The perceptive poets: a comparative study of Jal lu’-Din Rín Rúmi, Sant Kabír, Matsuo Bashó and William Blake

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The Perceptive Poets:

A Comparative Study of

Jal lu'-Dín Rúmi, Sant Kabír, Matsuo Bashó and William Blake

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Dedicated to

H. H. Nirmala Srivastava

and

Sir C. P. Srivastava
Abstract

This thesis lies between the fields of literature and religion. The thesis argues that Jalalu'l-Dín Rúmi, Sant Kabír, Matsuo Bashó and William Blake are not only "mystic" and "symbolic" poets, but that they have enough in common to justify the creation of a new, more well-defined area of interdisciplinary research between the fields of literature and religious studies. This thesis refers to them as "perceptive poets" and aims to define this term.

The selected poets represent mystical branches of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. The thesis is, therefore, to some extent a comparative study of Sufism, Náthism, Zen and the Gnostic tradition. The combination of poets allows for comparison of symbolism between diverse literary traditions, and also promotes examination of the crucial relationship between silent mystic experience and the creation of symbolic forms of writing.

Current literary taxonomy does not allow for satisfactory comparative studies of poets who originate from different religious and literary backgrounds, but who in fact share profoundly similar spiritual insight. No particular field of literary studies simultaneously and completely: accommodates for the poet whose first priority is spiritual life; incorporates poets from both East and West; acknowledges the difference between the mystic state of expanded consciousness and the unconscious; and recognises the relationship between the "Perceptive Faculty" affected by certain mystic experiences and the "Imaginative Faculty" associated with the creation of symbols.
This research aims to narrow the field of "mystic poetry" and enable distinction between the poet who has experienced expanded consciousness and the poet who displays random mystical tendencies. Through a comparative study of these four prominent poets, who have each been described as both "mystic" and "symbolic", the thesis identifies six common characteristics. These points of association are brought together to create a new framework suitable for the examination of similar poets from various religious and literary traditions.
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CERTIFICATION

I, Michelle Shete, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Journalism and Creative Writing, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Michelle Shete
March 2008
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INTRODUCTION

At times two writers emerge from distinct periods and literary traditions who have in common with each other more than they do with other writers of their own time and national literature. Their affinity of spirit transcends dissimilar literary backgrounds.... [They] share a common terrain of thought and language that gives them a unique kinship. (Barnstone 207)

Then there are fellows who work hard for the goal of true poetry and soothe their hearts by doing so. These... with the thought that poetry writing is another vehicle for entering the True Way, explore the spirit of Fujiwara no Teika.... There are so few of these that... you can readily count them with your ten fingers. (Bashò qtd. in Sato 22-23)
Argument

This thesis argues that Jal lu'l-Dín Rúmi, Sant Kabír, Matsuo Bashó and William Blake are not only "mystic" and "symbolic" poets, but that they have enough in common to justify the creation of a new, more well-defined area of interdisciplinary research between the fields of literature and religious studies. This thesis refers to them as "perceptive poets" and aims to define this term. This definition will form a fresh framework suitable for further literary and religious comparison of mystic and symbolic poets. This definition will also clarify the distinction between these poets and others who might have been described as "mystical" but who, in fact, do not display the same characteristics.

The poets who are the topics of this thesis have been selected from the traditions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity – therefore enabling comparative examination of the mystic traditions of Sufism, Náthism, Zen and the Gnostic tradition. This combination of poets also allows for comparison of symbolism between diverse literary traditions, and promotes examination of the crucial relationship between silent mystic experience and the creation of symbolic forms of writing.

Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake lived within different religious environments and yet each has been described as either a "mystic" or as having "mystical" tendencies (Nicholson, Rúmi 17; Scott 160; Basho, Japanese 2; Brennan 54). As poets, they wrote in different centuries and countries and their literary traditions vary greatly, yet each has been recognised for his prolific use of symbols (Schimmel 101; Scott 206-213; Ueda,
The Master 178; Brennan 97). The immediate aim of this research is to examine in detail
the nature of the "common terrain" (Barnstone 207) existing between these poets in
order to create a foundational study in an area to be termed the "perceptive poets".

Through six chapters of this thesis, Rúmi, Kabír, Bashô and Blake are compared,
and their essential common characteristics are explored. It is argued that these poets
display an intense focus on inner spiritual life and that this subject is of higher priority to
them than creativity. It is also shown, however, that these poets display qualities which
can be differentiated from characteristics ordinarily associated with general mystics. The
poets' mystic paths are examined, and it is argued that each of the poets experienced a
similar state of expanded consciousness (Jephcott 11) and an associated heightened level
of perception. The effect of this experience of expanded consciousness and heightened
perception upon the creative capacity, or "Imaginative Faculty" (Hirsch 85), of the poets
is then explored. Finally, the poets' clear acknowledgment of human intellectual
limitations, and their creation of highly symbolic forms of poetry are examined. From
these essential similarities, a framework is built so as to form a broad definition of the
term "perceptive poet".

This research takes what could be considered a traditional psychoanalytical and
biographical approach to the topic. As such, the research presented here could be called
‘conventional’: it is not interested in pursuing post-structuralist literary ideas such as the
fixed notion of the absent author, the autonomous text, or notions of Deconstruction.
Justification for this traditional approach can perhaps be found in Jacques Derrida’s own
insistence upon the right to question prevailing norms, or what he calls the “dominant
normativity” (qtd. in Tellez & Mazzoldi 157). Derrida’s “unconditional freedom to
question” (qtd. in Giroux 54) may ultimately be employed in relation to these post-
structuralist theories which currently dominate literary research. One is led to question
the direction in which post-structuralist literary theories are taking creativity. This is
especially the case when it is clearly stated by literary scholars that “all of these
destructive discourses and all their analogues are trapped in a kind of circle” (Rice 152).
This situation becomes all the more ironic when one considers the initial reasons for the
acceptance of these theories. Phillip Rice explains:

Literary studies has traditionally been concerned with the interpretation of texts, with
revealing the ‘meaning’ behind the text (be that meaning the author’s intention or the
‘truth’ of the human condition). Deconstructionist logic disrupts that interpretive mode.
If the meaning of the text is unstable, undecidable, then the project of literary
interpretation is compromised; interpretation is doomed to endlessly repeat the
interpretive act, never able to reach that final explanation and understanding of the text
– it is haunted by the continual play of difference (Rice 152).

It would appear that despite the emphasis on post-structuralist literary approaches, little
has changed in terms of “the project of literary interpretation” having to “endlessly
repeat the interpretive act”.

Mystic poetry in its various forms, furthermore, is not only of interest to literary
scholars but to scholars of religion, psychology and philosophy. It could be argued that
within these other fields there is more enlightening research being undertaken in the
interdisciplinary field of religious literature. The predominant post-structuralist literary
theories do not constructively lend themselves to interdisciplinary research of the kind
which is not solely concerned with language. To disregard the author or writer along
with his or her psychological or religious experience in order to focus upon the text and
the words contained within the text, for example, not only drastically reduces the
potential appreciation for mystic poetry and creates an artificial literary protocol, but also clearly limits the possibilities for interdisciplinary research.

Through his studies in “cognitive poetics”, Reuven Tsur, for example, is not only concerned with how readers perceive certain poems to be mystical, or the way in which language is manipulated in order to generate these responses in readers, but he is also concerned with the relationship between states of consciousness and how their alteration translates into language. This examination of the relationship between psychology and literature aims to advance the knowledge of the human mind, its evolution, its function and its overall nature. Literary approaches associated with post-structuralism, including the intense focus upon textuality, subject and discourse, may be relevant to literary studies, literary critics and new literary genres which prioritise the reader, but they are not necessarily relevant or useful for interdisciplinary researchers in their investigations of other crucial phenomena.

Discovering the similarities between four poets from four different mystic traditions will provide a useful set of criteria for examining other poets whether described as "mystic", "Romantic" or "symbolic". This set of criteria will enable examination not only of literary methods in the work of such poets, but also of the relationship between the "Perceptive Faculty" (Brennan 34) and the "Imaginative Faculty". This will result in better comprehension and appreciation of these poets who fall somewhere between the fields of religion and literature.
Literary and Biographical Details

Rúmi, Kabir, Bashó and Blake are poets whose reputations as poetic masters extend beyond the boundaries of their countries and beyond the centuries in which they lived. In this section their basic biographical information is stated, their poetic reputations are briefly confirmed and their literary output is surveyed. This is done before examining the more essential spiritual focus of the poets in Chapter One.

Rúmi

Jal īl-Dīn Rúmi has been described by Afzal Iqbal as "the most eminent Suﬁ poet whom Persia has produced" (v). Rúmi was born to Bah ‘u’l-Dīn, the "King of Scholars" (Iqbal 67) and "important Suﬁ writer" (Baldick, "Medieval" 96), on 30th September 1207 in the region now known as Afghanistan. He is generally thought to have lived from 1207-1273 (Barnstone 22). It is agreed that Balkh was the city of the poet’s birth and that as a child he travelled to Konia, Turkey, where he eventually died (Nicholson, Rúmi 17).

Rúmi’s poetic output is substantial. His Masnavi i Ma’navi couplets and parables stretch over six books, while his Dívāni Shams-i Tabríz comprise roughly 2500 odes, or ghazals. He wrote at least 1600 quatrains contained in the Rubá’iyat (Nicholson, Rúmi
22), and apart from this, his "table-talk" (*Fihi Ma Fihi*), and letters (*Maktubar*) are considered to be important collections (Shah 110).

Scholars primarily view Rúmi as a poet, however, they also consider his poetry as great religious work. Rúmi's collection *Masnavi i Ma'navi*, comprising 25,000 rhyming couplets, has been called "the Qur'an in the Persian tongue" (Parrinder 35). This manuscript is "generally considered to be one of the world's greatest books" (Shah 110). Coleman Barks' *Essential Rumi*, published in the United States in 1995, rapidly accelerated Western interest in this poet, and William C. Chittick, in 2004, declared Rúmi to be "one of the best-selling poets in North America" (Shams, foreword).

**Kabír**

The dates and details concerning the life and work of Sant Kabír (1398-1449) (Scott 2)¹ are debatable: his place of birth and even his original religion are unclear. It is known that he lived in India in roughly the fifteenth century and most scholars agree that he was born in Benaras (Dwyer 16). He spent most of his life as a weaver, but his poetic output has survived the centuries and been published well beyond the borders of his own country.

According to Charlotte Vaudeville, Kabír "has been hailed as 'the father of Hindí literature' and even sometimes placed on par with the greatest Hindí poet, Tulsídás, the author of the Hindí Rámáyan, 'the Bible of Northern India'" (11). Vaudeville goes on to declare that the "extraordinary vigour" and "abrasive roughness" in Kabír's poetic style stands "supreme in the Hindí language and perhaps in the whole Indian tradition" (129).
She quotes W. G. Orr's statement that "for sheer vigour of thought and rugged terseness, no later Bhakti writer can be brought into comparison with [Kabír]" (129). William J. Dwyer describes Kabír as having "a clarity and force which makes him tower like a giant among pygmies" (271). What is definite about this poet is the impact and impression his poetry left upon his local language.

It has been a difficult task for scholars to assess which of the poems attributed to Kabír are, in fact, his own. According to Vaudeville, Kabír's Bíjak was for a long time the main source for Western scholarship regarding this poet. Added to this collection are 243 verses attributed to Kabír and found within the Sikhs' Adi Granth of 1604 (later called the Gurú Granth). There have been several attempts at English translations of these poems, but some of these translations include works which may not, in fact, have been Kabír's. Despite questions regarding the authenticity of some of these verses, Vaudeville mentions the importance of a collection of Kabír's verses published as Kabír-granthávalí by Shyam Sundar Das. It seems that the authenticity of many of Kabír's poems published in English is questionable, and Vaudeville relies to a certain extent on a 1961 version of Kabír-Granthávalí by P. N. Tiwári. Kabír's shorter poems are believed to be the most authentic (Vaudeville 145).

**Bashó**

Most scholars agree that Matsuo Bashó (1644-1694) (Basho, Seasons 1) was born in the city of Ueno in Japan and given the name "Kinsaku" (Ueda, The Master 19). For some time he wrote with the name "Tosei" but eventually became known as Master
Bashó. He was formally educated in philosophy, calligraphy and poetry and was therefore familiar with the work of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu (Bashó, *Haiku* 6) among other Chinese philosophers and poets. His earliest surviving poem appears to have been written at the age of eighteen. It seems he did not dedicate himself to poetry, however, until roughly the age of thirty, around the time he settled into what has been called the Bashó hut.

Bashó is referred to as "the greatest of haiku-writers, and the poet who crystallized the style" (Basho, *Japanese* 2). Makoto Ueda has no hesitation in calling him "the greatest contributor to the development of haiku literature" (*The Master* 1) and "a poet of the highest order" (*The Master* 1). He is described as having been "ardently loved by his followers" (Basho, *Japanese* 2), and William Higginson recognises him as a "master of the renga" (7) whose *haibun*, or haiku prose work, *The Narrow Roads of the Interior*, he considers "a world classic, as important in its way as *The Tale of Genji*" (11).

Bashó's work, especially his literary criticism and his contributions to renga, or linked verse, has not yet been fully translated into English. Works which are available in English include: *The Records of a Weather-Exposed Skeleton, A Visit to Kashima Shrine, The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel, A Visit to Sarashina Village, The Saga Diary, The Monkey's Cloak* and *A Sack of Charcoal*. His most well-known poetic travel journal, *The Narrow Roads of the Interior*, has been described by Ueda as "one of the highest attainments in the history of poetic diaries in Japan" (*The Master* 30). Bashó established himself as a professional poet of great renown even in his own day.
Blake

William Blake (1757-1827) was born in London on November 27, 1757. His first biography was published in 1863 but the poet was rediscovered by William Butler Yeats in 1905. Blake was not formally educated (Yeats, Poems xiii) but became particularly familiar with the Bible, Milton and Shakespeare. It appears that he took it upon himself, particularly in the 1780s, to study ancient Greek literature as well as a number of foreign languages.

Blake's "powerful imagination" and "irradiating vision" have been highlighted by John Beer ("Influence" 201), while Samuel Taylor Coleridge describes Blake as "a man of genius" (qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 181). Christopher Brennan also praises the poet, saying:

Here is a noble and vigorous language, nourished on all that is best in the Bible, the Elizabethan epoch, and Milton; here too... is a poetry of epic amplitude, or heroic breadth, worthy to take its place beside the most famous. (102)

Brennan, in his early essays, compares Blake to Shakespeare, while E. D. Hirsch refers to Blake's Songs of Innocence as "highly original poems that have no true counterpart in English literature, or, to [his] knowledge, any other literature" (21).

Blake's creative output is immense. His Songs of Innocence, Poetical Sketches and Songs of Experience are perhaps most widely known due to their relative simplicity in comparison with his later work. His prophetic books, however, are the more influential within the "visionary" tradition of Western literature. These include Tiriel, The Book of Thel, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, The Visions of the Daughter of Albion, America: A Prophecy, Europe: A Prophecy, Gates of Paradise, The Book of Urizen, The Song of Los, The Book of Los, The Book of Ahania, Jerusalem, Milton and
Vala, otherwise known as *The Four Zoas*. Blake is also well known for his industrious method of publication through which he managed to produce books of poetry and prophecy together with highly original accompanying illustrations and designs.
Critical Context

Introduction

Within the current field of literary studies, it is difficult to establish a comparative approach when dealing with poets who do not fit within the same literary tradition or period. Such an approach requires in the first instance a great breadth of knowledge concerning diverse literary traditions. In order to compare symbolic elements in the work of Blake and Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, one would first have to begin with the separate traditions of English Romanticism and American Transcendentalism. Similarly, to make a comparative study of such elements in the work of Novalis and William Cowper, it would be necessary to comprehend both the tradition of French Symbolism and that of English Metaphysical Poetry. Scholars have noted similarities between some of these traditions. Brennan, for example, states that the affinity between the French Symbolists and the German Romantics is much deeper than has previously been acknowledged (105). This affinity lies in the relationship between a particular kind of mystic experience and poetic inspiration. That is to say, although a number of so-called mystic poets seem to have experienced a similar heightened state of expanded consciousness, and could therefore be usefully compared in this regard, they
have not been considered in this light, but rather have traditionally been separated from each other according to other criteria.

The problem of classification, or taxonomy, is amplified when this research is extended to include Eastern poets. There is no common terminology and no starting point at all except a combination of the words "mystic" and "symbolic". The majority of comparative literary studies taking Blake, for example, as the predominant poetic figure compare him to some other Western poet. Numerous studies have compared Blake with English poets such as Coleridge and William Wordsworth, or other European poets, such as Yeats. Only a small number have set Blake beside Eastern poets. Robert Hillyer, for example, in a study of Kahlil Gibran, notes that Gibran displays "a spiritual affinity to the English poet William Blake" (Gibran ii). Rosy Singh also attempts a comparison between East and West in her work *Tagore, Rilke and Gibran: A Comparative Study*. These comparative studies are infrequent, however, and do not seem to be consolidated into a particular field. To compare Blake with Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó is, therefore, to establish what appears to be a totally innovative framework.

A number of scholars and poets have recognised a strong bond, however, between certain mystic poets. Willis Barnstone, for example, notes a phenomenon whereby particular poets, separated by time, culture and religion can be seen to share characteristics in their poetry and ideas (207). Barks also recognises a similar phenomenon which, although reluctant to label or categorise as such, he makes use of to link certain otherwise unrelated poets in terms of their spirituality. He refers to them casually as "unaffiliated mystics" and "advocates of a perennial philosophy" and says that these poets "recognise one another across centuries and cultures" (*Readings 7*). Included in his list *inter alia* are Rúmi, Blake and Bashó (*Readings 5-6*).
Brennan uses the word "striking" to describe the same phenomenon. He refers to it as "the fundamental agreement across the centuries, of writers unknown to each other, an agreement to be observed, also, in authors purely mystical..." (21). He has purposefully chosen the phrase "purely mystical". He makes particular reference to Blake in this regard, and goes on to say that Blake's similarity to certain other "purely" mystic poets becomes even more astonishing when one realises that it cannot "be explained away by the idea of a tradition" (21). The present study is founded on the belief that observations of this nature made by scholars and poets such as Barnstone, Barks and Brennan are crucial in our understanding of the connection between the genuine mystic’s state of expanded consciousness and the phenomenon of symbolism. These observations also indicate the need to narrow the currently uncertain and undefined field of "mystical" poetry.

The relationship between genuine mystic experience and poetic inspiration has been recognised for centuries, however, the idea has remained largely inchoate. Within the mass of Western literature generally surveying the field of mysticism and poetics, a large number of different phrases and terms have been adopted by scholars in their attempts to grapple with the subject. Such terms include: “mystic poets”, "sacred poetry", "natural aristocracy", "prophetic poets", "Romantic poets", "sublime poets", "visionary poets", "symbolic poets" and "universal men". Scholars writing within these fields have often identified the issue of creativity and its relation to spiritual life but although a great deal of scholarly attention has been dedicated to the subject, its essence remains largely intuitive and undefined.

Despite efforts of scholars and poets, the terms "mystic" and "symbolic" continue to carry complex connotations in the field of literary studies. Arthur Symons, for
example, associated mysticism with symbolism during the late nineteenth century (95), and Brennan, along with other nineteenth century literary critics, attempted to redefine the word "symbolism" in order to associate it with genuine "mysticism" (60). The terms "mystic poet" and "symbolic poet", however, still do not enable clear distinction between poets who appear to have experienced a genuine alteration of perception through mystic experience, and poets who may be mysterious, vaguely mystical or even emotionally or mentally unstable. A new definition is required in order to enable an extension of the research into certain mystic experience which gives rise to both altered perception and highly symbolic forms of creativity. Brennan suggests that one must "knock at the door of the mystics" in order to discover how certain poems "derive their power" because, he believes, the mystics are "in possession of the law of correspondences" (Brennan 51). This thesis pursues that suggestion.

For the purpose of this study the term "perceptive poets" has been chosen in preference to any of the above-mentioned terms because the perceptive capacity is intrinsically linked to one's state of consciousness. This term, therefore, denotes the existence, and specific importance, of an expanded state of consciousness. Before establishing this, however, it is necessary to examine some of the terms which have been employed in previous attempts to research the relationship between mystic experience, inspiration and poetic symbolism. The following section examines those terms and their principal limitations.
a. "mystic poets"

Perhaps the most common term used to describe poets who have experienced a heightened state of consciousness is "mystic poet". At first this would seem appropriate, however, the term is highly problematic. The term “mysticism” has been well defined in the field of religious studies, and the original concept of “mysticism” is explored in the parameters of Chapter One. Here, however, the terms “mysticism”, “mystic poetry” and “mystic poets” are explored in relation to a number of complicated concepts and connotations which have become attached to these terms within the field of literary studies.

As noted above, the efforts of literary scholars to redefine the term “mystic poet” have not been very successful. It appears that within the field of literary studies the term “mystic poet” has developed its own meanings seemingly equivalent to its connotations. These connotations are summarised in this section and further explored at various points throughout this thesis. These include: the association between “mystic poets” and extreme emotionalism, ecstasy or irrationality;⁴ the connection between “mystic poets” and mental disturbance;⁵ the association between “mysticism” and the exploration of unconscious desires;⁶ the link between “mystic poetry” and poetry displaying an affinity with nature; the association between “mysticism” and the writerly assumption of Godly authority;⁷ and the belief that “mystic poetry” is somehow inferior to more literary poetry. This last point is particularly due to the fact that the field of literary studies does not currently provide a suitable framework in which to situate poets who are primarily inspired by a heightened state of consciousness.
The term “mystic poets”, therefore, does not distinguish between poets, on the one hand, who are inspired by a heightened state of consciousness, and poets on the other hand, who are either: emotionally unbalanced, mentally disturbed, sensually indulgent, inclined towards nature, self-ordained as “Symbolists” or even generally mysterious. These differences are extreme in their disparity. The majority of scholars agree that the terms "mystic" and "mysticism" are both troublesome in the field of literary studies. The complexity of these terms becomes obvious when, for example, Barbara Spackman explains that Max Nordau "retranslates" the word "mystic" as "confused" (12).

The first complication is that “mystic poetry” is usually thought of as ecstatic, rambling or irrational and Barnstone, for example, examines mystical experience mainly in terms of ecstasy. While this thesis takes up a number of points examined in Barnstone's work *The Poetics of Ecstasy*, in which Blake is mentioned (189), it does not focus upon "ecstatic poets" or the ecstatic element of mysticism. A brief look at Ursula King's *Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages*, demonstrates that many ecstatic mystics experienced such things as "the stigmata" of Christ, that is, physical "impressions of the five wounds of Christ crucified" (74) and various other extreme phenomena. Without denying the connection between ecstasy and poetry, the current study shifts emphasis away from extreme phenomena to the existence of a more subtle perceptive quality. Barnstone's emphasis on states of ecstasy, rapture and "varieties of Ekstasis" can be differentiated from the intention of this thesis which is to explore a particular state of heightened consciousness.

The term “mysticism” is nowadays also linked to behaviour which might be considered out of the ordinary, non-social or even mentally unbalanced. Brennan
believes that the word "mystic" awakens the fear of "eccentricity and dangerousness" (51), and it seems that this association between “mysticism” and mental disturbance repels literary scholars from the word “mystic” altogether. According to Ronald L. Grimes, Blake could not have been a mystic because a mystic is one who has "no real interest in the affairs of mundane, historical time" (59). Grimes seems to consider a mystic as one who is removed or isolated from ordinary existence. It would appear that some “mystic poets” do indeed require seclusion but that they also have an inclination towards mental disturbance. Emily Dickenson, for example, has been described as a “mystic”, is well known for her “seclusion” (Dickenson 20) and is believed by some to have suffered from mental distress later in life (Dickenson 68-69). She has also been described as “Romantic” in tendency (Dickenson 45). It is crucial to note that in a study of Poetic Madness and the Romantic Imagination, Frederick Burwick says, "Romantic literature, with its emphasis on subjective experience, quite naturally turned to expositions of madness that reflected contemporary developments in medicine and psychology" (12). In other words, the Romantic poets' interest in the irrational aspect of the unconscious coupled with their interest in religious experience has led to confusing associations between madness and spirituality. It would appear that while a “mystic poet” might experience an expanded state of consciousness, he or she might also be vulnerable to mental disturbance. It does not follow, however, that enlightened inspiration can originate from a state of mental distress. This distinction should be made clear.

