his memoirs which happen to fall in the narrators hands. Pitted Face's memoirs are an account of his life of Silence and meditation. Being mentally detached from society, he examines the meaning of human existence and his place as an "Obscure, insignificant, and uncomely man".[125] He expresses his disenchantment with what he thinks to be a world of greed, hatred, and wars.

Pitted Face is drive by two difference forces: a physical one (his worldly pursuits) and a spiritual one. His portrait of this dilemma is a follows:

"I must be two pitted Faces in one: the first is a man who has with drawn
From the world of men and wrapped himself in silence that he may
Reach a world of a higher order and move with it in an orbit other than
That of the earth; the second is a man cut off from the main human
Current by some human side currents, and striving to rejoin the herd.
He is of a lower world and is ill at ease excepting in that world, with
Which, so it seems, he has many accounts to settle".[126]

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[125] -Naimy, *'The Cuckoo clock'*, P.P-9.14
[126] -*Ibid.* P-67

Because he believed in the continuation of life in death and wanted to reach a higher state of being and completely unchain his soul, he killed his bride Najla at the end and then killed himself. The novella hence embodies the human struggle between the physical and the spiritual. It exhibits Naimy's mystical philosophy which emphasizes the importance of the spiritual side of life and the fact that the purpose of the human being is to be unified with the divine. Nadeem Naimy makes a believable connection between pitted face and the author by saying that the book reflects the isolation and alienation that Naimy himself experienced in New York.[127]

It must be mentioned, however, that the intensity and tragic turn of the book cannot be traced in Naimy's own life.

Naimy and Jibran overlap, the above works remind us of Jibran's bitterness towards the ills of society, his idea of death as a release from the sorrow of life, his Rousseau like belief in the natural goodness of man away from the corrupting civilization—

In this famous poem *'Al-Mawakib' (The Procession) 1919*, for example, Jibran expresses his outrage about man's laws and material pursuit as opposed to the natural flow of life. The poem is a dialogue between a youth who sings of the virtues of the natural world and an old sage who mourns the futility of the world and civilization which he believes is an obstacle for humanity to fulfill its spiritual self.

In Jibran's short story *'Al-Asifa' 1920*, translated as *'The storm'* or *'The tempest'*, the protagonist Youssuf El-Fakhri very much

[127] -Nadim Naimy *'Mikhail Naimy: An introduction'*, American University of Beirut, 1967, P-173

resembles pitted Face and might actually have inspired his creation. He is self emancipated from himself to the narrator on why he closes a hermitic life".

"I did not seek solitude for religious purposes, but solely to avoid the people and Their laws, their teachings and their traditions, their ideas and their clamour And their wailing".

"I sought solitude in order to keep from seeing the faces of men who sell themselves and buy with the same price that which is lower than they are, spiritually and materially".

"I sought solitude in order that I might not encounter the women who walk proudly, with one thousand smiles upon their lips, while in the depths of their thousand of hearts there is but one purpose".

"I sought solitude in order to conceal myself from those satisfied individuals who see the spectre of knowledge in their dreams and believe that very have attained their goal".

"I fled from society to avoid those who see but the phantom of truth in their awakenings, but shout to the world that they have acquired completely the essence of truth".

"I deserted the world and sought solitude because I became tired of rendering courtesy to those multitudes who believe that humanity is a sort of weakness, and mercy a kind of cowardice, and snobbery a form of strength".[128]

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[128] -A treasury of Khalil Gibran, Martin L. Wolf, New York! Citadel Press, 1951, P-17-18