The terms “mysticism”, “mystic poets” and “mystic poetry” have somehow become associated with the unconscious and consequently with the exploration of the primitive, chaotic side of human nature. Ray Jackendoff appears to notice a peculiar
paradox which seems to exist within modern understanding of the unconscious. He links unconscious thought to “instinct” and also “creativity” (84). He then notes that this kind of unconscious thought is sometimes given “even a deeper respect and awe than conscious thought”, but he goes on to add that “on the other hand, when animals do it, we call it ‘instinct’ and accord it less respect than conscious thought!” (84). Here Jackendoff hints at a possible problem in our understanding of the unconscious. On the one hand, there is the concept of the creative, awe-inspiring unconscious, and on the other, there is the association between the unconscious and chaotic, primitive behaviour. This problem is reflected in literary studies when, for example, the term “mystic” is used to describe both Maurice Maeterlinck because of his spirituality (Symons 89) and Charles Baudelaire despite his “sensuous indulgence” and “regression”. These complications will be examined further in Chapter 2.

It seems that the term "mystic poet" has also been used interchangeably with the term "nature poet". It has been argued that Wordsworth displays a kind of "nature mysticism" (Parrinder 25) and Geoffrey Hartman describes the poet, at the beginning of "Tintern Abbey", as "striving toward the expression of a mystic feeling" (7). The expression of feelings through nature images or symbols, however, does not necessarily signify the existence of a heightened state of consciousness. Nature mysticism has also been identified in the poetry of George Herbert and Henry Vaughan, and King actually refers to both poets as “mystics” (176). It has been said that Herbert influenced Vaughan and that Vaughan’s “mystical view of nature influenced the work of William Wordsworth”.11 Within this tradition of “nature poetry” there is indeed an examination of mystic concepts and, in fact, Bashó himself is often described as a “nature poet”. Neither the term “nature poet” nor “mystic poet”, however, appear to encompass fully
the state of expanded consciousness experienced by a few. Brennan is astute to suggest that the term "mystic" be restricted to describing "formless and modeless contemplation" (51), and this thesis proposes that the term is better reserved for the field of religious studies.

Another complication associated with the term “mystic poet” is the way in which it has been associated with writerly poets such as Stéphane Mallarmé whose intellectual, ritualistic and seemingly religious approach to the act of creativity itself has been mistaken as mystic in nature. This has led, for example, to Thomas A. Williams’ study, *Mallarmé and the Language of Mysticism*. While Mallarmé’s approach to creativity appears to be mystical, it should be stated that this mystical approach is completely different from the phenomenon of expanded consciousness. Simply because a poem deals with religious themes in an unorthodox manner, or because a poet adopts a particularly religious or ritualistic attitude towards creativity in a priest-like manner, does not indicate the existence of any mystical experience let alone the existence of an expanded state of consciousness. The tradition of the Symbolists, in which a poet may appear to be mystical, complicates this phenomenon. This is further explored in Chapter Six, a chapter which clarifies the distinction between the Symbolists and the literary device of symbolism.

It is apparent that the term “mysticism” is considered non-scholarly in the field of literary studies due to the vagueness of the word itself. It is said, for example, that Emerson avoided "the whirlpools of mysticism... in an effort to chart a clear passage to spiritual knowledge" (Geldard 26). This phenomenon is also evident in the history of Blakean scholarship. George Anthony Rosso says that John Middleton Murray is "constrained to admit that the whole process of Blake's work 'begins with the mystical
experience" [italics inserted] (33), whereas previous scholars such as Yeats and Algernon Charles Swinburne were enthusiastic to declare that Blake had the "perpetual freshness and fulness of belief, the inalterable vigour and fervour of spirit" characterising the "heretic and mystic" (Swinburne 44). Margaret Newlin attempts a comparative study of the mystic element in Blake and Yeats in her work, *Divided Image*, but this in turn is rejected by Hazard Adams who admits that in his comparative study, *Blake and Yeats: the Contrary Vision*, he tries to "steer clear" of the term (xiv). Harold Bloom, in fact, states clearly that Blake was “not a mystic” (1) and says that Blake should not be removed from the English Romantic tradition or be placed alongside figures associated with mysticism. If the relationship between the state of expanded consciousness and creativity is to be examined within the field of literary studies, it would appear that the term “mystic poet” is both undesirable and inadequate.

Bloom, in fact, refers to the "esoteric" as "the wastelands of literature" (18) while at the same time making serious reference to "Blake's gnostic cosmology" (21). Avoidance of the subject of mysticism does not change the fact that Blake's poetry is not only influenced by Spenser and Milton but also by mystic experience, including familiarity with the mystic works of Jacob Boehme, Emmanuel Swedenborg and Paracelsus. The word “mystic” is clearly inadequate as an academic descriptor and the field of literary studies requires a more acceptable term if any progress is to be made in this interdisciplinary research. Barnstone declares that "the word 'mystical' has been cheapened to mean anything from mysterious, vaguely religious, to hermetic symbolism and plain mystification" (168). In this thesis the terms “mysticism”, “mystical”, and “mystic poet” are employed in this general manner as is now traditional within literary studies, and these terms are defined according to those connotations briefly examined
above. This thesis does not seek to clarify the definition of “mysticism”. Instead, it seeks a new, more suitable term to make reference to the state of expanded consciousness and enable literary scholars to explore the relationship between that state of heightened perceptivity and the process of creation.
b. "sacred poetry"

In philosophic discussion concerning the divine nature of poetic inspiration, another frequently-employed descriptive terms is "sacred poetry". The term has most often been associated with the Bible, and one could argue that because this association is still very strong, the term is not broad enough to include poets of the East whose religions are not based upon this particular sacred text. James L. Kugel says that the poetry and prophecy of the Hebrew Bible was contained within a "corpus of sacred writings" (Kugel, "Poets" 15). These included the Torah (Pentateuch) and Nevi'im (prophets) together with "a purely 'poetic' section consisting of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs" (Kugel, "Poets" 9). These “sacred writings” were held to be distinct from secular poetry: sacred writing was that contained within the Bible while poetry was a secular phenomenon. In his work on "The Nature and Domain of Sacred Doctrine", Saint Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century also makes a clear distinction between "sacred Scripture" on the one hand, and secular "Poetry" on the other (Adams, Theory 117). The frequent use of the word "sacred" in this context of Christian theological discussion appears to ground it within Western Judeo-Christian tradition and the “sacred” nature of the Bible as scripture.

Although the word "sacred" has taken on new meanings in more recent times, its roots within biblical discussion cannot be denied. For example, in Robert Lowth's seminal lectures on "The Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews", where the scholar boldly identifies biblical passages as having poetic formation, the connection between the word
"sacred" and Western, biblical tradition remains strong. Stephen Prickett explains that "the aesthetic principles enunciated by Lowth were part of a long tradition of debate about the nature and properties of sacred verse" (98). The connection between Lowth's notion of sacred poetry and the poetry of the Romantics extends this discussion to include secular poetry, but the discussion remains firmly grounded in recognition of the Bible as an important reference point.

Emerson indicates that the poet who deserves the title of "sacred" is one whose poetry is inspired by his own spiritual experience. This does not necessarily relate only to Judeo-Christian spiritual experience and does not necessarily assume biblical influence. Emerson distinguishes "between teachers sacred or literary". He suggests that:

one class speak from within, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact;
and the other class, from without, as spectators merely, or perhaps acquainted with the fact on the evidence of third persons. (Emerson 161)

The term "sacred poetry", however, makes no such distinction between secular poetry which may be biblical in appearance or style, and poetry which is essentially inspired by spiritual experience. For this thesis, the debate has more to do with the subject of experience and consciousness than with Western literary genres or religious traditions.

Blake could perhaps be included in this tradition of "sacred poets", and Bloom, for one, indicates that Blake's work is essentially part of the Western biblical lineage, written "in the tradition of Spenser and Milton" (1). Yet placing Blake beside these conservative biblical poets seems inappropriate. Bloom clearly explains that "Spenser and Milton were Christian poets" whereas "the Romantics were not" (1). As it has evolved, the term "sacred poet" seems, in fact, to apply more to these conservative Christian poets than to poets such as Blake. The term seems to have connotations of
conservative Christianity and Blake is not what one would call a conservative Christian poet.

While "sacred poets" seems at first to be a general term, its long association with conservative Christian tradition makes it no longer broad enough to include poets whose influences are not purely biblical or Judeo-Christian. It is certainly neither broad enough to include Eastern poets who have no connection to Western biblical traditions, nor is it specific enough to acknowledge the relationship between a genuine experience of expanded consciousness and creativity.
c. "natural aristocracy"

It appears that there is evidence of an intellectual spiritual lineage within the Western literary tradition which can be traced back at least to Socrates, and that these poets, critics and philosophers are part of what has been called "the tribe of Plotinus" (Walkley qtd. in Maeterlinck, *Treasure* ix). Maeterlinck displays a firm grasp of this concept:

... for at every period there have been men who penetrated to the innermost recesses of life, to its most secret affinities: and all that they learned of the heart, the soul and the spirit of their epoch has been handed down to us. (*Treasure* 33)

This "tribe of Plotinus" which Emerson traces from Plotinus, Neoplatonism and Marsilio Ficino to Christian esotericism and Thomas Taylor (Geldard 22), is similar to what Bede Griffiths refers to as "the nearest equivalent in the West of the Vedantic tradition of Hinduism in the East" (qtd. in King 59).12 Barnstone also finds notions of monism and theism in pre-Socratic monism and pluralism and a "clear line from Pythagoras to Plato to Plotinus and the Christian mystics" (8).

According to Richard G. Geldard, Emerson viewed the "class" of sacred teachers, who derive their knowledge from personal spiritual experience, as "a natural aristocracy" (135). This concept of a spiritual aristocracy is also noted by Aldous Huxley who quotes Meister Eckhart in *The Perennial Philosophy*. He says, "Within us all is the other person, the inner man, whom the Scripture calls the new man, the heavenly man, the young person, the friend, *the aristocrat*" [italics inserted] (49). Symons, too, appears
to have been familiar with this notion. He compares Emerson with Maeterlinck, declaring that Maeterlinck belonged to "the eternal hierarchy, the unbroken succession, of the mystics" [italic inserted] (89). Symons, here, seems to refer to Huxley's discussion of Rufus Jones and his book of "Spiritual Reformers". Huxley says that "in spite of the murdering and the madness, the apostolic succession remains unbroken" [italics inserted] (Huxley 20).

Such a lineage is highly relevant to this thesis. Blake has often been described as "neoplatonic" (Wittreich 24). George Mills Harper examines the influence of Plotinus on Blake through a study of Thomas Taylor's translations of Platonism, and their effect upon the poet. Harper considers these translations as a "primary source of Blake's ideas" (viii). Two factors presented early in Harper's study, however, contradict this concept. The first is Blake's "distrust" of Plato due to Plato's "emphasis on systems" (Harper vii). The second is Blake's belief that "the philosopher should always be subordinate to the poet because truth must be apprehended by vision rather than reason" (Harper vii). These two factors immediately point to the limitations of exploring Blake within this tradition of Neoplatonism. The Neoplatonists, according to Maeterlinck, primarily looked to the ancient philosophers of Greece in an effort to find a reflection of Eastern philosophical knowledge (Secret 155). They were, therefore, primarily philosophers.

This thesis seeks a term to denote a certain kind of poet who is not only concerned with philosophy, theology or ideas, but whose inspiration is inherently connected with a personal experience of heightened consciousness as discussed within this tradition. Plotinus himself notes the relevance of expanded consciousness when he says, "Shut your eyes and change to, and wake to another way of seeing" (qtd. in Barnstone 11). Evelyn Underhill also recognises the profundity of this point. She states,
"Not to know about, but to Be, is the mark of the real initiate" (72). The members of the "natural aristocracy" and "the tribe of Plotinus" seek corresponding ideas from Eastern sources, yet the tradition remains essentially Western in its focus on intellectual ideas as opposed to actual spiritual experience.
d. "prophetic poets"

The term "prophetic poets" seems to relate to the poet's capacity to foresee the future. It is also a term which denotes a particular style of writing, one which is used mostly in an English literary context. Rosso, in his work, *Blake's Prophetic Workshop: A Study of the Four Zoas*, defines his understanding of "prophetic". He explains:

...prophecy develops a set of generic signals and expectations, including a visionary idiom, intertextual or allusive contexts, narrative disjunctions, multiple perspectives, a typological code, and a liberatory social ethic. Further, the composite medium of prophecy – its generic mixture – doubles as its message, which is designed to personally accost readers and render their cultural outlook and self-understanding problematic. The prophetic, finally, designates a living drama of contending voices whose generic cast retains its workshop status with each performance. (Rosso 12)

According to this definition, the “prophetic” refers to a particular genre of writing. Rosso also states that this literary genre has its sources in Judeo-Christian textual traditions. He says that the prophetic tradition has its sources in "the affiliations and shared cultural materials of a group of poets that deeply influenced Blake, notably Milton, Spenser, Dante, and the biblical prophets, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John of Patros... "(12). Rosso examines Blake as a “prophetic poet” following this particular literary tradition. While Blake may be examined within this tradition, it would seem that the term “prophetic poet” is not broad enough to encompass either Eastern poets who do not share this cultural background, or mystic poets who do not write in this particular literary style. Rosso, in fact, believes that the tradition of prophetic poetry is “now under
erasure” and that “for some, it remains an embarrassing residue of the poet’s late eighteenth century Christianity” (12).

Acknowledging the difference between prophets and poets is, in fact, an ancient and problematic concern for scholars writing within the traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. While Kugel examines the concept of prophetic poetry in the collection *Poetry and Prophecy*, he accepts that "This tradition hardly speaks with one voice" (1). Most pertinently, in Islam the prophet Mohammed declares that his inspiration was not from the same source as that of poets or magicians. The poets and shaman figures were believed to have been "possessed" by "jinn" (Zweettler 76): "Jinn" is translated as "daemon" while "shayatin" is translated as "satan" (Heinrichs 121). According to Michael Zweettler, however, the distinction "between divine revelation and inspiration by jinn or shayatin seems to have been totally beyond the grasp of most of Muhammad's Meccan compatriots" (Zweettler 81). The term "prophetic poet" itself, therefore, carries within it a great deal of complexity and paradox. While the tradition is helpful in our identification of two separate sources of inspiration (the expanded consciousness and the unconscious), it is also problematic. The discussion of prophecy and poetry, being linked to the term "sacred poets", and sharing similar grounding within biblical tradition, is also, again, not broad enough to include Hindu, Buddhist or other Eastern traditions.
e. "Romantic poets"

The term "Romantic poet" has an enormous range of associations. Ordinarily the term refers to a late eighteenth-century European movement associated with figures such as Friedrich Schlegel, Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Wilhelm Von Schelling, as well as to a group of English poets, including Blake, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century. M. H. Abrams identifies the "Romantic" movement as occurring in both England and Germany during "that remarkable period of creativity, the three or four decades following the outbreak of the French Revolution" (Natural 12), but definitions of the "Romantic poet" vary greatly. Apart from the fact that the poets with which this thesis is concerned do not belong to the same period or to the same country, it is apparent that even the main concepts of Romanticism are not all relevant to them.

To most, Romanticism refers to a particular interest in the poet and his or her own personality or psychology. Adams points to Edward Young's Conjectures of Original Composition as a point after which "primary interest turned from the relationship between the work and the reader to that between the author and his work" (Theory 328). According to some, Romanticism also refers to the poet's tendency to prioritise poetic content over poetic form. Concepts of "organicism" (Barfield 210) and of the "organic" poem creating itself out of the poet's highly sensitive emotional being emerge, along with later dialogue concerning the "cult of sensibility" (Oates 118-120). Adams explains that the "emphasis shifted from discussion of rules and conventions of literary statement to interest in originality and innate 'genius'" (Theory 11).
At this point it is worth noting the Romantic association between Plato's poet whose "reason has deserted him" (Plato, *Phaedrus* 55), and the way this tradition evolves through Coleridge's "unintelligible wildness and incoherence" (*Griffith's Review* qtd. in Wordsworth xxii) into an emphasis on melancholy and a connection between genius and madness. A rift between reason and imagination becomes a particularly problematic point of concern. Joyce Carol Oates makes reference to "Romanticism and its gradually accelerating hysteria" (119). This clearly associates Bloom's notion of non-mystical Romanticism with mystic hysteria, based on a link between Romanticism and the allure of the unconscious as noted by Beer (*Romantic* preface). One could say that the phenomenon of Romantic poets seeking mystic experience within the unconscious is the foundation upon which ecstatic mysticism and ecstatic poetry are born.

The main concepts of Romanticism are also accompanied by numerous less important definitions. To some, Romanticism refers to a particular style of writing which is highly conscious of itself (O'Neill, *Romanticism* xli-xliv). Others insist that "Romanticism proper retains the familiar poetic vehicles but changes their message, dramatizing a poet standing apart from society" (Porter 5). Some consider it as a "symbolic mode of apprehension" (Barth 107), while the term sometimes becomes synonymous with "visionary" (Bloom 2-131) and hence particularly concerned with the unconscious as a source of spirituality.¹⁴

The term "Romantic" seems to have also developed connotations of melancholy. Adams' opinion, for example, that Edgar Allan Poe expresses "extreme Romantic taste" in his "sadness, which he considers the 'most legitimate of all tones'" (*Theory* 574), would seem to exclude the poets dealt with here from being described as Romantic in that sense. These poets do not reflect this sadness at all. In a discussion of Lord Byron,
Bloom concludes that this poet is haunted by "the Spectre of meaninglessness", and "pointless absurdity". This "Byronic gloom" (Bloom 267) is distinctly at odds with what has been called "Blakean tears of Joy" (Hirsch 224). It is apparent that neither Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó nor even Blake belong to any “cult of sensibility”.  

Within these minor concepts associated with Romanticism, discussion of the relationship between poetry and spiritual life is found, but it is this point which is of major concern to the poets dealt with in this thesis. While many of the above-mentioned descriptions may be relevant to Blake's style of writing, there are large and important differences between the English Romantic poets in terms of their spiritual life. Bloom explains that Blake "preceded the other Romantics, and never identified himself with them" (2). Bloom also suggests a deep spiritual distance existing between these poets:  

Wordsworth and Coleridge died as Christians, but only after they had died as poets.  
Byron rejected no belief, and accepted none. Shelley lived and died agnostic, and Keats never wavered in believing religion an imposture. Blake thought himself Christian, but was not a theist in any orthodox sense. (1)

According to Henry Crabb Robinson, Blake believed Wordsworth was "too much in love with nature" and only his "most obscure" poetry was appreciated by Blake (qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 16). If Blake is considered as a poet primarily inspired by genuine mystic experience, then it becomes plain that this group of Romantic poets does not provide an adequate framework in which to appreciate the importance of the relationship between Blake's spiritual life and his creative work. Furthermore, the term “Romantic poets” is so general in nature that it cannot be adopted in an effort to narrow the field of mystic poetry.
Within the tradition of Romanticism, the term "sublime poets" has been used to distinguish between poets of "imagination" and poets of "fancy". This tradition can be traced back to Longinus and Plotinus, through to John Dennis and Edmund Burke in England, and given popular expression through Coleridge under heavy influence of the German Romantics Schelling and Kant. Adams describes the German influence on Coleridge, saying that his distinction "between the beautiful and the agreeable in his Principles of Genial Criticism" are "drawn straight from" Kant's Critique of Judgment (Theory 375), while "much of Coleridge's Biographia is sheer Schelling" (Theory 456). This tradition of literary theory displays a significant interest in the relationship between creativity and spiritual life: from Longinus and his references to "Higher Thinking and Higher Feeling" in his work, On the Sublime (xiv), through Schelling's interest in mythology and poetry expressed in his Philosophy of Art, to Coleridge's reference to "The Mystics" and their definition of creative beauty as a spiritual process in his Principles of Genial Criticism (380).

Coleridge appears to have recognised a source of power associated with "Nature" which leads to "an implicit wisdom deeper than consciousness" (qtd. in Barfield 75), but according to Owen Barfield, not necessarily "unconscious" (79). Coleridge terms this the "Primary Imagination". The expression of this power appears to be the act of what he describes as the "Secondary Imagination". As the activity of the primary imagination "is raised to, or nearer to, the level of consciousness, and therewith becomes expressible"
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The power of translating inspiration into a communicative act would appear to be a power of the secondary imagination but the primary imagination is, according to Coleridge, "the living Power and prime agent of all human Perception" (qtd. in Barfield 27).16

These concepts which in the Romantic tradition sometimes refer to various processes of creativity, sometimes to various powers and sometimes to various sources of inspiration, are crucial to this thesis. The "Imaginative Faculty", in its association with higher spiritual life, is especially significant to the discussion of mystic poets.17

The confusion and incoherency of discussion concerning fancy and imagination, as it appears throughout English Romanticism, however, may be linked to an undefined, yet essential, difference between notions of the unconscious. On the one hand, there is a conception of the unconscious as a disorderly source of dreams, inspiration and associated madness, and on the other, the unconscious appears to refer, in fact, to an altogether different and higher state of consciousness also associated with inspiration.

Beer’s research in particular has included an extensive analysis of the unconscious in the work of the Romantic poets. Dreams, nightmares, ecstasy, and hallucinations become especially significant.18 Some Romantic poets seem even to find in "the unconscious", a source of spirituality, or the experiences necessary to move towards a pure state of "Being" (Beer, Post-Romantic preface). It is particularly relevant to note, however, that Barfield believes the extent of "depth-psychology" approached by Coleridge is one "which twentieth century theory has not yet overtaken" (80) and that, according to Beer, "Blake did not use the word 'unconscious' in his known writings" (Post-Romantic 17).
Blake demonstrates a clear understanding of the difference between what he calls "Memory" and "Imagination", and this parallels his understanding of the unconscious as differentiated from heightened consciousness. His poetry has been described as "sublime" (Curran xiv), yet his own understanding of the term is linked more to a spiritually inspired process of creativity than to literary aesthetics. This process essentially refers to a transformative link between mystic experience, heightened perception and creativity. The term "sublime poet", however, does not make this association clear but seems, rather, to associate itself with a complex tradition of critical theory concerned with questions of judgment as to the nature of beauty. The term is unclear even within the tradition of Romanticism itself. What is needed is a term which clearly identifies the significant relationship between a particular heightened state of mystic consciousness and creative activity while avoiding, as far as possible, issues of aesthetics.
g. "visionary poets"

Very closely related to Romanticism, mysticism and the "varieties of Ekstasis" is the concept of the "visionary poet". Bloom contains all of the major English Romantic figures under the title of *The Visionary Company*, and yet, in his context, the visionary quality is more of an ideal vision than an actual visionary experience. Oates also examines "The visionary experience in literature", and makes reference to Blake in the company of Yeats, Walt Whitman, D. H. Lawrence and Rainer Maria Rilke (4-5). While her study is compelling, she does not define the term "visionary", and focuses on an exploration of the lives of poets with very different visionary characteristics rather than the phenomenon of the visionary experience itself. In her discussion she refers to the "mystics who have experienced the very highest consciousness available to man" (3) but differentiates between them and the poets. Moreover, like Bloom, Oates appears to discuss Romanticism more than the concept of visionary experience.

Brennan, in his essay "Vision, Imagination and Reality", tries to define the differences between vision and ecstasy (22), and concludes that vision is "not sense-hallucination" (27). It "is symbolic" and "spontaneous", but also "capable of control" (28). He believes vision is "not a supernatural, miraculous endowment, but an extraordinary intensification of common mental power" (29). With this definition in mind, it could be said that the poets discussed in this thesis experienced visions of this nature, as opposed to hallucinations, but it would seem that this visionary capacity is of minor importance. It is said that both Rúmi and Kabir experienced visions (*Divanı* xvii;
Vaudeville 44), and the visions of Blake are commonly discussed. Blake's visions of angels and of his deceased brother are certainly an integral part of his overall imagination, yet to focus on Blake as a "visionary" is perhaps to be misled.

Brennan describes the visionary capacity as a component of the overall "Imaginative Faculty" when he says, "Imagination – which term I shall henceforth employ as including vision – is a perceptive faculty, with its own outlook on the world..." [italics inserted] (34). Brennan not only takes the focus away from the visionary quality but identifies imagination with the "perceptive faculty". What is needed is a term which emphasises a certain intensity of perception, as opposed to hallucinatory (or even visionary) experience.
h. "symbolic poets"

The link between spirituality and creativity is again identified by scholars researching "symbolic" poets. It appears that the thrust of this research is in associating poetry and its creation with a semi-religious power. Great variations and extremes exist, however, between poets whose work manifests elements of symbolism, or whose prose work discusses aspects of symbolism itself.

An early attempt to define "symbolism" in literary terms, is to be found in Symons' work on French literature, *The Symbolist Movement*. Symons clearly identifies a connection between mystic experience and creativity. He recognises the need for the artist to tend the "inner light" (90). "Cleansing the vessel", "trimming the wick" or creating "a brighter flame" are considered spiritual activities necessary for the creation of poetry. Symons acknowledges the relationship between mysticism and symbolism. He says:

> the doctrine of Mysticism, with which all this symbolic literature has so much to do, of which it is all so much the expression, presents us... with a theory of life which makes us familiar with mystery, and which seems to harmonise those instincts which make for religion, passion, and art.... (95)

These observations, however, are not clearly defined. Richard Ellmann, in the Introduction to Symons' work, seems to concede this when he explains:

Symons does, it is true, use the term "symbolism" rather loosely. In the essays on Nerval and Villiers symbolism is primarily the perception of a reality which is opposite to the world of appearances; in the essays on Mallarmé and Maeterlinck this reality is not opposed to appearance, but is just barely over its borders; with Rimbaud and Verlaine,
on the other hand, symbolism is the perception of the world of appearance with a visionary intensity; with Huysmans symbolism is the understanding of the organic unity of the world of appearance. Symons includes among the symbolists those who reject the world, those who accept it so totally as to see it with new eyes, and those who regard it under the aspect of eternity. (xiii)

It should be noted that the inclusion of such different perceptive qualities under the one definition within Symons’ work suggests that his understanding of the word "Symbolist" could be separated into several categories. This is crucial to note because within the French Symbolist movement there seems to be the germ of another movement, the "Decadents", which moves away from mysticism.

Brennan notes the confusion surrounding the word "Symbolist" and explains that it has been redefined according to various schools (49-55). The French school, for example, is amusingly defined with reference to "a certain theory as to the colours of the vowels", which Brennan describes as a misunderstanding stemming from over-importance placed on Arthur Rimbaud's sonnet "Vowels". The Irish school, on the other hand, stands for "a discreet, but none the less repulsive, immorality". What is noteworthy is Brennan's observation of the "repulsive immorality" which attaches itself to the word "Symbolist". A close connection is found here between the French Symbolists and the tradition of the "Decadents" as propagated by Baudelaire, who is also described as the "father" of French Symbolism (Symons viii). This association is reflected, for example, by Nordau, who describes the Symbolists as "degenerate" and "imbecile" (qtd. in Spackman 12).

This association seems to have also contributed to the development of a connection within the field of literary studies between "mysticism" and suffering in pursuit of the arts. The French Symbolist movement Symons was concerned with and
which was, according to him, based on mysticism, eventually becomes "the moral and quasi-religious doctrine of life for art's sake," (Abrams, *Literary 2*). Abrams is astute to note the difference between the mystic concept of fresh, innocent poetic perception and Baudelaire's comparison between convalescence and child-like perception. According to Abrams:

> The passage in Baudelaire, however, has overtones which signalize a new turn in the aesthetics of the innocent eye. The genius is "an eternal convalescent" because he suffers from an incurable disease: *artistic inspiration is something like a cerebral stroke..."* ([italics inserted](Natural 414)).

Rimbaud, who considered Baudelaire a great poet, also declares "Now I am debauching myself as much as I can. Why? I want to be a poet, and I am working to make myself a seer. The sufferings are enormous" ([qtd. in Abrams, Natural 417](Natural 414)).

In contrast to this concept, Barnstone, as noted, describes the poetry of mystics as "a rising voyage through the emotions, with full exposure before sensual reality, and ultimately a movement into an expanding realm of ecstasy" (207). This enthusiasm may be contrasted with a poet such as Jules Laforgue, also included in Symons' group of Symbolists, who is described as having "self pity, which extends... across the world," and being "distressingly conscious of the unhappiness of mortality" (Symons 60). In the French Symbolist tradition mysticism appears, at times, to be reduced to artistic suffering. The quasi-spiritual literary movement of Symons, initially so connected to mysticism, ends with disturbing questions now relevant to contemporary Western poets. These questions include:

> To whom does their poetry belong? By what right do they put pen to paper at all, seeing that they derive their authority from no one but themselves? Is their sense of being "outside" simply an inability to adjust, or an extreme form of pride? Writing in a
vacuum, do they do more than dramatize themselves and fill the voice with their own egos? (Richard Sheppard qtd. in Niebylski 26)

At some point it seems the French Symbolist poet divorced himself from genuine spiritual experience to become a "self-proclaimed priest" (Niebylski 15). Poetry itself is considered a vehicle for transcendence but for Rimbaud "the revelation that poetry cannot deliver the transcendence desired led to self-imposed silence and the rejection of the poetic ideal..." (Niebylski 18).

Despite displaying spiritual overtones, the Symbolists are, rather, consumed by an intellectual and self-reflexive interest in the process of creativity, and "...at the heart of this attraction towards the negative aspects of language is an obsession with the self-reflexive process" (Niebylski 5). In a study of Mallarmé, Rilke and Cesar Vallejo, Dianna C. Niebylski concludes that "the poets who came at the end of the Symbolist tradition became simply "gardener[s] of epitaphs", asking themselves questions concerning the purpose and limitations of poetry. Although they attempt to make poetry the vehicle for spiritual experience, they become disillusioned with this notion. The movement culminates in Mallarmé who, while being included in Symons' book, is in fact described by Symons himself as "a thinker" and "not a mystic" (74). Robert Greer Cohn concludes that the "Mallarmé century", following the steps of the French Symbolists, was characterised by "disorientation, disorder, and fragmentation" (qtd. in Niebylski 20). The word "Symbolist" now has strong connotations associated with intellectualism and intense analysis of the creative process.

Laurence M. Porter recognises French Symbolism as "a poetry of failure" (12). Porter's insight enables distinction between the French Symbolist movement and a certain literary device called symbolism. This literary device is employed by each of the
The poets dealt with in this thesis but this characteristic is only one of the poets' distinguishing features. The poets' symbolism is closely examined in Chapter Six, but the poets are not referred to as "Symbolists". The term is too broad to be useful in narrowing the field. Its connotations are too closely associated to French tradition. Its connections to the Decadent tradition and the concept of suffering further increases its complexity.\textsuperscript{22} Additionally, the term, while being so closely connected to mysticism, does not appear to contain any concept of what actually constitutes a mystic.
i. "universal men"

Within Eastern traditions, the term "universal men" has been used to refer to those who have achieved a high spiritual state of consciousness. Idries Shah explains that the Sufis, the mystic branch of Islam, refer to what one might call Emerson's "sacred aristocracy" in terms of "Universal, or Completed, Men (Insan-i-Kamil)" (31). Shah goes on to list some of these men, including Rúmi, Rúmi's master Shams-i Tabrız, and Ibn El-Arabi. The "universal man" is described as "the supreme type of Perfect Man" by Reynold Nicholson in his work titled *Rúmi: Poet and Mystic* (23), while the idea of the "Perfect Man" itself seems to find its initial voice in the work of Ibn El-Arabi (Baldwick, "Medieval" 99). According to Laleh Bakhtiar, Plotinus is known to the Muslims as "Shaykh", or spiritual master, and apparently *Enneads* of Plotinus was "the most complete metaphysical text to reach Islam from the Greeks" (7). Plotinus, thus, is perhaps considered by some Sufis to be one of the "universal men". Similarities between this concept and those inherent in the Western lineage of Neoplatonism are strong. Maeterlinck praises Plotinus, saying "of all the intellects known to me, that of Plotinus draws the nearest to the divine" (*Treasure* 224). Huxley also quotes from Plotinus and seems to recognise the concept of the "universal man":

The middle gate gives entrance to the exponents of what has been called 'spiritual religion' – the devout contemplatives of India, the Sufis of Islam, the Catholic mystics of the later Middle Ages.... (7)
Huxley perceives essential similarities between certain mystics of all religions and recognises Plotinus as one of those key spiritual figures.

The term "universal poets" could have been adopted for this thesis since the Sufi concept linked to this term is associated with a certain spiritual state. Once again, however, the term does not make specific enough reference to a heightened state of mystic consciousness or to the importance of the "Perceptive Faculty". The term is certainly applicable to the poets dealt with here, and it would not be surprising to find Eastern critics referring to Blake as a "universal man" in the Sufi sense, but for purposes of narrowing the field of mystic poetry, it appears to be too general. What is needed is a more concrete term to denote at least one of the essential qualities of the "universal poet". The "Perceptive Faculty", or the quality of perceiving, is a central issue for the poets dealt with in this thesis. As perception is integral to one's state of consciousness, it is integral to the state experienced by the genuine mystic, or "universal man". The term "universal man" makes no clear reference to this point.
The Term "perceptive poets"

While the above-mentioned terms describe to some degree some of the poets of this study, none of these terms is entirely suitable. Some, for example “mystic poet” and “symbolic poet”, are in fact either confusing or misleading. These traditions do not ordinarily acknowledge the possible existence of a state of expanded consciousness, therefore they do not clearly distinguish this state from the unconscious. Within these traditions there is confusion concerning the relationships between madness, genius, mystical ecstasy and unconscious processes. There is no complete comprehension of the relationship between a particular heightened state of mystic consciousness and the creation of symbolic forms of writing. The majority of these traditions are Western, Judeo-Christian concepts and, while they may reach towards Eastern philosophy, their grasp of it is limited. They do not allow constructive comparison between "universal poets" of the East and West, or enable the emergence of deeper understandings of the relationship between silent mystic experience and poetic symbolism.

In the tradition of "sacred poetry", Emerson directs attention to an actual experience of inner transformation, not to the outward form of poetry. For him the "sacred" poet writes "from within" (Emerson 161). Even Huxley, in his philosophical discussions, points to Plotinus then to the East, and to the subject of states of consciousness and perception. He quotes from Sankaracarya to focus on this point.

The wise man is one who understands that the essence of Brahmin and of Atman is Pure

Consciousness .... [italics inserted] (qtd. in Huxley 12)
The nature of the one Reality must be known by one's own clear spiritual perception; it cannot be known through a pandit (learned man). (qtd. in Huxley 11) [italics inserted]

The poets with which this thesis is concerned appear to have an experiential understanding of the "Perennial Philosophy" as noted by the "tribe of Plotinus". Moreover, the creativity of the poets seems to have been affected by this experience. It is significant for this thesis that Huxley frequently quotes from both Kabír (16, 253, 122) and Rúmi (2, 107, 166), indicating his recognition of these poets' inclusion within his philosophical system. Huxley might have referred to these men as poets of the "Highest Common Factor" (Huxley 1), or poets of the "Perennial Philosophy", but these terms emphasise the intellect. The term "perceptive poet" contains the essence of heightened mystic experience. It is quite significant that of all the material available from Blake, Huxley chooses to quote only one sentence entirely relevant to the "Perceptive Faculty" of human beings, "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would be seen as it is, infinite" (qtd. in Huxley 217). While Blake is indeed a "prophetic poet" and "Romantic poet" and while he also describes his own work as "sublime" (Keynes 57-58), these terms are not broad enough to allow comparison between Blake and Eastern poets of the same spiritual calibre.

For the purpose of this study, therefore, it is preferable to place Blake within a new framework which allows for inclusion of Sufí, Náth and Zen poets, while maintaining and clarifying many of these Judeo-Christian concepts. When Blake calls his poetry "sublime", he refers to the symbolic poetry of the "perceptive poet" as being the result of a spiritual, or sublime, creative process. His definition of the sublime is therefore the same as that of "The Mystics" who, according to Coleridge, define the "most beautiful" as that process of "the subjection of matter to spirit so as to be
transformed into a symbol, in and through which the spirit reveals itself” in which the beauty of this process is considered greatest "where the most obstacles to a full manifestation have been most perfectly overcome" (Coleridge 380). This sublime creative process is universal but not experienced by all poets or all mystics. There is evidence to suggest that Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake had an experiential understanding of this sublime creative process, that they perceived its existence and its action within themselves and that they had a fully developed comprehension of the subject. It is this highly perceptive spiritual state which gives rise to sublime (symbolic) poetry. The term "perceptive poet", therefore, suggests a greater sense of this important association. In place of the limited terms examined above, this thesis favours the term "perceptive poets" to describe and compare Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake. The term has been selected in order to situate them within a new framework which is defined over the following six chapters.
Outline of Chapters

This thesis explores the similarities between Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake and identifies the poets as "perceptive poets" sharing six key characteristics. Those characteristics are: an intense, inner spiritual focus which presents as rebellion against doctrinal religion; emotional detachment, avoidance of sensual empiricism and display of the spirit of *fûkyô*; a recurrent focus on the subject of perception; a Gnostic understanding of the "Imaginative Faculty"; criticism of human rationality and utilisation of literary symbolism.

Chapter One argues that despite ongoing literary success, Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake were more concerned with inner spiritual life than personal creative output. The poets are introduced individually within their distinctly different religious backgrounds. The poets' non-doctrinal and seemingly irreligious natures are compared, and the mystic paths of Sufism, Náthism, Zen and Gnosticism are introduced in relation to the poets. The link between the poets in their search for inner spiritual reality is highlighted. It is also demonstrated that the poets, despite their literary credibility, express detachment from literary endeavours.

Chapter Two explores three main subjects linked to mysticism and the unconscious: madness, mystical ecstasy and the tradition of "Decadents". The chapter therefore attempts to deal with the "Problem of the Unconscious" (Rauhala 1) as it relates to the poets in order to clarify whether the poets' inspiration came to them predominantly through unconscious processes, or from a distinctly separate source.
associated with a state of heightened perception. The chapter argues that the poets are linked in their passionate spiritual-poetic attitude of *fūkyō*, but that this can be differentiated from mental imbalance. It is also argued that the poets demonstrate a sense of emotional control as opposed to ecstasy, and that they express a desire to move beyond sensual empiricism.

Chapter Three closely examines the poets' particular mystic paths and focuses on their concern for the subject of perception. The concept of "expanded consciousness" is explored in relation to the poetic expression of heightened perceptivity. It is argued that these poets, through their focus on the "Perceptive Faculty", demonstrate experiential knowledge of the genuine mystic state of expanded consciousness. This, together with their focus upon three other spiritually related subjects – alchemy, human evolution (in its spiritual aspect) and expansion of the senses – appears to be critical in defining the "perceptive poet".

Chapter Four considers the "Imaginative Faculty" and its relation to expanded consciousness and heightened perception. The poets' concern for subjects such as "Active Intellect" (Bakhtiar 20), "imagination" and "genius" is examined. The connection between these qualities and mystic experience is investigated. It is argued that the poets express a Gnostic understanding of the difference between inspiration originating from the unconscious, and inspiration originating from an expanded state of consciousness.

In Chapter Five, the thesis demonstrates the poets' acknowledgement of linguistic limitations. Their criticism of intellect and reason is also examined in light of their gnosis, and this is linked to their preoccupation with the subject of silence. The question of the poets' literary motivations becomes evident as their concerns regarding
the inadequacy of language are examined. It is argued that, despite these issues, the poets struggle within the bounds of language in order to attempt communicating gnosis to a small minority of readers.

Chapter Six examines the poets' use of symbolism and investigates how the "perceptive poets" manage to overcome the problem of silence and the inadequacy of language. This chapter focuses on the highly symbolic and original nature of the poets' work and the ways in which they attempt to communicate their expanded state of consciousness using the comparatively inadequate tool of language. This examination of their efforts to express the ineffable, highlights their poetic struggles and stresses the necessity for placing them within a new, more supportive literary framework.

Following this analysis the conclusion consolidates the six major features of the four poets, thus creating a broad definition of the term "perceptive poet" and a new framework in which to investigate selected mystic or symbolic poets. This framework is one which equally considers both the spiritual and literary lives of the poets. Some suggestions are made for further research possibilities within the area of "perceptive poets". Lastly, the results of the thesis are briefly considered with practical relevance to the subject of inspiration within the field of creative arts education.
1 Prabhakar Machwe discusses the obscurity of dates (9-15).

2 Nicols Fox includes Emerson and Blake in a study of poets protesting against the industrial revolution.

Farhang Jahanpour also makes comparison between these two poets, referring to them as "prophets" and finding Sufi similarities in his essay, "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Sufis" published online (1.11.2007) in the Journal of Globalization for the Common Good (www.commongoodjournal.com).

3 Born Friedrich von Hardenberg.

4 This is examined further in Chapter 2.

5 This is examined further in Chapter 2.

6 This is examined further in Chapter 2.

7 This is particularly related to the Symbolist movement. See Introductory section on “symbolic poets”.

8 Norman Livergood at www.hermes-press.com/emily.htm examines “Emily Dickenson as Mystic”.

9 See the following section on “Romantic poets” for further discussion.

10 Reuven Tsur examines Baudelaire’s “mystic fusion of ego with non-ego” at www.tau.ac.il/~tsurxx/Hymne.html in “Baudelaire’s ‘Hymne’ – Cliché or Masterpiece”.

11 See www.poetsgraves.co.uk/vaughan.htm

12 Griffiths makes specific reference to Plotinus, St Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius the Areopagite within this lineage of ideas (King 59).

13 This distinction between two sources of inspiration will be examined in more detail throughout the thesis.

14 See Beer, Romantic and Beer, Post-Romantic for general discussion.

15 This is a critical point and is further discussed in Chapter Two.

16 Primary and secondary imagination are distinguished quite sharply by Coleridge from "Fancy". "Fancy" is associated with memory. Brennan explains, "Imagination deals with beauty as significance, the union of sense and spirit. It is a lower faculty, fancy, which manipulates beautiful detail in an ingenious and charming fashion" (16).

17 This is explained in detail throughout the thesis, especially in Chapter Four in discussion of the link between expanded consciousness and inspiration.

18 The Romantic fascination with this is traced by Beer into contemporary poetry (Post-Romantic 1-50).
This is further discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

Of mysticism, Symons says, "On this theory alone does all life become worth living, all art worth making, all worship worth offering..." (96).

Quoted from Octavio Paz.

Chapter Two examines these concepts in more detail.

"Perceptive Faculty" and the state of expanded consciousness are examined in Chapter Three.

The term is also clearly gender specific.

These points are examined in detail throughout the thesis.
CHAPTER ONE

Priority of Inner Spiritual Life:

the Perceptive Poet and Religious Rebellion

... it can be no accident that so much mystical writing is also great poetry or prose, and it springs from an inner concordance of art and religion, a similar mystical vision. Most of the classical Upanishads are in verse, and so are the Bhagavad Gita and countless later Hindu mystical devotional works. The great Sufi mystics were often great poets, such as Rumi, Hallaj, Hafiz and even Omar Khayyam. Not only Blake and Wordsworth, but the English metaphysical poets... have been claimed as mystical. (Parrinder 27)

The general relationship of those works of art which through the centuries are not weakened but always more and more strengthened, does not lie in the "external" but in the deep roots of mystical inner content. (Kandinsky 53)
Introduction

The Introduction to this thesis briefly established the literary merits of the poets in this study. In contrast, this chapter examines the intense spiritual nature of the poets, an aspect that possibly works against the pursuit of literature. Original definitions of the term "mystic" are explored, then it is argued that the poets dealt with in this thesis are closely linked in their attitude towards religion. Their intense opposition to organised religion, together with their passionate focus on inner spiritual life, are established as their first common characteristic.

The poets' spiritual dissatisfaction is revealed in this chapter. It is shown that each poet, through his work, criticised the prevailing religious tradition of his country. This chapter explores Rúmi’s criticism of both philosophy and religion, and his belief that spiritual experience cannot be gained through these avenues. Kabír's frequent satires on all religious rituals and traditions, and Bashó's illustration of sterility in religion are similarly investigated. Blake's emphasis on exposing religious hypocrisy is examined along with similar occurrences in the work of the other poets. The poets' dissatisfaction with the traditions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity are compared.

Despite apparent rebellious and anti-religious behaviour, the poets' passionate interest in the subject of spirituality becomes evident. Their movement towards mysticism and their constant focused attention on spirituality is emphasised. In this chapter, the poets’ mystic traditions and their associated terminology are examined in order to establish differences between them.
This chapter puts forward the proposition that the four poets appear to have been more concerned with spiritual life than creative success despite their literary credibility and productivity. It is argued that poetic success seems to have come to these poets as a result of their mystic life. The poets are examined as spiritual figures whose creative life is characterised by, what might be termed, “egoless creativity”. The four poets chosen as representative of the "perceptive poets" have as their first common characteristic a passionate concern for inner spiritual life. Not only is this spirituality seen to be independent from religious dogma, but it is also argued that it is the “perceptive poets”’ spiritual priority which actually governs their creative life.
Parameters:

Original Definitions of “Mystic”

An effort will be made here to examine the original definitions of the term “mystic”, however, this thesis does not seek to reinforce these definitions upon the term. Rather, it accepts that the term “mystic” has now evolved to include various connotations already examined, and it accepts that the field of literary studies uses the term “mystic” in a general manner. It also argues that in order to narrow the interdisciplinary field of “mystic poetry” it is now necessary to examine a number of “mystic” and “symbolic” poets of different religious background, discover their similarities, form a new framework and find a new term in order to make further progress in researching the experience of expanded consciousness and its translation into poetry. These definitions below simply assist in the process of clarifying which characteristics of the mystic are the essential elements.

The term "mystic" is a Western term which has its origins in ancient Greece and early Gnostic cults. King says that Clement was the first writer to introduce the words "mystical" and "mystically" into Christian literature (31). Scholars agree that the term comes from muein meaning "to close the lips or eyes, with the probable primary sense of one vowed to keep silence" (Parrinder 7). The original connection between mysticism,
meditation and higher states of consciousness becomes apparent here. The majority of religious studies scholars agree that the term "mysticism" refers to "a non-intellectual mode of consciousness" (Stace 9; Happold 7) and a "non-intellectual and therefore, ineffable, mode of awareness" (Barnstone 7). It would appear then that the original term *muein*, in its association with Gnosticism, differs substantially from the literary understanding of the word "mystic".

It seems, in fact, that there may have been some connection between Gnosticism – and therefore the term *muein* – and Eastern spiritual knowledge. It has been argued that Gnosticism was "a pre-Christian movement" (Wilhelm Boussett qtd. in Pagels xxx) with its roots in "ancient Babylonian and Persian sources" (Pagels xxx), or "ancient Iranian religion and... Zoroastrian traditions" (Pagels xxx).¹ Indian influence on Gnosticism in Ancient Greece has also been suggested by scholars of Buddhism, such as Edward Conze (Pagels xxi), while Lauri Rauhala believes that "the Eastern influence on the interpretation of consciousness is perceptible even in Plotinus" (60). Maeterlinck also states that the "pre-Socratic doctrines" were "obviously of Asiatic origin" but "became the teachings of the mysteries" in the form of the Gnostic cults (*Secret* 142).

Geoffrey Parrinder finds that the Eastern term corresponding most closely with "mysticism" is "yoga". Of yoga, he says "This ancient and complex word has, at its origin, a meaning of joining or harnessing, and it is directly related to the English word 'yoke'" (15). The term "yoga" was at one stage defined as "restraint of the fluctuations of the mind" (Parrinder 45). Perhaps a proper understanding of the term "mysticism" should, therefore, be associated with Eastern spiritual knowledge and Eastern concepts such as yoga, meditation, silence and higher states of consciousness rather than the occult, ecstasy, esotericism, hypnosis, dreams and the unconscious. In fact, Parrinder
declares that the well known mystics, Sankaracarya and Eckhart were, "both opposed to the more popular forms of what might be called mysticism: miraculous activities, occult phenomena and illuminism of any kind" (40).

In the process of defining "mysticism", scholars within the field of religious studies have concentrated particularly on the importance of distinguishing between theistic mysticism and monistic mysticism. Among these scholars, it is widely accepted that theistic mysticism "seeks union with God but no identity", while monistic mysticism "seeks identity with a universal principle, which may be called Divine" (Parrinder 15). R. C. Zaehner, for example, in his work Mysticism Sacred and Profane, focuses upon the differences between mysticisms rather than their similarities.

On the other hand, a number of scholars in the field of religious studies have looked towards mysticism in an effort to find, what Parrinder calls, "the real link between religions" (4). These would include David Knowles, who believes the "basic element is the inaccessibility to the human understanding of the knowledge acquired or received" (13). As Nicholson states, "all mystical experiences ultimately meet in a single point; but that point assumes widely different aspects according to the mystic's religion, race, and temperament" (Mystics 2). Parrinder, in his comparison of various kinds of mystic experience, is critical of Zaehner's disregard for nature mysticism. Parrinder claims:

> There are different forms of mysticism and among these, nature mysticism should find a place. But attack has been directed at the high priests of English nature poetry, Wordsworth and Blake, no doubt with the aim of suggesting that if these can be shown to be unmystical then lesser writers can be ruled out entirely. (25)

Parrinder argues that the vision of the nature mystic does not necessarily have to correspond with the "formless void of the Indian contemplative or the obscurity of The
Cloud of Unknowing" (27). He believes "nature mysticism" should be included in the many categories examined by Zaehner.

It would appear that this "Neo-mysticism" (Parrinder 4), which aims to discover, as W. T. Stace attempted, "a universal core of mystical expression" (Parrinder 11), coincides with the methodology of this thesis in its focus upon the poets' similar states of consciousness and in its examination of their attempts at communicating mystic experience. This thesis investigates similar experience existing between four poets of different religious origin who have each been described as "mystic". It therefore disregards differences between theistic mysticism and monistic mysticism, focusing instead upon likeness in order to establish a broad enough definition to include both Eastern and Western poets.

The four poets of this study are not what Symons might have referred to as "unsystematic mystics". Symons says:

The vague dreamer, the insecure artist and the uncertain mystic at once, sees only shadows, not recognising their outline. He is mastered by the images which have come at his call; he has not the power which chains them for his slaves. (14)

Rather, each of these poets experienced genuine mystic states of consciousness as a result of their constant and intense focus on spiritual life. In fact, it is argued that their poetic capacity evolved out of this first primary focus. In this chapter, the intense spiritual nature of each poet is examined as the first main common characteristic of the "perceptive poets".
Analysis

Rúmi

While born into a scholarly family in an Islamic country, Rúmi imbibed neither philosophy nor traditional religion. His recognition of the limits of philosophy coincide with his rebellion against doctrinal religion. Dissatisfied with the mental pursuit of knowledge and the boundaries of religion, his life took a turn towards mysticism. It was only after his meeting with a wandering mystic that Rúmi gave up writing scholarly work and began composing poetry. From that time onwards, he sought encounters with "the perfect man", and these encounters directly inspired his creativity (Nicholson, *Rúmi* 23). Through his poetry the concept of egoless creativity becomes evident as his priority was clearly inner spiritual life, not creativity.

It appears that from an early age Rúmi perceived a connection between philosophy and false religious ideas. Philosophy is portrayed as a futile activity. The poet says:

The philosopher kills himself with thinking. Let him run on: his back is turned to the treasure.

Most of those destined for Paradise are simpletons, so that they escape from the mischief of philosophy.

While the clever ones are pleased with the device, the simple ones rest, like babes, in the bosom of the Deviser. (qtd. in Nicholson, *Rúmi* 73)
The poet acknowledges the simple-hearted as those "destined for Paradise", while the scholarly philosopher is pleased with only the "device", or the act of thinking and pondering the book. The "device" would appear to include all religious books which lead to dogma.

Recognition of the limits of intellectual knowledge, run parallel to Rúmi's awareness of religious division and his criticism of religious doctrine. Within his *Masnavi i Ma'navi*, are various references to man-made, or false religion. Philosophy and the external rituals of religion are both considered unnecessary. He states:

> No need to turn to the Ka'ba when one is in it,
> And divers have no need of shoes.
>
> *(Masnavi 82)*

The poet suggests that spiritual knowledge is all-pervading and not restricted to books. The "divers" are the spiritual seekers who attain their knowledge without artificial aids. The genuine mystic knowledge is only partly reflected in "false idols" and books. Rúmi says:

> That well-meaning man goes wrong through his mistake;
> The moon is in heaven, and he fancies it in the well.
> By these false idols mankind are perplexed.... *(Masnavi 139)*

The poet compares the moon's reflection with false religious ideas. He clearly differentiates between inner spiritual knowledge and philosophy. The poet says:

> The spiritual man's knowledge bears him aloft; the sensual man's knowledge is a burden.

God hath said, *Like an ass laden with heavy books: heavy is the knowledge that is not inspired by Him*.... *(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 98)*
These extracts from Rúmi’s later work show that the poet became increasingly aware of a fundamental problem: scholarly learning or philosophy do not provide spiritual experience.

The search for spiritual truth seems to have been Rúmi’s primary focus from very early on. At a young age, Rúmi’s spiritual nature was noticed by the Sufi poet, Attar of Nishapur. According to legend, the poet gave Rúmi a copy of his own *Asrarnamech* (Morrison 56) and said, "The day will come when this child will kindle the fire of divine enthusiasm throughout the world" (Rúmi, *Masnavi* xxxix). While it is said that Rúmi had the capacity to see visions from the age of six (Rúmi, *Díváni* xvii), it was not until the age of twenty-five (Nicholson, *Rúmi* 18) that he is said to have turned to the mystic path.

The poet's Sufi life began when, knowingly or unknowingly, he sought a Shaykh, or teacher. One Burhánu'l-Dín is mentioned by Nicholson as being an influential figure at this stage, leading Rúmi away from scholarship and orthodox religion, towards Sufism. Nicholson maintains that the Sufis "were not in opposition to Islam, but formed an extreme wing of the orthodox party" (Rúmi, *Díváni* xxvi). E. H. Whinfield calls the Sufis "the lineal spiritual descendants of the earliest saints of Islam" (Rúmi, *Masnavi* xiv), while Edmund Helminski refers to them as the "Gnostics of Islam" (10). There are various opinions as to whether Sufism was simply a mystic branch of Islam or a more antagonistic movement. Nicholson, in his discussion of Sufism, concludes that "although on the surface Islam is not directly assailed, it sustains many indirect attacks" (Rúmi, *Díváni* xxvi).

The words "Sufi" and "mystic" have close associations. Parrinder describes Rúmi as one who had "mystical teachings" (4) while Nicholson explains, "the word 'mystic',
which has passed from Greek religion into European literature, is represented in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, the three chief languages of Islam, by 'Sufi' (Nicholson, *Mystics* 3). Scholarly definition of the word "Sufi", however, seems to be a point of contention. Shah believes that the word should not simply be associated with the Arabic word "soof" which translates as "wool", and to the majority of Sufi scholars refers to the woollen robes of early Islamic mystics. Shah believes the genuine meaning of the word comes from the sounds of the letters S, U, F, "in Arabic, the signs for Soad, Wao, Fa". He explains, "It is held by some that the sounds roughly represented by the signs S, U, F are among those for reaction to which the brain is, or may be, programmed" (171).3 Parrinder explains that a Sufi, "by mental and spiritual discipline, like a yogi but in a quite different context, sought an experience of God in an emotional and contemplative mysticism" (130). Thus the Sufi path tends to defy definition in the same way that the word "mystic" is often defined in the Christian tradition as the "way of negation" (King 21).

Rúmi's son, Sultán Walad, explains that his father's Sufi life fell into three distinct periods. Rúmi first discovered the "Perfect Man" in the form of Shams-i Tabríz where the relationship between Rúmi and Shams was "marked by a mystical intimacy of the closest kind" (Nicholson, *Rúmi* 18). The poet frequently mentions the name of Shams, glorifying this Shaykh figure. Rúmi says:

The face of Shamsi Din, Tabriz's glory, is the sun.
In whose track the cloud-like hearts are moving.

(*Divâni* 27)

Rúmi, himself, is compared to clouds following the "glory" of Shams. It is through this relationship that the poet grows spiritually. He explains:
Without the power imperial of Shamsu 'Haqq of Tabríz

One could neither behold the moon nor become the sea.

(Díváni 79)

It is revealed by Chittick that when Rúmi and Shams spoke together, "one or more members of the circle took notes" (Shams, foreword). Shams was twenty to thirty years older than Rúmi and a major figure in Rúmi's spiritual life. The relationship between the two men appears to have been so much beyond the normal level of human relationship that it inspired jealousy and ended in rumours of the murder of Shams. Chittick, however, disputes this idea and believes Shams abandoned Rúmi in order to allow Rúmi to grow spiritually in his own light (Shams xiv). The creative result of this period in Rúmi’s life was the Díváni Shams-i Tabríz.

The second period of Rúmi's Sufi life began when the poet found a saintly companion in the form of an elderly goldsmith known as Saláhu'l-Din Farídún Zarkúb. This relationship was of a similar spiritual kind. Rúmi, again, directly states the name of this inspirational figure in the poetry of the Díváni. He says:

Assuredly Saláhi dil u din is the image of that Fair One;

Rub thine eyes, and behold the image of the heart, the image of the heart.

(Díváni 115)

This pattern of establishing an intimate spiritual relationship then consequently producing creative work, occurs at least three times during Rúmi's life.

The third period of Rúmi's Sufi life involved similar spiritual meetings with one named Husámu'l-Dín whose name is associated with the Masnavi i Ma'navi. Nicholson says that Rúmi describes himself during this period as "a flute on the lips of Husámu'l-Dín " (qtd. in Rúmi 20). The poet makes an "Address to Husamu-'d-Din":
O light of God, Hsusamu-'d-Din....

Thou art as Muhammad in heaven, O brilliant Sun!

..........................................................

When my spirit recognises thy spirit,

We remember our essential union and origin.

(Masnavi 220)

Within these Shaykh figures, Rúmi not only found kindred spirits, but he found a way to increase the intensity of his own spiritual growth, and a way to expand the breadth of his spiritual knowledge.

Rúmi did not identify himself as a "poet". The Sufi way of life was his primary interest and poetry was the result of his particular mystic experience. Rúmi suggests that his own will was not the cause of his poetry. He says:

The Sun of Tabríz is on the throne,

while my verses line up like willing slaves.

(Ruins 45)

The poet is a "slave" to his verse which comes as a result of his mystic life. Questions concerning poetic ambition or poetic success become irrelevant simply because "Love wills that this Word be brought forth" (Ruins 20). Rúmi's "Song of the Reed" typically illustrates the poet's position as simply an instrument for his creativity:

This flute is played with fire, not with wind;

and without this fire you would not exist.

It is the fire of love that inspires the flute.

It is the ferment of love that completes the wine.

(Ruins 20)

The "fire of love" is equated to the poet's genuine mystic experience and this "inspires the flute". The hollow flute, or human body, ordinarily played "with wind", or having
nothing to say, is now "played with fire". The poet seems compelled to create and also
seems at ease being simply an egoless, creative instrument and unknown poet. Rúmi
explains that the phrase "I am God" (Nicholson, Rúmi 184) is not a statement of ego but,
rather, the humblest expression. He explains:

When a fly is plunged in honey, all the members of its body are reduced to the same
condition, and it does not move.... if he cries out, "Oh, I am drowning", he is not said to
be in the state of absorption.

(qtd in Nicholson, Rúmi 184)

In this allegory the poet attempts to explain that there is no difference between the
mystic and God. The "state of absorption" is a state where the genuine mystic is
surrendered to the will of his God and therefore without ego.

Rúmi appears to recognise that his inspiration came to him as a result of his
mystic life. In his Diváni, he expresses recognition of the essential role of his mystic
experience in the creative process. He states:

I am a painter, a maker of pictures; every moment I shape a beauteous form,
And then in thy presence I melt them all away.

..........................................................

Every drop of blood which proceeds from me is saying to thy dust:
'I am one colour with thy love, I am the partner of thy affection'.

(Diváni 135)

The poet dissolves his own sense of ego in the face of the Shaykh figure. His creations
and his ego "melt" away, while his creations, which he equates with the "blood which
proceeds" from the poet, express their unity with the "love" experienced during the
mystic state. Rúmi's objectivity and detachment from his poetry seem to signify a
genuine comprehension of what it is to be nothing more than a creative instrument.
Shah, in his major work *The Way of the Sufi*, discusses Rūmi. He says that the poet:

had the uncomfortable Sufi habit of excelling in literary and poetic ability beyond all his contemporaries, while constantly affirming that such an attainment was a minor one compared to Sufihood. (110)

This point of spiritual priority is crucial. Jacques Maritain writes, "the knowledge of supernatural contemplation itself awakes in the soul the poetic instinct... that is why it is natural for the mystical experience to be expressed lyrically" ("Knowledge" 67), and Nicholson, speaking of Rūmi's encounters with his Shaykh figures, says "These experiences live at the very centre of Rumi's theosophy and directly or indirectly inspire all his poetry" (Nicholson, *Rūmi* 18). In the poem "This Task" Rūmi explains:

> You have a duty to perform. Do anything else, do any number of things, occupy your time fully, and yet, if you do not do this task, all your time will have been wasted.

(qtd. in Shah 119)

Rūmi's task was to experience spiritual heights and his mystic life was therefore more important to him than either scholarship or creativity. He is described by Reuben Levy as "a mystic" (55), and by Shams himself as "God's saint" (212). Helminski also succinctly notes that "Rūmi's work is not the product of literary ambition, but an act of service" (Rūmi, *Ruins* 13). Helminski announces the highly relevant point that "Western culture has no convenient category for Mevlána Jeláluddin Rūmi" (Rūmi, *Ruins* 9).

Rūmi certainly had spiritual priorities and one could describe him as a mystic, but this should not detract from his credibility as a poet. He is of a particular literary category which until now has not been properly established. Walad recognises this when he says "The saints, then, write poetry to the greater glory of God not to the greater glory of themselves" (qtd. in Lewis 328). There is a tendency among Western readers to view
Rúmi as generally "mystical" and obscure. Many descriptions of him acknowledge his mystic life but in doing so, somehow detract from the poet's literary credibility. When, for example, his work is described as "generally instructional" and "intended for enlightenment of disciples" (Nicholson, *Rúmi* 25), it appears that his poetics is considered as being of lesser quality. His *Masnavi i Ma'navi*, for example, is often referred to in this way. Bakhtiar describes it as "virtually a Persian commentary upon the Quran" (7). At the same time, however, these scholars do recognise Rúmi's poetic abilities. Nicholson credits him as "the greatest mystical poet of Persia" (*Rúmi* 17) in whose poetry, "the Persian mystical genius found its supreme expression" (*Rúmi* 25).

The poets described in this thesis were primarily concerned about their inner spiritual life but they were also reputable poets. What is needed, is a sympathetic framework in which to situate properly and appreciate fully the "perceptive poets" whose creative work contains Wassily Kandinsky's eternal qualities of the "quintessential" element (52), but whose first priority was not simply literary success.
Kabír

Both the Hindu and the Islamic traditions are frequently the subjects of Kabír's satires. The poet's intense focus on inner spiritual life led him to criticise all kinds of formal religious doctrines. He moved beyond such rituals of religion into the realms of mysticism. Influenced by the yogic culture of Náthism, Kabír employed yogic terminology but even criticised the rituals of the Yogís themselves. Kabír's mystic experience and spiritual focus lay at the heart of his creative life. His creativity was an extension of this spiritual life. He therefore created without expectation of public success. While he was not educated in literature, the praise for this poet culminates in the acceptance of Kabír as "the creator of sacred literature in Hindi" (Sushil Gupta qtd. in Vaudeville 33). Like Rúmi, Kabír expressed a detached attitude towards poetry and literary success. This section examines this quality of his as reflecting a sense of egoless creativity.

It has been shown that Rúmi took a stand against the philosophy and religion of his country. So too, Kabír found the traditions of the Hindu caste system reprehensible. It is believed that he lived in Benares, "a citadel of Hindu religion" (Scott 12) in India, but his poetry directly attacks the Brahmin caste and their accepted birth-rights. He asks:

If the creator
had invented caste
Why didn't He mark the Brahmins at birth
with a triple line?
(qtd. in Vaudeville 218)
Kabír, in a humorous vein, indicates that he has become a poor weaver because, as a Brahmin in a previous life, he did not become spiritually enlightened. He says:

In my previous life, I too was a Brahmin,
I had failed to take up the service of Lord Rám,
so I was caught and turned into a Juláha.
(qtd. in Vaudeville 220)

The poet stands apart from the prevailing beliefs of his culture and rebels against religious hypocrisy. He emphasises equality:

Says Kabír,
there are no low-born: This man alone is vile
who does not invoke Rám.
(qtd. in Vaudeville 219)

In terms of religious scholarship Kabír is a flexible figure. His rebellion against doctrinal religion makes him difficult to categorise. Linda Hess believes that he had "no patience with self-aggrandizing religionists, whether they be Brahmin priests, Muslim preachers, 'posturing Yogís’, or greedy pilgrims" (Kabír, *Grace* xiii). Kabír became associated with a tradition of holy men, and in the nineteenth century was considered the "most important Sant figure in Northern India" (Schomer 3-5). 5 His dislike for organised religion and meaningless ritual is evident throughout his work. He says:

Reading and pondering on the Veda, the Pandits went astray:
the mystery of their own self, they never pierced! (qtd. in Vaudeville 149)

In this couplet, Kabír, like Rúmi, acknowledges the essential difference between worldly or philosophical knowledge and spiritual knowledge. He portrays religious ritualism as a waste of life. Hindu Pilgrimages, Muslim purification, and rituals such as circumcision, all become the subject of his satires. Pilgrims are imaged:
Going in endless pilgrimages, the world died
exhausted by so much bathing.
(qtd. in Vaudeville 201)

Religious rituals are challenged by rhetoric:

What's the use of ablutions, litanies, purifications
and prostrations in the mosque?
(qtd. in Vaudeville 217)

The specific ritual of circumcision is criticised by comments like:

If you are a Turk,
born from a Turkini,

Why didn't God Himself
circumcise you in the womb?
(qtd. in Vaudeville 219)

Kabír persistently criticises all religions and rituals, and yet he has been hailed as the
possible founder of a new unnamed doctrine. Indeed, almost every religion, including
Christianity and Buddhism, has claimed him as their own. Pertinently, Hess declares that
Kabír "has been characterized as a social reformer, satirist, mystic, and ecstatic – labels
that all somewhat miss the mark" (Kabír, Grace xiii).

It is evident that Kabír was familiar with Hindu terminology and also
comfortable using yogic language. Sometimes, however, he used it to attack the methods
of the Yogís themselves. He says:

O Avadhút The true Yogi is detached from the world,
He has his dwelling in the sky, He does not see the world,
seated on the seat of Conscience:
Outwardly, He wears the frock,
but His soul contemplates the Mirror.
His body, he has burnt in the Fire of Brahman
and He remains awake in the triple Confluent:

Says Kabír, such is the King of Yogís,

who has immersed Himself in the Sahaj-súnya.

(qtd. in Vaudeville 115)

In this poem Kabír's knowledge of yogic philosophy is evident. Vaudeville believes his yogic terminology reflects his own association with the Yogís and, with some reservations, she concludes that Kabír's "own ancestral tradition was a form of ‘Náthism'" (99). She also suggests that Kabír's father might have been a Yogí, as Kabír used yogic terminology, referring to him as a great "Gosáin" (77). The Náth-Yogís, or Yogís in Bengal at the time, were mostly weavers who, as members of a lower caste, had reason to be quietly opposed to the caste system. The Náth-Yogís already existed slightly outside the Hindu culture prior to general conversions to Islam among the lower classes. These conversions to Islam were undertaken more for political and social reasons than for religious reasons. Mohan Singh believes, "the converts themselves never wholly gave up their own kind of Hinduism..." (qtd. in Vaudeville 72). Kabír's Hinduism appears to have been, in the first instance, influenced by the Náth-Yogís.

It is widely accepted among modern scholars that despite having absorbed Hindu culture Kabír, at some stage, officially belonged to a weaver caste considered to be Muhammedan. Vaudeville states quite plainly, "All agree that he was a Muslim weaver" (xvii, 12). Arguments against Kabír's association with Islam have been put forward by Hindu literary critics in India probably on the grounds that his conversion to Islam was superficial (Vaudeville 48-52). It would seem, however, that the majority of scholars agree that Kabír did have some connection with Islam. Whether or not he was born into a Muslim family or even converted to Islam, it seems that his knowledge of the
traditions of Islam and its vocabulary was either not very great, or not often employed throughout his work.⁶

Many suggestions have been made that Kabír was actually a Sufi. These comments come several hundred years after Kabír's death, at which time Kabír's work was in fact being read and appreciated within Sufi circles. Even at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Kabír's name was known by the Sufis in Delhi and Agra (Vaudeville 49). The similarity between his mystic experience, and that of the Sufis, must have been profound for the Sufis to have accepted him as one of their own. Yusuf Husain even declares that Kabír was a disciple of one Shaykh Taqqí, however Vaudeville contests this by pointing out the poet's apparent disregard for this man. Kabír says:

He is eternally in all bodies:

listen, O Taqqí, you Shaykh!

(qtd. in Vaudeville 82)

Kabír, in fact, never called himself a Sufí, Yogí, or Sant. He denied categories of any kind. Furthermore, there was a close association in Kabír's time between the Sufís and the Yogís. The Náth-Yogí masters were sometimes also referred to as "Faqír" or "Pír", both Islamic terms. It is also recognised that the Sufís converted Yogís to Sufism and vice versa (Vaudeville 84). Vaudeville comments:

... during the period of the Delhi Sultanate, Sufís and Jogís seem to have coexisted in relative peace, each group regarding the other as a somewhat misguided variety of its own kind and both enjoying the veneration and confidence of simple folk. (84)

This close connection seems to indicate that each shared a great deal of common philosophy or experience through similar mystic insight.

It is clear that Kabír's religious influences were manifold. He lived within a largely Hindu community, while the government was Islamic. During his time "Sufí
mysticism had impregnated the whole composite culture" (Vaudeville 83) and it appears that his ancestors may possibly have been Yogís. Kabír somehow managed to chart a path through all of these influences to experience his own "meeting with the Guest" (Kabír, Fish 1) and to experience the "bliss of the mystical Sahaja state" (Scott 18). It would seem that the impact of the general Hindu tradition and its associated terminology had the greatest influence upon Kabír. Unlike Rúmi, he does not declare his love for a particular Shaykh or Sufi teacher. It has been conjectured that Kabír's guru was one Hindu Saint Ramanand (Kabír, Grace xvi), and yet dates seem to undermine this proposition, and it is quite clear from his poetry that Kabír did not worship any living being. He worshipped only the formless, the nameless, and attained his spiritual depth "not from a particular guru, but from direct experience" (Vaudeville 92). It appears inaccurate, therefore, to say that Kabír belonged to a tradition in which "importance was placed upon the teacher, the Guru, who could be regarded almost a God himself" (Parrinder 105). In contrast, the poet says plainly "Rám is an interior light which illuminates me, and this can hardly be learned from a teacher" (qtd. in Dwyer 45).

Like Rúmi, Kabír was involved in what could be called egoless creativity. He had no attachment to his role as a poet. He says:

I have done nothing, nor will I do anything: my body is incapable of doing anything.

Whatever I have achieved is Hari's doing.

(qtd. in Dwyer 64)

This egoless state led to detachment from creativity. Kabír wrote his dohás and pads with no particular concern for his role as an artist. He was indifferent to any social reaction his politically confronting verse might engender. As Vaudeville says, Kabír was "unconcerned with the pleasure or displeasure of his audience" (129). Through brief
verse, Kabir witnessed, or perceived life without his own self, or ego, becoming involved. He says:

Repeating 'Thou, Thou', I became Thou,
In me, no 'I' remained:
Offering myself unto thy Name,
wherever I look, Thou art!

(qtd. in Vaudeville 173)

Kabir's attitude of witnessing was well-suited to the poetic formats of the dohá and pads. Vaudeville explains that the poetic forms are "by their very nature, muktak, i.e. detached, independent verses" (124). The poet took no credit for his creative output:

Everything is done by the master, nothing by the servant.

(qtd. in Dwyer 260)

His creativity was simply an extension of his spiritual life. His focus was not at all on literary popularity or success.

Despite the inaccuracies and discrepancies surrounding Kabir, it is certain that his main concern was spiritual and his life was completely devoted to that spiritual path. His priority is stated here very simply:

Kabir says: you must know the One, knowing which you know all.
Those who fail to know this One, all their knowledge is ignorance.

(qtd in Dwyer 71)

With this spiritual knowledge as his priority, Kabir did not consider poetry to be very important. Nevertheless, he has been praised throughout India as a most original, gifted poet. Vaudeville concludes by declaring that Kabir cannot be called a kavi, or 'poet' in "the traditional Indian sense", but nevertheless "the little weaver of Benares was indeed a great poet, one of the greatest known in India and elsewhere" (130). Kabir's creativity
developed due to a particular kind of responsibility bestowed upon the genuine mystic. His job was:

- to note the experience... note the specific physical and spiritual manifestations, and then
- hope that the reader, though uncertain about interpretation, will be convinced at least of
- the authentic occurrence of the experience itself. (Barnstone 23)

David Scott emphasises that Kabír was "above all a mystic" (160) and that only incidentally did he become a poet. This priority of inner spiritual life over creative life, is the first crucial common characteristic found in the four poets of this study, and the first point of reference in creating a definition of the "perceptive poets".
Bashó

Bashó, who is described as having a "mystical philosophy" (Bashó, *Japanese* 2), wrote within a culture influenced by Indian Buddhism, Japanese Shinto and Chinese Taoism. Like Rúmi and Kabír, his focus on inner spiritual life is evident in his poetry. Spiritual dissatisfaction appears in his haiku and he seems to display a certain rebellious attitude towards the constructs of religion. His focus on spirituality led him away from traditional doctrine towards the mysticism of Zen. It appears that at certain stages of his life he believed poetry itself would enable him to transcend worldly affairs, and he therefore regarded art as a spiritual discipline, supported in his efforts by the aesthetic philosophy of Zen and Japanese culture. There is also evidence, however, to suggest that Bashó was consciously attempting to detach himself from his creative life.

A number of Bashó's haiku are heavy with melancholy and suggest the poet's quest for spiritual meaning. The poet comments:

The sound of a winter jar
Cracking on this icy night
As I lie awake

(qtd. in Ueda, *The Master* 54)

The "cracking" in the cold, quiet night gives a sense of the poet contemplating the harsh reality of lonely life. Similarly he writes:

How harsh it sounds!
The spattering of the hail
On my traveling hat

(qtd. in Ueda, *The Master* 55)
The Perceptive Poets: “Priority of Inner Spiritual Life”

The poet, travelling on his mystic journey towards self-knowledge, seems to be alone with only the sound of the hail. This sombre mood is recurrent throughout the poet's early work.

Bashō's dissatisfaction extends into the criticism of organised religion. There is no blunt accusing voice, as can be identified in the poems of Rūmi or Kabīr, but in a more subtle way Bashō emphasises the sterility of religion in the following three haiku:

Cold white azalea –
lone nun
under thatched roof.

(Love 44)

Buddha's death-day –
old hands
clicking rosaries.

(Love 59)

Carven gods long gone ...
dead leaves alone foregather
On the temple porch.

(Japanese 50)

Bashō's use of such adjectives as "cold", "lone", "old" and "dead" to describe nuns and temples creates a feeling of spiritual dissatisfaction and this feeling is strengthened beside the religious words "Buddha" and "gods".

On occasion, however, Bashō's respect for the significance and sincerity of religious life becomes evident. He appears to have been highly respectful of wandering monks and to have had a natural inclination towards asceticism. This becomes more
distinct towards the end of his life. In his haiku, the external constructs of religion such as temples, seem to signify for him, spiritual division, entrapment and stagnancy, but one also senses the poet's deep spiritual concerns. The poet observes:

Four temple gates –
under one moon,
four sects.
(Love 78)

This haiku illustrates religious division beneath the glory of what seems to be a full moon, itself significant as a symbol of spirituality. The following haiku depicts neglected temples, "lost" in the distance:

Beyond potato fields,
temple gate
lost in goose-grass.
(Love 78)

There is quiet beauty in the moon and the "goose-grass" along with irony in the lost temple and divided sects. Bashó speaks directly to the priest:

Come out, bat –
birds, earth itself
hauled off by flowers.
(Love 33)

Lucien Stryk believes that the bat, an isolated and apparently dark figure not usually associated with nature, signifies the priest (Love 33). At one stage Bashó was attracted to monastic life. He says, "I was anxious to confine myself within the walls of a monastery. Yet I wandered on...." (qtd. in Ueda, The Master 25). The idea of simplicity, discipline and intense devotion seems to have appealed to him, but it is significant that he made the decision not to formally become a monk (Ueda, The Master 168). Toshiharu Oseko
plainly states that Bashó "did not become a Buddhist priest" (Bashó, *Haiku* Intro. 2c),
despite his intense interest in spiritual life.

Bashó's spiritual seeking led him away from the monastery but towards a life of
tavel and poetry. His seeking is evident in the expression of his desire to experience
God while travelling. He writes:

    How I long to see
    among dawn flowers,
    the face of God.

    (*Love* 199)

Scholars have described the poet as having "a transcendental yearning" (Rimer 6), and
Bashó clearly says of himself in *The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel*, "It is spirit, such
as it is, which led me to poetry, at first little more than a pastime, then the full business
of my life" (*Love* 1). Not only was he a wanderer seeking poetry, but in fact his aim is
more accurately described as "seeking of the roots of art" (Rimer 18). His calling to
tavel and his use of poetry as a discipline, became a more intensely spiritual pursuit. It
is believed that at one point, "he had many friends, disciples, and patrons, and yet he was
lonelier than ever" (Ueda, *The Master* 24). It seems that Bashó's path towards literature,
whether conscious or not, was motivated by spiritual calling.

In the same way that Rúmi and Kabír avoided doctrinal religion and moved
towards mysticism, Bashó began to look for answers through the Zen path. Zen,
according to Parrinder, is a synthesis of Taoist and Buddhist thought where "the origins
are in the Chinese word *ch'an*, which is supposed to be derived from Sanskrit *dhyana,*
'meditation'" (72). The close association, therefore, between the Indian tradition of
meditation, familiar to the Yogi, and the Zennist experience should be noted. Bashó
clearly says that he began practising Zen meditation under the direction of the Priest Butchó:

   Behind a temple called Ungan-ji which is not far from Kurobane, my Zen mentor, the priest Butchó, once had his monastic retreat.

(qtd. in Britton 32)

There is evidence to indicate that Bashó, at some stage, had a serious interest in the meditative processes of Zen.

   Although Bashó might have become associated with Zen, he was never a dogmatic poet. Stryk compares Bashó with the Zen poet Dogen (1200-1253) to illustrate the way Bashó avoided "the traditional didactic tone of much classical Zen poetry" (Bashó, *Love* 16). Bashó's understanding of the concept of non-attachment, as an aspect of Zen philosophy as well as of the Hindu tradition, is apparent in certain haiku. For example:

   Skylark on moor –
   sweet song
   of non-attachment.

   (*Love* 42)

Unlike a doctrinal poem, however, this poem creates a feeling of spiritual freedom.

Stryk states that Bashó was "conscious of being an artist" (Bashó, *Love* 17), not a Zen Master as Dogen was. It would be more accurate to qualify this statement by saying that Bashó was, at that time, conscious of being an artist whose art form was intrinsically linked to his spiritual life.

   At the time of turning to Zen, Bashó also embarked on his most important poetic voyages around Japan. In the poet's final journeys, his mystic experience and his poetry became united. Stryk claims that "it is especially in the travel sketches that the poet's
profound debt to Zen is apparent" (Bashó, *Love* 15). These journeys, unlike his previous ones, were now "for the sake of spiritual and poetic discipline" (Ueda, *The Master* 25).

The poet says:

There we did begin,
Cloistered in that waterfall,
Our summer discipline.

(qtd. in Britton 31)

Noteworthy is the poet's realisation of a connection between his spiritual and creative "discipline". Bashó says that his travelling companion "took religious vows" before beginning one of the journeys, and also "shaved his head... changed into a priest's black robe and took the Buddhist name of Sógo" (Britton 30). Bashó and his companion sought "liberation from mundane life" (Ueda, *The Master* 175), and it was this energy that drove the poet to become a wanderer with a desire to eventually express a "profound sense of the oneness of nature and religion" (Bashó, *Love* 91). This is heard in haiku such as:

Monks, morning-glories –
How many under
the pine-tree Law?

*(Love 66)*

The "pine-tree Law" refers to the one law of God and nature. Bashó began attracting "not pupils, but disciples" (Bashó, *Love* 13), and he "engaged with disciples in profound discussion of the art of haiku" (Bashó, *Love* 13). Primarily, he became focused on finding spiritual reality and, as Ueda says, he travelled now "not as a renowned poet, but as a self-disciplining monk" (*The Master* 29).
It appears that a particular problem experienced by Bashó, and one of which he seems to have been well aware, was his unwillingness to detach himself from creative work. He describes his obsession with haiku as "a sinful attachment" (Ueda, *The Master* 35). Thus there are statements from scholars indicating that while Bashó thought he would achieve serenity "by means of poetry", it was, instead, "poetry itself that forever disturbed his mind" (Ueda, *The Master* 169). This is, perhaps, a particular problem for Bashó because Zen is traditionally supportive of the arts, and one of the Zen "Ways" is the "Way of Poetry" known as "Kadó" (Stryk, *Zen* xLvi). In Bashó's philosophic environment, the process of writing haiku was regarded as a semi-spiritual discipline where the poet was respected as a sage-like figure. Oseko suggests that Bashó did not become a monk, nor live a secular life, but instead "just followed this line of the way of poetical elegance" (Bashó, *Haiku*). Kenneth Yasuda believes that Zen is the "key to the completest appreciation of most haiku" (2). Poetry-writing, according to the Zen tradition, is considered "a mystic Way – to a most difficult truth" (Stryk, *Zen* xLvii) and thus the word "Poet" is ordinarily presented throughout Bashó's work with a capital letter because it is considered to be such an honourable, priest-like position.

Bashó's poetry, however, does suggest the poet's awareness of being an instrument without ego. The poet says:

> while sweeping the yard

> it forgets about the snow –

> a broom.

(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 246)

This poem, written about the Zen monk Han Shan, illustrates Bashó's recognition of human activity being accomplished without self-conscious thought. Yasuda explains that the creative state of "readiness" in which the poet situates himself, "must be a
disinterested form of single-minded activity. If it is not disinterested, it will be commercial... or scientific..." (12). While Bashó began his writing life with some notion as to his future possible poetic fame, gradually he became more removed from this role and began to view it objectively. He stopped receiving money for assisting in the games of renga composition because "Pecuniary recompense jarred his search for poetic truth" (Sato 21). He began to view himself objectively:

my horse ambles along...
I see myself in a painting
of this summer moor.
(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 90)

Ebara Taizó explains that this haiku "embodies the tranquility of a mind that looks at itself from a distance" (qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 90). Bashó became detached from the concept of fame and fortune. In response to this poem by Ryóta:

If I retire,
one acre of fertile land
with forty gallons
of miso, a servant, and
a supply of good water
(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 273)

Basho writes:

a hermitage –
the moon, chrysanthemums
one acre of rice field.
(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 273)

In contrast to Ryóta's great expectations of servants, land and "gallons of miso", Bashó is content with the moon, or spiritual life. Bashó began to distance himself from worldly
desires and his attachment to poetry therefore became disturbing for him. Kubota Usubo says:

Bashó himself was like a monk, his only desire being to write better poetry. Yet even he seems to have complained of lacking the kind of freedom he desired for himself. With that complaint in mind, he looked up at the sky above the moor and saw, with envy, a skylark singing... The lark at that moment was in the very sphere Bashó aspired to.

(Ueda, Basho 156)

Usubo refers to Bashó's haiku about a skylark:

above the moor
not attached to anything
a skylark sings

(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 156)

Eventually Bashó came to view all poets in three separate categories: poets who do anything to succeed in fame, poets with talent but without depth and poets who are on the "True Way" (Sato 22-23), essentially referring to poets whose first priority is spiritual life.

Bashó sought spiritual knowledge as a priority, but it was within the creative process itself that he believed he could experience it. He was supported in this quest by the aesthetic philosophies of his culture. One well-known haiku poet, Otsuji, says that "Before a poet can compose haiku, he must find a unity within his life which must come from the effort to discover his true self" (qtd. in Yasuda 15). Parrinder says, "Taoism has always been one of the sources of inspiration in art, and with its teaching of harmony with the Tao, it is one of the great examples of nature mysticism" (71). The essence of Bashó's mystic experience is further examined over the following two chapters which explore whether it was associated with an experience of nature, creativity, meditation, or some other feature.
One might describe Bashó as a "nature mystic" or a "nature poet" and yet it seems that such descriptions somehow "miss the mark", as Hess has said in relation to Kabír. Bashó's focus on inner spirituality and his movement away from religious doctrine sets him comfortably beside Rúmi and Kabír. These poets hold inner spiritual life above outer religion and also above their craft.
Blake

Born into a predominantly Christian culture, Blake was preoccupied with evaluating the moral structures and traditions of his country. His spiritual discontent is especially evident in poems contained within the Pickering Manuscript. Brennan describes the poet as "a rebel against religion and morality" (92) while Swinburne believes Blake was "born and baptized into the church of rebels" (3). Like Rûmi, Kabîr and Bashó, Blake's concern with religious hypocrisy is evident throughout his work. It appears that he pursued creativity not only for its own sake, but in order to follow a particular spiritual calling. Despite first appearances, there is also evidence in Blake's work of an attitude of egoless creativity.

Hirsch believes that certain poems within the Pickering Manuscript reflect a "period of spiritual turmoil" (118) in Blake's life and that they also reflect the notion of seeking, finding and becoming disillusioned. Particularly noticeable in this regard are the poems: "The Golden Net", "The Mental Traveller", "The Land of Dreams" and "The Crystal Cabinet". "The Mental Traveller" is especially noted for "taking us closer to the substance of the revised Four Zoas than any other poem" (Hirsch 124). This poem appears to describe an endless cycle of hope and despair with visual references to the crucified Christ and a feeling of anxiety over the destruction of genuine spiritual knowledge which is "born in joy" (5) but ends in "bleeding youth" (21). The main theme in this poem appears to be of the terrifying destruction of spiritual innocence and religious insight:
And if the Babe is born a Boy
He's given to a Woman Old
Who nails him down upon a rock
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold

She binds iron thorns around his head
She pierces both his hands & feet,
She cuts his heart out at his side
To make it feel both cold & heat.

("Mental" 9-16)

The reference to thorns and the piercing of hands and feet are both biblical images illustrating Blake's religious preoccupation. The regular rhythm and repetition of "She" builds a desperate climax indicating the poet's passionate concern about his subject. Blake's search for spiritual truth and his efforts to grasp it are also reflected in "The Crystal Cabinet". The poet writes:

I strove to seize the inmost Form
with ardor fierce & hands of flame
But burst the Crystal Cabinet
And like a Weeping Babe became

A weeping Babe upon the wild
And Weeping Woman pale reclind
And in the outward air again
I filld with woes the passing Wind.

("Crystal" 21-28)

The poet strives to "seize" the essence, or "inmost Form" of life, and also strives to communicate it with "hands of flame" – ordinarily representing Blake's fiery, creative
forge. These poems from the Pickering Manuscript are born out of Blake's passionate preoccupation with inner spiritual life.

Blake's poetry and prophetic books criticise the religious structures of his day, and poems such as "The Chimney-Sweeper", "Holy Thursday" and The Marriage of Heaven and Hell contain elements of deep resistance to religious dogma and hypocrisy. In the same way as Rûmi criticises philosophically-based religion, Kabîr satirises all religious rituals and Bashó points to the sterility of temple life, Blake attacks the hypocrisy of the Christian church. This is most obvious in Songs of Innocence and Experience, where, for example, in "The Chimney-Sweeper" the young boy expresses anger towards the Church. He says:

And because I am happy, & dance & sing,
They think they have done me no injury:
And are gone to praise God & His Priest & King,
Who make up a heaven of our misery.

(Songs, Song 37, 9-12)

The poem points to the hypocrisy of a culture which praises "God" and "His Priest" but remains oblivious to "misery". There appears to be no genuine concern within the poet's Christian culture for the young chimney sweeper's predicament. Similarly, in "Holy Thursday", the Christian charity school is satirised. The poet does not recognise charity itself as anything special. Rather, he asks why poverty exists at all in a "rich and fruitful land" (Songs, Song 28, 1). Blake's criticism of Christian religion is also clearly evident in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. The poem announces:

Prisons are built with stones of Law,
Brothels with bricks of Religion.

(pl. 8; 21)
The poet indicates that the rigidity of religion has created perverse sexual behaviour. The priest of the Christian church is also attacked. For example, the poet states:

As the catterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys.

(pl. 9; 7-18)

There is no shortage of evidence to illustrate Blake's contempt for religious dogma. Brennan explains that Blake reserved the word "God" for referring to the "tyrant powers of various religions" (94). His *Book of Urizen* is described as a parody of the “Book of Genesis” and of "all religious codes that formulate myths" (Hirsch 73).

Blake cannot be called a traditional Christian, and Michael Davis declares that Blake "scornfully rejected Christianity" (36). Despite Blake's apparent visions of the twelve apostles, his acknowledgment of the biblical prophets Ezra and Isaiah as "among the most important influences of his childhood" (Lincoln, *Innocence* 10), his "passionate interest in the Bible" (Lincoln, *Innocence* 10), and his constant references to Jesus, Blake criticised Christianity itself. Yet he remained essentially a spiritual man whose letters indicate extreme religious fervour. He was familiar with the work of foreign mystics, especially Boehme and Swedenborg and other influences included the mystic Paracelsus. It is possible that Blake actually met with mystics and "students of magic" (Yeats, *Poems* xxix). He supposedly belonged to and was "an active member" of the "New Jerusalem Church" (Butter 26). All of this, together with his exposure of religious hypocrisy has led to him being described as one who had "a mystical vision of things" (Parrinder 11), and even on his memorial tablet in St Paul's Cathedral he is described as "artist, poet, mystic" (qtd. in Parrinder 26).

Christian mysticism with its roots in Jewish heritage and Greek thought (King 5) appears to describe Blake's influences well. Certainly Blake was influenced by the
Biblical character Isaiah, whose “Temple vision” is noted by King as fundamental to the history of Christian mysticism (12). Yeats also compares Blake to the creators of the Jewish mystical tradition of Kabbalah saying Blake was equally "original" and "profound" (*Poems* xxxi), while many scholars have noted the Neoplatonic (Parrinder 26), or Greek element, in Blake's work, however, Blake is not included in King's book, *Christian Mystics*. King makes reference to Blake as a "visionary writer" influenced by Boehme and comparable to the German poet and mystic Hildegard of Bingen, while Parrinder (154) refers to a book called *The Protestant Mystics* and states that Blake "the nature poet" sits in "very mixed company" there. The feature of Protestant mysticism which indeed seems to describe Blake is the acknowledgement of "the divine element in the human being, the spark, center or ground of the soul" (King 176).

Recognition of the divine element within human beings is also apparent in the Christian Gnostic tradition. Davis believes Blake was "haunted by Boehme's theory that man was originally a pure angel, containing feminine spirit, balanced between dark and light worlds" (37). Peter Sorensen's study of Blake as a Gnostic Christian is also salient in this context. Sorensen explains that one Gnostic myth describes the feminine divine as trapped within human beings in order to lead humanity back to God (4), and Sorensen believes this is reflected in Blake's "fallen female figures". Sorensen also finds within Blake's longer works, a Gnostic figure of the "demiurge or architect of the false world" (74) and says this is "clearly the antecedent for Blake's characters Urizen, Tiriel, and Gwin" (74). Most importantly, Sorensen declares that "such a challenge to the world view of Christianity had not occurred in precisely this form since the early days of Christianity" (74). Sorensen declares that Blake should not, in fact, be connected to Neoplatonism, Kabbalism, traditional Christianity, Renaissance alchemy, druidism or
"any number of other -isms" and that he should be known as a "Christian Gnostic, first and foremost" (3).

There are elements of Protestant mysticism, Kabbalism, Gnosticism and "other -isms" in Blake's work, but it should be recognised that "Blake was great enough to make all these a part of himself" (Davis 37). It could certainly be that Blake's statement, "the purpose for which alone I live, [is] ... to renew the lost Art of the Greeks" (Keynes 6), could refer to gnosis, or spiritual knowledge of the Greek Gnostics. Perhaps the capital "A" in "Art" is made significant not only as creativity but as spiritual life, and yet, as Sorensen himself states, Blake would not have had the same understanding of Gnostic myths as today's scholars. Sorensen points out that only over the past one hundred years has our so-called understanding of Gnosticism been established. To say that "Blake found 'confirmation' of his Gnostic vision" (Sorensen 9) in the work of Swedenborg or Boehme, appears acceptable. On the other hand, however, it also seems problematic. To decipher Blake according to our modern understanding of the Gnostic myth of the fallen Goddess (*Pistis Sophia*) for example, as Sorensen does, is to imply that Blake had a good understanding of this very detailed myth which was "not yet in translation" (Sorensen 9) in Blake's time. In essence, therefore, labelling Blake a Gnostic is not completely precise.

Defining the word “gnosis” is perhaps more applicable. Blake's Gnosticism was one of personal experience, where the word gnosis, must simply be defined as "insight" (Pagels xix), "knowledge", "revelatory knowledge" (Sorensen 2), or "secret knowledge" (Sorensen 4) acquired through personal experience. He was not a student of Gnosticism, as Sorensen himself declares. The word gnosis may also be compared to the Sufi word *ma'rifat* which refers to knowledge attained through the heart (Nicholson, *Rûmî* 71). In
fact, Whinfield, in the Introduction to Rúmi's *Masnavi i Ma'navi*, defines gnosis by substituting "*ma'rifat*" in brackets (Rúmi, *Masnavi* xxxix), and Elaine Pagels defines gnosis as "an intuitive process of knowing oneself" (xix). The gnosis of the genuine mystics from East and West is therefore comparable. Blake himself insists that "The Religions of all Nations are derived from each Nation's different reception of the Poetic Genius" (*All Religions Principle 4*). For this reason he should be examined beside the genius expressed through the poetry of other nations.

Blake was a passionate artist and poet, and yet his passion was more related to his gnosis and spiritual motivation than to his expectation of success. To say that Blake was detached from his creative work, and not particularly interested in writing verse, would be incorrect, however, while Blake was adamant to persist with his "beloved arts", he was quite relaxed about whether or not he achieved any recognition from his work. Blake says:

> I should be sorry if I had any earthly fame, for whatever natural glory a man has is so much taken from his spiritual glory. I wish to do nothing for profit. I wish to live for art. I want nothing whatever. I am quite happy.

(qtd. in O'Neill, *Critics* 15)

Indeed it seems that this issue of material success led to Blake's sufferings. He was intent on pursuing his spiritual, creative work but his patron, William Hayley, appears to have wanted to capitalise on Blake's engraving skills. Davis believes that, as a result, Blake characterised his patron as Satan because Hayley, while "benevolent" and "sentimental", was also "shallow", restricting Blake's creative and spiritual freedom (105). Blake makes a number of comments concerning his disregard for commercial art. In a letter to James Blake in 1803 he declares:
... he thinks to turn me into a Portrait Painter as he did Poor Romney, but this he nor all
the devils in hell will never do.

(Keynes 50)

And again:

I regard fashion in poetry as little as I do in painting.

(Keynes 58)

While some might argue that Blake's sensitivity to criticism must have meant he was
excessively proud of his creative work, it seems more accurate to say that Blake's
reaction to criticism occurred as a result of his spiritual motivations being indirectly
undermined. In a letter to Hayley in 1805, Blake declares that "it is the Greatest of
Crimes to Depress True Art & Science" (Keynes 121). He refers to Jesus then says:

let us go on... Persisting in Spiritual Labours & the use of that Talent which it is Death
to Bury, & of that Spirit to which we are called.

(Keynes 121).

It would seem that perhaps Blake's reactions to criticism were more intense than those of
Rúmi or Kabír, possibly because the culture in which Blake worked was less supportive
of spiritually motivated creativity. This is, in fact, a key motivating factor for creating a
more supportive framework for these poets whose first priority is spiritual life.

Blake's priority was not literature alone, but literature for a certain spiritual
purpose. Brennan says that Blake was, "not so much a poet and painter importing
mysticism into art as a mystic conquering, for his ideas, the hitherto neglected fields of
art" (54). Blake was trained in drawing and engraving, but his poetry remained, to a
great extent, a self-taught passion. In a letter to Thomas Butts in 1803 Blake wrote:

... if a Man is the Enemy of my Spiritual Life while he pretends to be the Friend of my
Corporeal, he is a Real Enemy – but the Man may be the friend of my Spiritual Life
while he seems the Enemy of my Corporeal, but not Vice Versa. (Keynes 55)
Blake's spiritual life was far more important to him than his creative life, despite the fact that he constantly married the two elements and suggested that they had the same source. In many instances in his letters there are references to his creative mission.

I do not wish to irritate by seeming too obstinate in Poetic pursuits. But if all the World should set their faces against This, I have Orders to set my face like a flint (Ezekiel iiC, 9v), against their faces, & my forehead against their foreheads. (Keynes 58)

He seems unshakably confident as to his eventual success and at the same time somehow unconcerned about whether success happens during his own lifetime. He explains:

if Great things do not turn our, it is because such things depend on the Spiritual & not on the Natural World... & when it is proper, my Talents shall be properly exercised in Public.... (Keynes 47)

John Sampson argues convincingly that if Blake had indeed wished to be popular in his own day, he could have taken steps towards that end. It is believed that his talent was "immediately" recognised by enough influential contemporaries for him to have pursued a more successful literary career in his own time (xvii).

If it was indeed Blake's "own choice" (Sampson xvii) to remain undiscovered, then this can only indicate that his priorities were not directed towards poetic success. He stubbornly insisted upon his right to pursue "divine" arts. His wider poetic vision, with its radical energy and inherent power, was a result of the poet's fierce determination to live a spiritual, and synonymously, imaginative life. Sorensen notes this concordant relationship between spiritual insight and creativity when he declares, "it is entirely appropriate to equate Poetic Genius with gnosis" (17). Blake's "Poetic Genius" is further examined beside that of Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó in Chapter Four. The "Poetic Genius" of the "perceptive poets" is, in fact, a result of the intensity of their spiritual life.
Conclusion

Despite differences in religious background, each of the poets of this study displays dissatisfaction with traditional religious doctrines, together with an intense desire to experience inner spiritual truth. Each poet criticises external structures of religion and the hypocrisy of religious dogma. They sought spiritual meaning beyond accepted traditions and as a result, moved towards mystic paths. Regardless of the mystic paths they chose, or the particular names used to describe those paths, each of the poets gained the reputation of "mystic". As mystics, however, they defy categorisation and move beyond the borders of religion and culture. It is therefore difficult to categorise such poets and some scholars might oppose the concept of attempting to do so. Despite this, the poets themselves compliment each other and their literary merits are increased through comparison of their mystic ma'rifat or gnosis.

While the term "mystic" is troublesome in Western, literary fields, the subject of genuine mystic experience and its impact upon creativity should not be ignored. Essential to the full appreciation and comprehension of these poets' work is an understanding of their spiritual life. It may be stated that the first characteristic of the "perceptive poet" is an intense and passionate interest in inner spiritual life. It may be added that this focus on spiritual life is a matter which takes priority over creative life. The "perceptive poet" is non-doctrinal and rebellious when it comes to the subject of orthodox religion and does not belong to any particular religion, but in fact seems to speak on behalf of all religions at once. Not only does the "perceptive poet" seek
spiritual satisfaction, but he or she finds it through genuine mystic experience. The exact nature of the mystic experience, as it relates to Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake, is examined throughout the following two chapters in order to narrow the field of "mystic poetry" and contribute to the framework which constitutes a broad definition of the term "perceptive poet".
1. Elaine Pagels makes reference here to the work of Richard Reitzenstein.

2. This is further discussed in Chapter Five.

3. Mallarmé's "Cratylism" may perhaps be comparable to this notion.

4. This fact is further examined in Chapter Four.

5. These Sant figures were not affiliated, but loosely linked, according to later scholars, by the nature of their spirituality.

6. This point becomes more apparent through discussion of the symbolic nature of his poetry in Chapter Six.

7. The moon as a symbol is examined in more detail in Chapter Six.

8. Similarities between this tradition and that of the French Symbolists may be debated.

9. Actual name is Seki Osuga

10. "I will go on in the Strength of the Lord; through hell will I sing ..." (Keynes 56).

11. Whinfield states, "According to the Sufi gnosis (ma'rifat), God is the only Being..." (Rûmi, Masnavi xxxiv).
CHAPTER TWO

*Ōkyô, Detachment and Balance:

The Perceptive Poet and the Legacy of Mysticism

Madness is self-centred, whereas art strives to communicate.¹

(Burwick 14)

The Danger of Ecstasy:

If a dervish remained in a state of ecstasy,
He would be fragmented in both worlds.

(Saadi of Shiraz qtd. in Shah 99)

The Man of God:

The Man of God is drunken without wine:
The Man of God is sated without meat.

(Rúmi qtd. in Shah 116)
Introduction

In the previous chapter it was argued that Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake were more concerned with inner spirituality than outward religion, and that their spiritual pursuits led them to various mystic paths and consequently to creative life. In this chapter, the four poets are examined in relation to the general Western "Problem of the Unconscious" (Rauhala 1). This problem, as it relates to the thesis, is relevant in the way it associates the unconscious with spiritual experience but also with other subjects such as mental disease, ecstatic states and decadent behaviour.

In this chapter, the poets are firstly examined in regard to the subject of madness. Both Rúmi’s and Blake’s use of the word "mad" is examined as referring to the state of ordinary reasoning. This is compared to Kabír’s use of the word in association with the experience of samādhi. The Japanese term fúkyó is also examined in relation to poetic madness whereby the poet is not mentally unbalanced, but rather, passionate about spirituality.

The issue of ecstatic mystic experience is also examined. It is shown that both Rúmi and Blake distinguish between "Knowledge of Reality" (mystic ma'rifat or gnosis) and "knowledge of states" (emotionalism). In Blakean language this translates into a difference between Urthona and Beulah. It is also argued that both Kabír and Bashó demonstrate emotional detachment rather than ecstasy through their poetry.

Thirdly, the poets are examined in regard to the subject of sensual empiricism. It is argued that while Rúmi and Kabír both utilise images of intoxication and conjugal love, these are employed in a metaphorical manner. Bashó’s love for nature is examined
as an initial concept which evolves towards a state independent of sensual stimulation, and Blake's similar movement beyond sensual experience is also examined.

In summary, it is argued that the poets' work displays a philosophy of mental, emotional and physical balance and that this is the second main characteristic of the "perceptive poets". While these poets may have at times been associated with the subjects of madness, ecstasy and decadence, there is evidence, on the contrary, to suggest that these phenomena are irrelevant in the creative process of the "perceptive poets". These concepts appear to be connotations associated with mysticism in general, and not essentially related to the poets of this thesis.
Parameters:

The Problem of the Unconscious: Madness, Ecstasy and Decadence

This thesis argues that Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake each experienced a particular state of heightened consciousness through their various mystic paths. It also asserts that this state influenced their "Perceptive" and "Imaginative Faculties". Therefore, to some degree, the subject of consciousness and the field of psychology are being approached. Rauhala, in her book *Intentionality and the Problem of the Unconscious*, explains that the word "unconscious" once had "sixteen meanings" (67) but is now mainly used in the field of philosophy to "designate those of an individual's mental relationships with so-called reality that exist in addition to the ones of which he is 'aware' or 'conscious' in the narrow sense" (10). The “unconscious” is defined in modern psychology as “that part of thought and emotion that happens outside everyday awareness”.²

Rauhala notes that "the difficulties of the mystics in expression are also associated with the problem of the unconscious" (64). These problems associated with the “unconscious”, and discussed within the fields of psychology and philosophy, seem to be reflected in the field of literary studies through association of a genuine mystic state of expanded consciousness with the disordered unconscious. This has led to an association between genuine mystic states and such things as unsocial, irrational behaviour, or emotional hysteria. In addition, the mystic path has also been associated
with such things as "descent" into the unconscious and sacrifice of contentment for the sake of inspiration. This chapter explores the notions of madness, ecstasy and decadence which appear to be somehow relevant to the unconscious but irrelevant to the state of expanded consciousness.\(^3\)

In the field of literary studies, particularly within Romantic and Symbolist traditions, the term "unconscious" has become associated with both abnormal psychological phenomena and spiritual experience. A most obvious example of this is found in the life of Gérard de Nerval who is sometimes thought of as a “mystic” (Knapp preface) despite the fact that he is included in Shoshana Felman’s psychoanalytical study of *Writing and Madness* and is also known for his dramatic act of suicide. Discussion of the subject of madness is fraught with difficulty due to such complex concepts as Michel Foucault’s “discursive currency theory” (Prado 26) through which Foucault displays more concern with the way in which a phenomenon such as madness is discussed, judged or perceived by society than with real issues such as the existence of a relationship between mental disease and destructive behaviour. C. G. Prado admits that Foucault only addresses the subject of reality when “those who misinterpret his views charge that his relativization of truth to discourse entails irrealism” (26). Here, it is worth quoting John Searle on the subject of “brute reality” (Prado 32). Searle states:

> I regard the basic claim of external realism – that there exists a real world that is totally and absolutely independent of all of our representations, all of our thoughts, feelings, opinions, language, discourse, texts, and so on – as so obvious and indeed as such an essential condition of rationality, and even of intelligibility, that I am somewhat embarrassed to have to raise the question and to discuss the various challenges to this view. (qtd. in Prado 138)
This thesis takes the view that a level of “brute reality” exists and that it can be perceived. Regardless of whether or not “madness” is referred to as “mental disease”, “abnormal behaviour” or, indeed, “normalcy”, it is considered here as a generally undesirable and mostly destructive aspect of “brute reality”. It is considered as an antithesis of spiritual experience.

As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, the Romantic poets, with their fascination for the mysteries of the unconscious, seem to have encouraged interest in visions and other phenomena occurring as a result of what has been called a "morbidly sensitive imagination" (Burwick 5). In Burwick's study of "Poetic Madness" in relation to the "Romantic Imagination", he finds "an overwhelming abundance of cases" concerning morbid hallucinations (5). This fact, together with Beer's notion that the Romantic poets believed "the motive power of spiritual evolution" was to be found within the "unconscious" (Post-Romantic 47), links the Romantic concept of the unconscious to obscure psychological phenomena, while simultaneously suggesting a form of spiritual life. This appears to reflect some basic flaw in the literary understanding of the unconscious: madness and higher spiritual states both appear to become associated with the unconscious but logically this would seem to be problematic.

In the Greek tradition, philosophers have associated inspiration with madness. Aristotle says:

Hence poetry implies either a happy gift of nature or a strain of madness.

(Poetics, II, xvii)

Plato agrees, stating:
The third type of possession and madness is possession by the Muses. When this seizes upon a gentle and virgin soul it rouses it to inspired expression in lyric and other sorts of poetry... (Plato, *Phaedrus* 48)

Burwick traces associations between: mental illness and liberated imagination, mental disease and genius, "mania" and creative talent (2-3), and also discusses Coleridge's fascination for the madness of Hamlet. Burwick notes:

In describing Hamlet, Coleridge identified some of the peculiarities of which he often accused himself. A crucial problem, one that he also often pondered in his notebook, was whether one could, in fact, watch one's own madness. (4)

Beer also explores the keen interest, demonstrated by modern writers, in such conditions as schizophrenia or split personality disorders. The Romantic allure of the unconscious – as a peculiar source of both spirituality and genius – develops into a fascination for inexplicable psychological phenomena, and this gradually becomes a sign of genius itself.

These connections are inherently complicated. Even Coleridge believed the "mad rhapsodist" should be separated from the one who is inspired by the "primary" level of consciousness (Burwick 39), and it would seem that Burwick is logically correct when he says, "to claim that the creative imagination can function in and through madness mistakenly attributes to madness a degree of control it does not possess" (14). Oates' inclusion of Sylvia Plath as "a tragic figure" in a work which examines the "visionary experience" is also noteworthy. Oates defines her study as:

an attempt to analyse Plath in terms of her cultural significance, to diagnose, through Plath's poetry, the pathological aspects of our era that make a death of the spirit inevitable.... (114)

Plath's inclusion in Oates' study demonstrates the blurred line between morbid sensitivity and spiritual sensitivity: the "cult of Plath" which "insists she is a saintly
martyr" (Oates 114), is one which worships a kind of disordered, or tormented state of mind. Similarly, Rilke feared that psychotherapy would end his creative life, describing the possible result as "perilously akin to a disinfected soul" (Rilke, Letters 199): Rilke's spiritual soul and his unconscious mind seem to have become synonymous.

Rauhala identifies certain pitfalls associated with Carl Gustav Jung's theory of the structure of consciousness which relate to these problems. Rauhala notes that Jung faced difficulties because of the "dual character of the unconscious, which was chaotic and primitive on the one hand, and wise and objective on the other..." (101). Donald H. Mayo believes that Jung “is as much Romantic philosopher as twentieth-century psychologist” (94). This dichotomy has led, for example, to both Jung’s work “On the Importance of the Unconscious in Psychopathology” in his book titled The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease, and also to Mayo’s work on creativity titled Jung and Aesthetic Experience: the Unconscious as a Source of Artistic Inspiration. One is reminded of both the poetic tradition of the "Decadents" on the one hand and its mystic origins on the other. Symons seems to have believed, for example, that a poet such as Nerval may be "graceful and elegant when he is sane, but only inspired, only really wise, passionate, collected, only really master of himself, when he is insane" (10). It is worth mentioning, however, that even Symons believed Nerval's particular state of mind was due to "the weakness and not the excess of his visionary quality, to the insufficiency of his imaginative energy, and to his lack of spiritual discipline" (14). According to Symons, Nerval was "an unsystematic mystic". The poets dealt with in this thesis, on the contrary, are consistent in their dedication to spiritual life. While they discuss "madness", it would appear that they use this word more poetically than literally. In fact, they use it satirically to indicate that their ma'rifat or gnosis cannot be mentally
understood. They therefore describe themselves as "mad" because the majority of readers do not understand them.

Perhaps the connection between mystic experience and madness has come from the use of the word "ecstasy" in describing the mystic state in general. Barnstone, in his *Poetics of Ecstasy*, explains that the etymological origins of the word "ecstasy" are in the phrase "beside oneself" or "out of mind" (3): this certainly suggests a state of irrationality or madness associated with the unconscious. The mistake, perhaps, has been to fuse the etymological meaning of the word with later Greek use of the word. Barnstone explains that in late Greek, the word "received another application", eventually referring to "mystic trance" (3). One could argue that this word "ecstasy" might be better reserved for describing uncontrollable emotional states.

A number of poets and artists have sought to delve into the unconscious for creative inspiration. E. M. Forster, for example says:

> In the creative state a man is taken out of himself. He lets down as it were a bucket into his subconscious, and draws up something which is normally beyond his reach. (qtd. in Dodds 64)

This reliance upon the unconscious or subconscious for inspiration is indeed a genuine process, but it would appear to be an altogether different process from that which stems from genuine mystic experience and also results in inspiration. Abrams notes poetic interest in the unconscious and a corresponding, and increasing, link to “the Decadence”.

He comments on Rimbaud:

> These extraordinary letters, and Rimbaud's consonant practise in his life and writings, point forward to prominent aspects of French Symbolism and the Decadence; to Alfred Jarry and *les Pataphysiciens*; as well as to Surrealism, free fantasy, automatic writing,
and other methods of composition in which control is surrendered to the unconscious mind. (*Natural* 418)

The willing "descent into hell" in the quasi-religious search for inspiration is also identified by Hartman:

Few poets have undergone the temptation of the eye with such will and force as Rilke....

Rilke, moreover, is aware that in submitting to sense experience he follows a long line of literary precursors who sought a modern descent into hell. The myth of this descent may be said to start with Novalis, reaching its climax in French symbolism – Nerval, Baudelaire, Rimbaud – and its conclusion in Rilke.... (134)

This notion of descending into the unconscious appears to be quite different from the process of spiritually ascending in *samádhi* or *satori* or what is examined throughout this thesis as the state of expanded consciousness.

This thesis, in part, works towards clarifying some of these confusing associations. In this chapter the issues of madness, ecstasy and sensual empiricism are discussed as they relate to the unconscious. Their relevance to the poets dealt with in this thesis is dismissed as a misunderstanding. The following chapters will then proceed to examine the state of expanded consciousness, its relevance to these poets and its relation to inspiration.
Analysis

Rúmi

On occasion Rúmi's name has been associated with madness. He is also often thought of as an ecstatic mystic whose language of love and intoxication reveal an indulgent and sensuous nature. A close examination of these concepts in relation to Rúmi's poetry, however, unveils a different understanding of this phenomenon. In this section, these notions are deconstructed as common misunderstandings in order to investigate, in the following chapter, a more likely source of this poet's inspiration.

Reference has been made to Rúmi’s ecstatic "madness", but on the whole, Rúmi refrains from becoming an hysterical mystic. The poet, in fact, seems to enjoy toying with the concept of madness. In one poem he correlates madness with love:

Love is a madman
working his wild schemes, tearing off his clothes,
running through the mountains, drinking poison,
and now quietly choosing annihilation.
(Rúmi, Ecstasy 47)

In another, he appears to confess to an infatuation with madness:

I'm weary of personal worrying, in love
with the art of madness!
(Rúmi, Ecstasy 59)
Rúmi's imagery is certainly "wild" in these poems. Nicholson states that Rúmi has an "imagination so overflowing, that we catch glimpses of the very madness of Divine experience" (Rúmi 25), but the use of the word "madness" needs to be qualified. Rúmi himself addresses his reputation for madness by saying:

To your mind, I am mad
To my mind, you are all sane.
So I pray to increase my madness
And to increase your sanity.
My 'madness' is from the power of Love;
Your sanity is from the strength of unawareness.
(qtd. in Shah 183)

In this humble and witty poem, the translator has taken special care to enclose the word "madness" in quotations. Rúmi considers the meaning of this word to be associated with something other than his own state of mind. If, according to Rúmi, sanity derives from the "strength of unawareness", then it follows that Rúmi’s concept of "madness" derives from an opposing strength of awareness. In some respects it seems the poet views "sanity" as the real state of madness. He prays to increase his own "madness" and therefore increase his own acute awareness which "sane" people apparently do not enjoy. Such an acute awareness, or what is identified in Chapter Three as a perceptive strength, becomes the "Imaginative Faculty" itself, converting normal appearances, through suprasensible senses, into symbolic poetry. This process is further examined throughout this thesis.

Rúmi's poetry reveals an underlying, definite capacity for emotional and creative balance. The frequent emotional exuberance, and even ecstasy, of Rúmi should be distinguished from his underlying sense of emotional control. He explains:
I darkened my eyes with the dust of sadness
until each of them was a sea full of pearls.

All the tears which we creatures shed for His sake
are not tears as many think, but pearls....

I am complaining about the Soul of the soul,
but I'm no complainer, I'm simply telling it.

My heart tells me it is distressed with Him,
but I can only laugh at such pretended injuries.

(Rúmi, Ruins 21)

This particular poem contains no element of ecstasy, neither in its mood, rhythm or language. The poet is "simply telling it". He seems to view his own sadness with objectivity: tears become pearls, complaints become statements, distress becomes pretence. While it is common to find exuberant outbursts throughout the poet's work, it is also true to say that Rúmi does not make hysteria nor ecstasy either the main source or the main aim of his poetry.

Whinfield declares that some of Rúmi's "worst errors" come from identifying Godly love with earthly love (Rúmi, Masnavi xxix). In one poem, for example, Rúmi states:

I stand open-mouthed in veneration of that beauty:

'God is most great' is on my heart's lips every moment.

The heart hath gotten an eye constant in desire of thee.

Oh, how that desire feeds heart and eye!

(Rúmi, Divāni 43)

This melodramatic ghazal blends sensual "desire" with spiritual desire. Whinfield, however, goes on to say that Rúmi was "not so great a sinner in this respect as many others of the mystic fraternity" (Rúmi, Masnavi 30). He makes reference to a line of
mystics associated with hysterical devotion and raptures, and appears to make an attempt to remove Rúmi from that tradition. Clearly, Whinfield recognises a difference between Rúmi and hysterical, or ecstatic, mystical-poets. Rúmi, himself, acknowledges this crucial difference in his poem "The Many Wines". The poet says:

Don't think all ecstasies
are the same!
(qtd. in Barks, Rumi 6)

Rúmi expresses his concern for the concept of ecstatic experience and clearly demonstrates an awareness of an existing line of confusion associated with the subject.

Shah believes that even within the Sufi tradition, the masters have made a distinction between emotional states roused by music, and the essential nature of the progressed Sufi mystic state. Ibn El-Arabi of Spain, for example, distinguishes between the Sufi "Knowledge of Reality" which is spiritual, and "the knowledge of states". He says the "knowledge of states" includes "both emotional feeling and strange states of being in which man thinks that he has perceived something supreme but cannot avail himself of it" (qtd. in Shah 85). The "knowledge of states" is considered lower and unrelated to the Sufi mystic state. Ibn El-Arabi says, of the former, "This is emotionalism". Shah also makes reference to a poem by Saadi of Shiraz explicitly titled, "The Danger of Ecstasy", along with a myriad of other Sufi Masters to make these distinctions clear (99). Therefore, while Rúmi is included among Barnstone's poets of felicity, for whom joy is the overwhelming emotion (189), it is probably the state of expanded consciousness, rather than the emotional capacity, which should be the focus of a study of Rúmi. Emotional ecstasy may occur in the work of any poet regardless of whether that poet has experienced a genuine mystic alteration of perception.
Rúmi's poetic inspiration, therefore, does not seem to relate to mental imbalance or emotional ecstasy, nor does it appear to come as a result of "descent" into sensual indulgence or extreme sacrifice of contentment for the sake of art. On the surface, through his references to intoxication, lovers, the beloved and the sadness of separation, it may appear as if Rúmi's inspiration comes to him from a state of sensual indulgence but this would certainly be a misunderstanding. Lewis and Helminski both clarify these matters. Lewis expresses firm belief in Rúmi's abstinence from alcohol (325), while Helminski makes a distinction between the intoxication of "spiritual states" and the "intoxication of conventional life" (Rúmi, Ruins 13). Rúmi's "intoxication" is a spiritually inspired symbol where "wine is the symbol of spiritual transports" (Rúmi, Masnavi xxiv). Secondly, Helminski refers to the Persian use of the spiritual metaphor of "Love, Lover, and Beloved" as having been "developed so vividly that its metaphorical significance was sometimes mistaken for wanton sensuality" (10). The ghazal, for example, traditionally became the poetic vehicle most suitable for expressing "amorous talk with women" (Sham-i Qais qtd. in Morrison 9). For the Sufi poet it became a vehicle for speaking about "the divine Beloved" (Morrison 54). Rúmi's use of symbols shall be more closely examined in Chapter Six. In this chapter, the point is made that these metaphors of intoxication and love are spiritually – not sensually – inspired.

Lewis also indicates his disbelief in the notion that Rúmi had "homoerotic" inclinations. He insists that Rúmi only employed the "symbolism of homoerotic" as it existed in Persian literature three hundred years before (324). He further explains that "Shams and Rumi both condemned the excess of Sufi behaviour, as did other Sufis, and were opposed to Libertinism" (320-324). It should also be noted, that while Rúmi spoke
about his grief of separation, he did not indulge in discontentment, or depressed states for the purpose of gaining inspiration, but in contrast, aimed to decrease the significance of his grief. He says, "I will not tell thee my heart's grief, for it would weary thee" (Rúmi, *Diváni* 133). His separation from "the Friend" is transformed into the joy of anticipated union. He says:

> If once in this world I win a moment with thee,
> I will trample on both worlds, I will dance in triumph for ever.
> O Shamsi Tabríz, I am so drunken in this world,
> That except of drunkenness and revelry I have no tale to tell.

(*Diváni* 127)

While the poem is about separation, and could therefore have had a melancholy tone, it is, on the contrary, high-spirited and alive with the joyful verbs, "dance" and "revelry". Rúmi at times employs notions of sensual indulgence, but it seems that this literary device is purely symbolic. It does not reflect the source of his inspiration.

Within the Sufi tradition, it is noted that sensory awareness is only the beginning of the mystic path. In response to one Sufi mystic's claim that mystic knowledge "begins by way of the senses", Bakhtiar says, "one is often waylaid by the sensory pleasures and detained from journeying further" (19). It appears as if the Western study of "mystic poets" and "symbolic poets" has not fully recognised this concept. Thus, on occasion, the term "mystic" has been associated with sensuality, particularly within the work of the Symbolists. However, Rúmi, himself declares:

> The embryo, being what it is, would turn away in utter disbelief; for the blind have no imagination.
> So, in this world, when the saints tell of a world without scent and hue,
> None of the vulgar hearkens to them: sensual desire is a barrier huge and stout –
> Even as the embryo's craving for the blood that nourishes it in its low abodes
Debarred it from the perception of the external world, since it knows no food but blood.

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 39)

Rúmi refers to the "vulgar" who have "sensual desire" which becomes a "barrier" to recognising the reality of a mystic's world. The mystic reality is portrayed as "external" to the world of the senses. The poet aims to move beyond the physical senses through his mystic path. His concept of an artist is one in which the artist is elevated to a position of great perception and detachment. He declares:

> The ugliness of the script is not the ugliness of the scribe; nay, 'tis an exhibition of the ugly by him.

> The power of the artist is shown by his ability to make both the ugly and the beautiful.

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 148-149)

The poet implies that the "scribe", or poet, need not have "ugliness" within him in order to write about "ugliness". There is no insinuation that the poet must, himself, descend "into hell" in order to gain inspiration.

While Rúmi toys with the notion of "madness", there is evidence to suggest that his use of this word is merely poetic. While elements of emotional ecstasy and certain elements of idiosyncratic behaviour are evident in his work, it is not accurate to identify him as simply an "ecstatic poet". In addition, Rúmi's frequent use of sensual metaphors does not necessarily reflect poetic decadent behaviour or "descent" into unconscious desires. Rúmi says, "Until content, the oyster holds no pearl" (Ruins 20). He suggests, therefore, that his inspiration comes from a contented spiritual life and this is subtly, though distinctly, different from a life of one who "gives up contentment for the sake of his soul and art" (Symons xiii). Making distinctions between the "mystical poet" who is possibly mentally unbalanced, emotionally ecstatic or decadent and the "perceptive poet" seems to be necessary in order to narrow the field of "mystic poetry", and
therefore regain scholarly attention to the subject of spirituality and inspiration. This thesis aims to do this through developing an understanding of what constitutes the "perceptive poet". This section on Rúmi has attempted to establish the poet's mental, emotional and physical balance and therefore remove the poet from the currently undefined and expansive field of general "mystics".
Kabír

Like Rúmi, Kabír sometimes refers to himself as "mad", however, his use of this word is always found within his satirical writings and his concept of madness is associated with spiritual life. Occasionally he is also emotionally exuberant but more frequently he is logical and direct. While he employs images of sensual indulgence, in the same way as Rúmi, it can be argued that sensual experience does not inspire him creatively. In this section, Kabír is examined in relation to these concepts before further investigating the more probable nature of his inspiration in the following chapter.

Kabír often refers to himself as "mad" but associates this madness with a spiritual state; "Kabír says, I went a little mad and surreptitiously my mind slipped into samádhi" (Dwyer 211). This term "samádhi" is associated with the mystic state of "sahaj" referred to by Vaudeville as the "ultimate state of sahaj-samádhi" (262). The poet declares:

Says Kabír,

I have gone mad –
Silently that soul of mine
has merged into the Sahaj!

(qtd. in Vaudeville 245)

"Sahaj", as a spiritual state of union, becomes linked to the word "mad". In relation to this verse, Vaudeville describes "sahaj" as "Transcendental Oneness" (245).

Kabír accepted the possibility that he might appear abnormal in his mystic quest. He did not mind what kind of reputation he created for himself. The following verse is found in Vaudeville's satires of Kabír. The poet says:
The whole world is wise
I alone am a fool:
I have gone mad,
let no one else be distraught!

Science, I don't study
of arguments, I know nothing –
Listening to Hari's praise
I've lost my head.

I didn't do it myself:
it was Rám who made me mad:
Burnt by the Satguru,
I got out of my mind.

I myself am distraught,
I've lost my head:
Let no one fall
in my folly!
(qtd. in Vaudeville 222)

It is essential to note that this poem is a satire. Kabír satirises his own spiritual state of being because nobody understands it and he is unable to explain it. When the poet says, "The whole world is wise / I alone am a fool", it becomes obvious that neither statement is accurate. Kabír is content to remain in his apparently "mad" state and he is happy to satirise the situation. He, himself, propagates the myth. He says:

If I am a little mad, Rám, I am your fool.
People fail to grasp this secret of mine.
It has pleased me to wear a garland and a tilak,

and people have thought of me as Rám's play-thing.

People say "Kabír has gone mad”,

even though Rám understands my secret.

(qtd. in Dwyer 212)

Kabír's reputation for madness comes simply from his incapacity to communicate his mystic experience. People "fail to grasp" Kabír's *ma'rifat*, but "Rám understands". Dwyer interprets Kabír's definition of "madness" by saying, "The mad one is he who lacks discernment of self" (265). This would appear to be an accurate estimation of Kabír's attitude towards the subject even though the poet insists on toying with the concept. Kabír's insightful manner portrays a poet who has "discernment of self" as opposed to a poet who is mentally disturbed.

Similarly, although Kabír has been criticised for "unbridled emotionalism" (Dwyer 211), he does not appear to be a poet inspired by emotional extremism. Sometimes the poet's dramatic nature is, indeed, expressed through prayers and pleas for union with God. He says:

Away from Rám,

    my body burns forever –

In water itself

    a blaze has broken out!

You are the Ocean

    and I, the fish in the water:

In water I live,

    yet for water I pine.
This poem is one in which the poet reveals his passionate side as the "little disciple" at the mercy of God. The poet within his "Cage", however, is also protected from "Death" because he is already with God. Dwyer indicates that Kabír uses words associated with emotional hysteria:

Kabír himself uses words such as baur, and bauránau, meaning being mad or in a frenzy. In the same context he speaks of matí khoí, or losing one's mind, or mat, or being intoxicated, and of Ramaí rangi rat, or of being coloured with the hues of Rám.

(219)

At the same time, however, the poet acknowledges the limitations of emotionalism. Kabír says:

Love of sensual pleasure and desire for joy have up till now prevented me from seeking refuge at Hari's feet...

When I gave up happiness then sadness left me.

(qtd. in Dwyer 207)

This is not the voice of an hysterical mystic. The poet appears, in fact, to be indifferent to both happiness and sadness.
On the whole, Kabir's abrasive style, clear-sighted wit and capacity for logic, together with his intense criticism of religious ritualism, indicate that he is less of a frenzied poet than a poet guided by keen intelligence. This sense of logic pervades the poet's work. He argues:

Whether you go naked or clothed,
what's the use
If you have not recognized Rám
who pervades all.

If, by wandering in the nude,
one could achieve Yoga,
Would not all the deer in the forest
achieve salvation?

If by shaving one's head
one could reach the goal,
Would not the sheep too
earn Paradise?

If by withholding your seed,
you could be saved, O my Brother,
Then, surely the eunuchs
would get to the highest heaven?

Says Kabir,
O Brother, listen:
Without the Name of Rám

none ever achieved salvation!

(qtd. in Vaudeville 230-231)

In a culture thick with rituals, the poet perceives all external rituals as meaningless habits. Kabír views his culture and religion objectively and applies logic in order to scorn any tradition he considers illogical. His other passionate, melodramatic side is frequently tamed by detachment and objectivity.

Kabír uses images of sensuality to express his desire for union with God, in the same manner as Rúmi. Images of conjugal love, and reference to Rám as "a strong lover" (qtd. in Dwyer 64) or "husband", are included in Kabír's poems:

O my husband, come to my house; my body is in pain without you.

Everybody calls me your wife but I have doubts – until we sleep together on one bed, how can there be any tender love.

(qtd. in Dwyer 196)

Similarly:

Kabír says: she keeps watching day and night for coming of her beloved.

The separated lover does not find her beloved and her jiv lives in torment.

(qtd. in Dwyer 130)

Dwyer explains that jiv relates to the soul (130). Kabír's overwhelming love for God leads him to create poetry in this tradition where God takes the masculine role and the soul becomes the feminine separated lover. Kabír's frequent use of sensual imagery, however, is not a reflection of the source of his inspiration. It seems that the poet was ardently opposed to whatever he considered to be anti-spiritual. For example, he expresses his morality by distinguishing between marriage and asceticism:
If a man marries let him fulfil the duties of his state (*dharm*); otherwise let him forsake all and become an ascetic. But if an ascetic is caught in worldly attachments, he is the most hapless of men. (qtd. in Dwyer 167)

The poet suggests that conjugal love is expected within marriage but not acceptable for the ascetic. Scholars generally agree that the poet was married (Dwyer 661), and that he often criticised a group of Yogís known as the "'Sakts" or "Shaivite Yogís " whose yogic methods were based on "heinous practices" such as "liquor drinking, consumption of fish and meat, and sexo-yogic rituals, including too the use of drugs" (Dwyer 163). Dwyer indicates that Kabír's attacks against the "'Sakts" suggest the poet's opposition to extreme behaviour (163).

Kabír's sensual metaphors are drawn not only from imagery of conjugal love, but also from imagery of revelry and intoxication. His love for God is translated into sensual terms where Kabír becomes apparently mad with God's love elixir:

> Give me but one drop of Rám-potion: it is like the liquor the distiller dispenses.

(qtd. in Dwyer 211)

And elsewhere:

> O avadhū, my man is drunk.

> The lowly Kabír having become drunk on this liquor will never again come to his senses. (qtd. in Dwyer 211)

These poems with their references to "liquor", "potion" and becoming "drunk", are reminiscent of Rúmi's similar use of such metaphors. Kabír's poetry is coloured with these sensual images but to assume that sensual empiricism is the source of his inspiration would be as inaccurate as applying the same kind of assumptions to Rúmi. On the contrary, the liquor of Kabír is associated with the "ambrosia" of the Yogís:

> The spring flowed, ambrosia oozed out,

> on such a drink, the Prince got drunk –
Says Kabír, such a flower is hard to find:

the all-knowing Guru alone masters the art!

(qtd. in Vaudeville 263)

Vaudeville explains that the "Prince" is the "Yogí, drunk with maháras" (263) where "maháras" is "the Liquor of Rám", or "Liquor of Immortality" (262). Kabír's quest is to attain "a single drop of Rám's Liquor" from the "saint in whose heart the bliss of sahaj is born" (qtd. in Vaudeville 262). Kabír's use of these metaphors does not suggest any similarity between him and the Symbolists on their pathway of "descent" into the unconscious.

In reality, Kabír attempted to move beyond the limits of his senses. In his poetry there are repeated references to transcending sensual empiricism. The poet declares, "Kabír died on the open field, fighting his senses" (qtd. in Vaudeville 184), and says:

Hari is not found within the lover of the pleasures of the senses.

Only then, when the cít is free of sensuality, does Hari dwell within.

(qtd. in Dwyer 147)

The cít refers to the attention which is drawn to the beauty of sight, smell and other senses, but also, according to Kabír, has the tendency to become fixed upon such things.

Kabír often illustrates this fluctuation of the attention:

Fleeting instants of happiness – and then endless pain:

this mind is crazy, like an elephant in heat!

As the moth gets burnt up by the flame of the lamp

just to gratify its eyes,

He who sought pleasure and comfort

never found any....

(qtd. in Vaudeville 139)
The poet views the attention as "crazy" because it seeks pleasure through the senses. Attempting to "gratify the eyes", it is "burnt" and thus no comfort is ever found through this avenue. Ironically, Kabír's senses become fixed upon Rám as the object of his sensual indulgence. In the following verse, Kabír is attracted to Rám through both the sound of music and the celestial sight of Rám playing his musical instrument, or anáhat, the human heart. The poet says:

The royal prince, Rám, plays the anáhat note on a celestial víná;

the sight of it leads on to enchantment.

O parasotam, such knowledge is revealed that I Kabír,

am beside myself with telling.

The rest of the world has gone astray while I lose my

senses in the immortal potion of Rám.

(qtd. in Dwyer 105)

The irony in this poem is that the world goes "astray" and becomes mad with reason, while Kabír overcomes his five "senses" as a result of God's liquor. At the same time Kabír loses the fickleness of his mind as the citt, or attention, becomes steady.

While Kabír is idiosyncratic, like Rúmi, and sometimes elated, his mystic state is not essentially related to madness, ecstasy or indulgence. Kabír himself indicates that these things do not lead to the mystic state or to the particular kind of inspiration which comes from such a state. He says:

What once was empty is now filled to the brim,

the clay-pot of Desire has burst apart –

The tunic of Lust is torn to shreds

and all wanderings are over.

(qtd. in Vaudeville 287)
"Desire" and "lust" are destroyed and seem to have nothing to do with the vessel which is now "filled to the brim". Kabír uses the word "mad" satirically, and demonstrates detachment from the concepts of happiness, ecstasy and even passion. He employs sensual images but indicates that "Rám" is to be found beyond the senses. It appears that both Rúmi and Kabír demonstrate avoidance of mental, emotional and physical imbalance. In the following chapter a more relevant source of the poets' inspiration is examined.
Bashó

Bashó’s style of writing is not as abrasive as the other poets in this study and this perhaps is the reason why he has not incurred the same accusations of madness. His creative spirit has, however, been described as an expression of "fūkyō" which appears to relate to "madness" in a spiritual and artistic sense. In this section the question of whether or not Bashó was a poet whose inspiration came to him through mental imbalance, emotional extremism or indulgence in the sensuality of nature is discussed. Western understanding of the subject of mystic experience has become intermingled with these subjects and with the unconscious in general. This chapter deals with these misconceptions before proceeding to make a distinction between the unconscious and the state of expanded consciousness.7

Bashó’s tendency to risk his life for the sake of artistic truth may lead some to contemplate his mental stability, but overall there is little doubt that mental instability was not a source of Bashó's artistic inspiration. In the opening paragraph of The Narrow Roads of the Interior, the reader is made aware of the intense nature of Bashó’s artistic calling:

Following the example of the ancient priest who is said to have travelled thousands of miles caring naught for his provisions and attaining the state of sheer ecstasy under the pure beams of the moon, I left my broken house....

(Narrow 51)

The reader is also made aware of the drastic nature of Bashó's life-risking journeys through various haiku. At times, the poet imagines his own death:
weatherbeaten skeleton
haunting my mind, how the wind
pierces my body!
(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 100)

He also recognises the seemingly irrational nature of his journeys:

With a bit of madness in me,
Which is poetry,
I plod along like Chikusai
Among the wails of the wind.

(*Narrow* 59)

The poet seems surprised by his own survival:

Journey's end
still alive, this
autumn evening

(*Love* 57)

The nature of these haiku, where the poet is "weatherbeaten", and where the wind "wails" and "pierces", reveals the poet's melodramatic and intense nature. Despite the fact that Bashó set off on his journeys with hardly any thought of returning home, and referred to his own records as "little more than the babble of the intoxicated and the rambling talk of the dreaming" (*Narrow* 74), the issue of his mental stability has, quite rightly, not been a serious concern for scholars.

In the Zen Buddhist tradition, the notion of *fúkyó* refers to a kind of artistic madness where the poet or artist is considered "mad' in the sense that he is undisturbed by worldly concerns of an ordinary – sane – person" (Ueda, *Basho* 427), and this spirit of *fúkyó* has been used to describe Bashó. It could also be used to describe the other
poets dealt with in this thesis. Utsubo explains that "For Bashō, travel was where poems were born and where a poet disciplined himself" (qtd. in Ueda, Basho 101). Both Bashō's journeys as well as his poetry were, therefore, disciplined activities, not sporadic manifestations of an unbalanced mental state. He might, however, be considered "mad" according to the concept of fūkyō because he, like Rūmi and Kabīr, had spiritual priorities dissimilar to those of most people.

Bashō's haiku certainly displays emotional intensity ranging from despair to ecstasy. Scholars have referred to the "deep solitude" (Katō Shúson qtd. in Ueda, Basho 407) in Bashō's poetry and to his "rather gloomy personality" (Utsubo qtd. in Ueda, Basho 278) which becomes apparent through certain haiku. The poet complains:

Muddy sake, black rice
sick of the cherry,
sick of the world.

(Love 73)

In haiku such as these, Bashō's sadness occasionally becomes evident. He despairs:

the morning glory –
that, too, now turns out to be
no friend of mine

(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 361)

At times, he questions his life:

this autumn
why am I aging so?
to the clouds, a bird

(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 407)

The poet's apparent melancholy is heard in these haiku where rice is "black", where the "morning glory" turns its face away and where birds, flying "to the clouds", represent
oncoming death. And yet, there is also jubilation and elation in Bashó's work. For example, the following haiku celebrates life:

come, children,
let's go out and run
in the hail!
(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 278)

Similarly:

now then, let's go out
to enjoy the snow ... until
I slip and fall!
(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 177)

The poet, like a child, is full of the joy of living. Scholars have referred to Bashó's "unconquerable spirit" (Shûson qtd. in Ueda, Basho 328) and his "poetic rapture" (Utsubo qtd. in Ueda, Basho 427), declaring that he would "risk death for the cause of fūga" (Tosai qtd. in Ueda, Basho 177), or the "true spirit of lyric poetry" (Utsubo qtd. in Ueda, Basho 278). The poet, therefore, at times expresses either melancholy or joy.

Despite these emotional extremes, Bashó's most widely acclaimed haiku are created neither out of deep melancholy nor out of great ecstasy. On the subject of haiku, Otsuji says:

When one is overwhelmed by sorrow, that sorrow cannot produce a haiku. When one is joyful and immersed in happiness, that feeling cannot produce a haiku.
(qtd. in Yasuda 11)

It is therefore not accurate to refer to Bashó as an "ecstatic mystic". Bashó, in fact, seems to have been capable of distancing himself from his emotions. He says:
so exciting
and, after a while, so sad –
cormorant fishing
(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 205)

Ueda explains that traditional cormorant fishing began with feeding fish to the
cormorants, but ended in maltreatment of the birds. The poet reduces intensity of
emotion by simply contrasting excitement and sadness. In other translations of this poem
he contrasts amusement and melancholy:

How amusing at first
How melancholy it was later
To see a cormorant show
On the darkening river.
(Narrow 36)

The emotions are observed objectively. Utsubo believes this particular haiku
demonstrates, on the one hand, Bashó's capacity to feel intense emotions, while on the
other, his capacity to view himself as he becomes absorbed in his emotions. Utsubo says,
"Those two tendencies coexisted in his character. Perhaps everyone is like that to some
degree, but the dualism was more pronounced in Bashó..." (Ueda, Basho 205). Bashó, in
fact, did not consider his emotions to be the source of his inspiration.

Ueda believes that Bashó's principle of "lightness" encouraged objective
presentation and discouraged "intensely emotional expression" (The Master 160). Bashó
often objectively presents terrible circumstances. The poet says:

fleas, lice –
a horse piddles
near my pillow.
(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 246)
Yamamoto Kenkichi believes "the charm of this poem lies in the way it gives extremely cheerful, unrestrained expression to wretched circumstances" (qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 246). While Bashò often lets the reader know in prose how he "wept bitterly" or "could not refrain from weeping" (*Narrow* 109), his poetry nevertheless comes from his efforts at distancing himself from those emotions. Kenkichi states that the original version of the following haiku is composed of "hard-sounding syllables" which remove all sentimentality. The poet contemplates:

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town where I was born –
as I weep over my umbilical cord
the year comes to a close
(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 178)
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This translated version includes the hard sounding words "town", "born" and "cord" at pivotal points, thus reducing emphasis on the emotive word "weep". This English version perhaps does not fully translate Bashô's emotional detachment. Comprehension of the word "lonely" also, perhaps, confuses the following haiku. The poet asks the cuckoo to increase his loneliness:

```
I'm filled with sorrow –
make me feel more lonely,
cuckoo!
(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 315)
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If this English translation is taken literally it appears that the poet is depressed and indulging his melancholy mood. Nobuyuki Yuasa translates this same poem differently:

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With your singing
Make me lonelier than ever,
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You, solitary bird,
Cuckoo of the forest.

(Narrow 41)

In this version, the lightness of loneliness is a little more perceptible. According to Aida Gozan, rather than loneliness, the poet is asking for "serenity" (qtd. in Ueda, Basho 315). Watsuji Tetsuró explains further, "Sorrow is a passive, heavy, melancholy emotion, whereas loneliness implies an active heart that can soar – aspiring to infinity, for instance" (qtd. in Ueda, Basho 315). Obviously, loneliness in this sense is not isolation, or removal from the world, but a certain inspired and serene state of being in which the poet is neither depressed nor ecstatic.

It was this state of loneliness which became Bashó's source of inspiration rather than nature, stimulation of the senses, or sensual indulgence. Many would describe Bashó as a "nature poet" and it is indeed true that he spent the majority of his time seeking poetic inspiration through his journeys into nature. The poet declares:

From five to six miles
I walk every day
In search of you,
Cherry blossoms.

(Narrow 83)

It is also true that Bashó says "all who have achieved real excellence in any art, possess one thing in common, that is, a mind to obey nature, to be one with nature..." (Narrow 71). Nature in itself, however, did not satisfy Bashó. While he describes such things as the "fields of bush-clover", the hills "covered with white rhododendrons in bloom", and the "dark pine woods" being the "subject of poetry because of its dewiness" (Narrow
112), it seems that nature was not the sole source of Bashó’s inspiration. In *The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel*, the poet says:

I saw the moon,
But somehow I was left
Unsatisfied –
The summer at Suma.

(*Narrow 87*)

In this particular account, Bashó does not hear the lonely voice of the cuckoo, giving him that serene, inspired state of loneliness. It is that silent state of being which Bashó sought through his travels, not just a sensual experience of the natural world. His concept of "being one" with nature was thus a spiritual concept and his journeys were not just meanderings, but pilgrimages to sacred sites and temples.

Bashó did indulge his senses in nature, and in other ways as well, but it would not be accurate to describe him as a sensually indulgent poet. Occasionally the reader finds him in such a mood:

the moonflower –
I stick my drunken face
out of the window.

(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 358)

Much more frequently, however, he communicates his detachment and simplicity. He confesses:

With morning glories
a man eats breakfast –
that is what I am.

(qtd. in Ueda *Basho* 81)
This haiku was written in response to one poet who was known to be a "heavy drinker who drank day and night" (Horoan Sanga qtd. in Ueda, Basho 81). This particular poet, Kikaku, had written the following haiku:

Within the grassy gate

a firefly eats nettles –

that is what I am.

(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 81)

Bashó responded to this sensual and passionate haiku with his own poem which he sent to Kikaku along with a copy of a priest's sermon against drinking. Bashó explains that he "could not live that kind of abnormal life, that he was an ordinary man who slept at night, awoke early in the morning, and took a plain meal instead of liquor" (Taizó qtd. in Ueda, Basho 81). Stryk examines Bashó in relation to Zen and concludes that "as in all genuine Zen art, calm replaces restlessness" (Zen xLvi). While Bashó has been described by modern Japanese poets as a "Symbolist" following the tradition of "life for art's sake", his work does not display the discontentment evident in much of the Symbolists’ work.

Towards the end of his life, Bashó acknowledged the important difference between the silent, meditative state he wished to experience, and nature itself. As a result, he purposefully tried to remove himself from nature in order to ensure that he was able to attain a meditative state without external aids. The connection between his inner meditative state and his creativity increased throughout his life. Along with Rûmi and Kabîr, he demonstrated an avoidance of the phenomena examined in this chapter. The attitude of fûkyô, or spiritual passion, along with the avoidance of both emotional extremism and sensual empiricism, appear to represent a second main area of commonality existing between these poets.
Blake

Like Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó, Blake has been associated with the subject of madness and many scholars have searched for evidence both of his sanity and of his insanity. He has also been compared to certain ecstatic mystics (King 80) and has been examined as a poet with a particular interest in passion, desire, sensuality and restraint. These features are all a part of the poet's character but they are not essential to his mystic state. In this section, they are briefly considered in order to differentiate, in Chapter Three, between them and what seems to be a more relevant source of the poet's inspiration and imagination.

Early Blakean scholarship focused on the discovery of an overall, consistent system in Blake's poetry in order to prove Blake's mental sanity. Critics referred to the poet as "a decided madman" (Robert Southey qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 13) and "unfortunate lunatic" (Robert Hunt qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 12). Blake, himself, promoted the myth to some extent. For example, his "Mad Song" ends with the lines:

For light doth seize my brain
With frantic pain.

(23-24)

This poem, which appears to be about sleeplessness, bears the voice of a restless poet. It appears as if Blake thought of himself as misunderstood. He writes:

O why was I born with a different face?
Why wasn't I born like the rest of my race?
When I look, each one starts! When I speak, I offend;
Then I'm silent & passive & lose every friend. (Keynes 65)
The image created in this poem is one of a social misfit. Despite early criticism of Blake's state of mind, Yeats, among others, attempted to study Blake's "Symbolic System", in order to prove the poet's genius (Rosso 29). Brennan questioned whether those who had previously assumed Blake's insanity had actually understood the poet (102), while Northrop Frye made the claim that "Blake very seldom talks nonsense" (Vision 23).

Cases have since been argued against the idea of Blake's poetic unity, with scholars declaring Blake's poetry to be largely autobiographical, self-critical and therefore inconsistent. However, Hirsch, who argues against the idea of Blake's overall system, believes that Blake "was the only Romantic poet to attack the rational faculty 'from the rear' rather than 'head-on'", and goes on to describe the "brilliant irony" with which Blake achieves this (75-76). Hirsch, and the majority of modern scholars, now seem to dismiss the argument concerning Blake's madness, referring to it as "moribund" (Milton O'Percival qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 32).

While some of Blake's acquaintances did indeed refer to Blake as "mad", others, such as his friend Samuel Palmer gave an opposite description of the poet. Palmer says, "I remember William Blake, in the quiet consistency of his daily life, as one of the sanest, if not the most thoroughly sane man I have ever known" (qtd. in Davis 156). It is also evident that Blake referred to his visions as something associated with his imagination. Anthony Blunt explains that, in response to the question "may I ask where you saw this?", Blake touched his own forehead (qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 86). Blunt argues convincingly that Blake was well aware of the "exact nature of his visions" (qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 86). The poet appears to have acknowledged his visions as images unavailable to others, and linked to his state of consciousness. In the margins of
Spurzheim's *Observations on Insanity*, Blake passionately reacts to the author's insinuation that religion causes madness. He tells the author:

> You retain health and yet are as mad as any of us all – over us all – mad as a refuge from unbelief.

*(Erdman, *Complete* 154)*

In the same paragraph Blake empathises with Cowper's passionate spiritual sensibility in contrast to the author's uninspired comments about spirituality. About one of his colleagues, John Flaxman, Blake also writes:

> I Mock thee not tho I by thee am Mocked
> Thou callst me Madman but I call thee Blockhead

*(Frye, *Blake* 76)*

It seems that Blake recognised a frame of mind which, on the one hand is passionate about the subject of spirituality, but on the other, firmly logical. To say that the poet's creative life came about as a result of mental imbalance not only confuses mystic experience with madness, but also promotes the Western myth linking madness with inspiration. It would appear that Blake's "madness" is more in line with Bashó's *fūkyō* where the poet is not concerned about subjects which affect the common person but, rather, passionate about the "spirit of poetry" which is spirituality itself.

While Blake's most recurrent emotion is that of "joy", one could hardly call him an "hysteric mystic". Hirsch refers to the poet's tendency to use "Blakean tears of joy" (224) and describes the poem "Infant Joy" as one of Blake's earliest expressions of "Divine Vision". Hirsch says, "'Joy' is consistently Blake's word for the emotion that accompanies our direct experience of Eternity" (43). Barnstone also includes Blake in his poets of felicity, explaining that Blake often uses happiness itself as a subject for literature (189). The closest Blake comes to elation, however, seems to be at the time of
writing letters with renewed enthusiasm after his visit to the Truchsessian Gallery. After this event, he refers to his elation as madness and uses an image of intoxication in a similar manner to Rúmi and Kabír. In a letter to Hayley in 1804 he writes:

   Dear Sir, excuse my enthusiasm or rather madness, for I am really drunk with intellectual vision whenever I take a pencil or graver into my hand, even as I used to be in my youth, and as I have not been for twenty dark, but very profitable years.

   (qtd. in Davis 114)

This, however, can hardly be described as "ecstatic" or "hysterical". The poet in fact directly criticises attachment to the sensation of "joy". He writes:

   He who binds himself a joy
   Doth the winged life destroy
   But he who kisses the joy as it flies
   Lives in Eternitys sun rise.

   ("Eternity" 1-4)

It appears that while joy is perhaps one of Blake's most frequent emotions, he expresses detachment from this sensation.

   Being a passionate poet, Blake was at times propelled into what he referred to as "stupid melancholy" (Keynes 17-18), but this was not a state he sought to revel in for inspiration. In relation to poetic inspiration, J. Maritain declares that "woe itself is not sufficient" ("Knowledge" 62). Blake recognises this point and calls his melancholy "a Disease which God keep you from & all good men" (Keynes 88). He says:

   I sometimes try to be miserable that I may do more work, but find it is a foolish experiment. Happineses have wings and wheels; miseries are leaden legged, and their whole employment is toclip the wings and to take off the wheels of chariots.

   (Keynes 31)
Blake's dislike for sentiment, and emotionally motivated activity, can also be seen in his constant suspicion of the word "pity". In "The Human Abstract" he says:

Pity would be no more
If we did not make somebody Poor;
And Mercy no more could be
If all were as happy as we.

(\textit{Songs}, Song 47, 1-4)

The poet recognises "Pity" and "Mercy" and such ordinarily humanitarian emotions as being illusory and insincere. Such an astute comprehension of the problematic issues surrounding human actions which are solely motivated by emotions, demonstrates the value Blake placed on control of his own emotional faculties.

Blake examines the emotional faculty of human beings in his development of the state of "Beulah", and also within \textit{The Four Zoas} itself. At first, Blake's state of "Beulah" corresponds to "threefold vision", and is presented in the poet's mythology as a desirable state to achieve, although later this state is transcended by "fourfold vision". Davis associates Blake's concept of "threefold vision" with the "emotional", while "fourfold vision" relates to the "spiritual" (101). Emotion itself, therefore, is not associated with imagination or inspiration, but with sleep, dreams, and aesthetically pleasing things. According to Andrew Lincoln, Blake clearly distinguishes between two sources of inspiration:

\begin{quote}
Beulah is now seen as a lower condition, a place of flowers, plains, and unstrenuous joy,
clearly distinguished from Eternity or heaven, which is a place of constructive activity.
\end{quote}

(\textit{Zoas} 157)
Similarly:

In Eternity the gates of Urthona are the gates of heaven, as Urthona inspires imaginative activity. In Beulah they correspond to the gates of sleep, and give entrance to a dreamy state in which consciousness is both liberated and limited.

(Lincoln, Zoas 201)

One source of inspiration, therefore, is the state of "Beulah", a certain state of consciousness associated with dreaming and emotions. A second source is the fourfold state of consciousness which, in Blake's mythology, is associated with "Urthona, the prophet of Divine fourfold Vision" (Hirsch 141). Blake's concern for situating the emotional side of human beings in a balanced relation to the intellectual and spiritual, also becomes a predominant issue in The Four Zoas. Urthona becomes associated with imagination, while Vala and Luvah, both with traits connected to the emotional side of human beings, struggle to find a balanced place. Brennan describes Luvah as being associated with love and pity but also with "vague emotion", "weakness" and "uninspired feeling" (97). Blake's visionary imagination, therefore, is not emotionally inspired.

Neither moral restriction of empiricism, nor indulgence in the five senses, appear to be associated with Blake's concept of liberated and constructive imagination. While Blake addresses the subject of sensuality and desire, he moves beyond this in the same way as Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó move beyond these concepts. Scholars have noted Blake's concern for the subject of unacted desire. Blake himself clearly states:

In a wife I would desire
What in whores is always found –
The lineaments of Gratified desire.

(Erdman, Selected 106)
The poet suggests that sexual desire must be satisfied, but at the same time he recognises the bounds of marriage. He does not condone the restriction of sensual expression but, rather, expects satisfaction through certain avenues. The following excerpt taken from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* appears to relate more to the subject of hypocrisy than simply "murder":

Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires.

(pl. 10; 29)

The poet appears to abhor the concept of concealing “unacted desire”. He seems to have believed that this hypocritical desire may be progressively transferred to following generations. He writes:

He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.

(*The Marriage*, pl. 7; 1)

He suggests that “unacted desire” itself festers in future generations and he appears to be excessively sincere in his morality, believing that not only action but desire should be pure.

Blake develops a theory of the physical, sensual body through various instruments including the character Tharmas in *The Four Zoas*. According to Brennan, Tharmas represents "the senses" including the "loins" and "tongue" (97). Lincoln describes Tharmas as representing the "fluid life of sense and instinct" (*Zoas* 174) and also as the God presiding over "unconscious processes" (*Zoas* 39). Lincoln goes on to say that the fall of Tharmas in *The Four Zoas*, "initiates the development of fallen consciousness" (*Zoas* 39). Hirsch also states that Blake's revised version of *The Four Zoas* illustrates that "man has gone astray... because he has permitted his lower functions – Tharmas (the body), Luvah (the emotions), and Los (the false prophet of natural apocalypse) – to gain mastery over his higher faculties" (128). The physical body and
The five senses do not, therefore, represent a pathway for reaching Blake's concept of imaginative consciousness. Blake explores the same kind of theme through *The Song of Los* where a "Philosophy of Five Senses" represents the culmination of a fallen world. He says:

Thus the terrible race of Los & Enitharmon gave
laws & Religions to the sons of Har, binding them more
And more to Earth, closing and restraining:
Till a Philosophy of Five Senses was complete.
Urizen wept & gave it into the hands of Newton & Locke.

(pl. 4; 13-17)

It appears that "Newton & Locke" represent reason but also a philosophy which is "closing and restraining" in both its comprehension of spiritual life and in its laws which govern the physical body. Hirsch comments on *The Song of Los*, "If the resurrection of the fallen world is to be achieved at all, it must be achieved by the imaginative faculty; not by revolution and not by sensual enjoyment but by vision" (85). Thus Blake should not be seen to precede the tradition of "descent into hell" through the five senses. The poet states his position:

for that I cannot live without doing my duty to lay up treasures in heaven is Certain &
Determined, & to this I have long made up my mind, & why this should be made an
objection to Me, while Drunkenness, Lewdness, Gluttony & even Idleness itself, does
not hurt other men. (Keynes 48)

It appears that Maeterlinck's concept of morality as "wholly internal" and "wholly spiritual" (*Secret* 85) aptly describes Blake. The poet's position suggests a movement altogether beyond the five senses and also beyond traditional concepts of morality.

While Blake has been associated with madness, it is now generally held by scholars that this is irrelevant to a study of his creativity or his creative life. His
"madness", in fact, appears to be a state of spiritual intensity. While his most common emotion is that of joy, it would be inaccurate to describe him as an "ecstatic mystic". His attitude towards the subjects of ecstasy and melancholy place him beside Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó who each avoid emotional extremes. This section has shown, furthermore, that Blake's movement beyond sensual empiricism indicates that he did not attempt a descent into the unconscious in search of inspiration. His movement beyond empiricism is, again, similarly reflected in the three other poets of this study who attempted to move beyond the senses. Blake's acknowledgment of the source of both poetry and prophecy as divine, is by far his overriding passion and this is examined beside similar concerns of Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó in following chapters. This section has argued against the influence of the unconscious and its associated phenomena upon Blake's creative life. A distinction between the unconscious and the state of expanded consciousness as a spiritual state is presented in the following chapter.
Conclusion

A number of subjects associated with the word "mystic" within the field of literary studies have been examined in this chapter in relation to the four poets of this thesis. It has been shown that mental imbalance, ecstasy or emotional imbalance, and indulgence in sense experience – or physical imbalance – are not particularly relevant to the poets' mystic experience or inspiration. Madness may have a place beside the "ecstatic mystic", but neither madness nor ecstasy seem to be associated with these poets. Sensual empiricism, as it relates to the descent into the unconscious, may relate to certain poets of the Decadent tradition, or poets of the Symbolist tradition, but does not seem to relate to these poets.

These poets, while exhibiting interest in the subject of madness, employ the word "mad" in a manner which corresponds to the Japanese term ふきょう. The poets are more concerned about spirituality and the "spirit of poetry" than other subjects, however, they are astute and logical in their reasoning power. Secondly, the poets demonstrate emotional detachment, and thirdly the poets move beyond interest in the five senses to a state which incorporates all of the senses but transcends them.

Chapter One established that the "perceptive poet" prioritises inner spiritual life over outer religious life and also over creativity itself. This chapter has established that the "perceptive poet", though perhaps superficially associated with madness, ecstasy and decadence, in fact displays astute mental capacities, emotional detachment and avoidance of sensual empiricism. The second main characteristic of the "perceptive
poets" can be summarised by saying that they demonstrate the spirit of fūkyō while displaying emotional detachment and a movement beyond sensual empiricism: they display a desire for mental, emotional and physical balance.

This chapter has explored certain subjects in order to resolve misconceptions concerning the mystic experience. Furthermore, the subjects explored in this chapter seem to relate to the unconscious. Madness and the unconscious have connections noted in Romantic and post-Romantic literature. Ecstasy and the unconscious have connections related to the subjects of "trance" states and "possession" noted in the Greek tradition of prophetic poetry. Sensual empiricism has its connection to the Decadent poetic tradition of descent into the unconscious. Having explored these concepts, the following chapter moves on to distinguish between the unconscious and a spiritual state of expanded consciousness which appears to have more relevance to the creativity of these poets.
1 Burwick finds this concept in Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*.


3 This state of expanded consciousness is further explored in the following chapters.

4 See Whinfield for discussion of hysterical devotion (Rúmi, *Masnavi* 28-30).

5 Barnstone discusses the subject of happiness as a central theme in the work of Blake, St. John and others.

6 Heightened perceptivity and the state of expanded consciousness are investigated in the following chapters.

7 This distinction is further examined in Chapter Three.

8 Ueda discusses the perception of Bashó's character in Japan and in the West (*The Master*, 177-181).

9 For this general approach see Hirsch as well as Sloss & Wallis.

10 Percival describes Blake as the "sanest and profoundest thinker among the poets of the romantic generation".
CHAPTER THREE

The Heightened "Perceptive Faculty":

the Perceptive Poet and Evidence of Expanded Consciousness

Jung and many other Western psychologists seem to consider that the absence of a consciousness of such an operating ego renders an experience unconscious. Hindu psychologists hold that this need not be the case; on the contrary, an experience is clearest and most genuinely conscious when the means of cognition is not employed..... It would therefore appear that Indian psychology-philosophy broadens the notion of consciousness in the direction of the conscious rather than in the direction of the unconscious.

(Rauhala 55)
Introduction

This chapter examines the mystic experience of each poet in relation to the notion of the "Perceptive Faculty". Brennan makes reference to the "Perceptive Faculty" (34, 104) in relation to Blake and the concept of "Imagination". This chapter argues that Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake, through their different mystic paths, each experienced a particular state of expanded consciousness (Jephcott 11) which intensified their "Perceptive Faculty". Evidence of this is found in the poets' concern for subjects such as wakefulness, ways of seeing and spiritual vision. There is also evidence of the poets' interest in the notions of "sixth sense", alchemy and evolution which all appear to relate to their focus on the "Perceptive Faculty".

This chapter also investigates the exact nature of the Sufi mystic state of consciousness together with Rúmi’s concept of "foresight" and compares them with the meditative state of samádhi attained by Kabír, the Zen state of satori touched upon by Bashó, and the "fourfold vision", or genuine mystic experience, of Blake. It is argued that the intensified "Perceptive Faculty" constitutes evidence of a genuinely expanded state of consciousness distinguishing these poets from more general "nature poets", "Romanticists", "Symbolists" and "unsystematic mystics", who have at times been referred to as having undefined, mystical tendencies.

This chapter finds evidence of the poets' focus on the subject of perception, and explores this subject within the more general traditions of mystic knowledge. The notion of heightened perception as being beyond ordinary sense perception is discussed. It is
argued that the "perceptive poets" use the five senses in metaphorical or symbolic language to communicate an experience which is, in fact, beyond the limits of ordinary sense experience. The poets' familiarity with the concept of spiritual alchemy and transformational processes is examined, and their belief in heightened perception as a spiritually evolved quality is also briefly illustrated. Evidence is brought together to suggest that the "perceptive poet" is one who has indeed attained a state of expanded consciousness and, as a result, expresses a desire for others to experience heightened perceptivity. It is suggested that the third main feature of the "perceptive poet" is that of having a genuine experience of an expanded state of consciousness which gives rise to a heightened level of perception and an associated interest in certain spiritually related subjects.
Symons' concept of a mystic appears to be one in which the mystic receives vague impressions from a disordered unconscious. He says, for example, that "Mallarmé was not a mystic, to whom anything came unconsciously..." (74). He clearly associates the unconscious with mystic experience. This idea seems particularly odd because surely a genuine mystic, in a state of samádhi or satori, is not only fully conscious but indeed more than conscious. Rauhala describes the states of samádhi and satori as the result of Hindu and Zen philosophies which both aim at "an enlargement consciousness" (56). It is this enlargement or expansion of consciousness which leads to inspiration of the "perceptive poet". This would appear to be quite a different phenomenon from that of the unconscious.

In his work on mysticism, F. C. Happold states that the mystic experience involves an "extension of normal consciousness" (19). A similar note is found in the work of J. Maritain who, in his essay "Concerning Poetic Knowledge", distinguishes clearly between the unconscious and mystic consciousness:

We are here confronted by an unconscious of a special type. As we noted above, it is the unconscious of the spirit at its source, quite a different thing from the Freudian unconscious of images and instincts. ("Knowledge" 65)
Maritain does not use the word "consciousness" at all, but in his essay refers to this special "unconscious" as being "more vital and deeper" than the ordinary unconscious (60). This observation may be a great deal more significant than it seems. If there is a difference between the "Freudian unconscious of images and instincts" and this other "unconscious of a special type", perhaps the latter has not been fully explored.

It seems possible that Western psychology may not have identified an accurate term to properly distinguish between the unconscious and the Hindu concept of the "superconscious". Geldard refers to Austrian psychoanalyst Paul Diel, who "redefines aspects of the human psyche to offer an expanded hierarchy which includes a divine element" (167). But Diel's concept of the superconscious as "a vague feeling" (qtd. in Geldard 168) still appears different from the concept of the "superconscious" in the field of Hindu psychology, where it is described as "Consciousness Itself" (Rauhala 53). In Western psychology, the term appears infrequently. It is sometimes associated with spiritual states and meditation and is found, for example, in connection with the word *samádhi* in an article exploring “200 Key Sanskrit Yoga Terms”. It is most often associated with the concept of transcending ordinary consciousness and would appear to relate to the capacity for perceiving ordinarily hidden aspects of reality.

Rauhala says the "idea of becoming conscious occurs ever and ever again in the writings of all representatives of Romanticism" (70), while Jung also acknowledges Romanticism as one of the first representatives of the Western tradition to give the problem of the unconscious a satisfactory formulation (Rauhala 68). It is noteworthy that Gnosticism, alchemy and Christian mysticism are also cited in this context (60). Perhaps Rauhala is correct to make a comparison between the Hindu psychological concept of the "superconscious" and Jung's "collective unconscious". Rauhala theorises:
Yet the difference in opinion between Hindu psychologists and Jung may be merely apparent. The manifestations of Jung's 'collective unconscious' in the form of the archetypal and symbolic can be interpreted as spontaneous sporadic manifestations of the superconscious capacity that can be attained in a full-fledged form through the yoga method in samâdhi. (53)

Rauhala implies that the states of samâdhi or satori give rise to symbolic creative activity, a small percentage of which has been identified by Jung in his work on symbols. Certainly, within the field of literature, there is no term at all to describe the Hindu notion of the "superconscious", nor the inspiration which may come from such a highly perceptive state.

Edmund Jephcott in his study, *Proust and Rilke*, identifies a phenomenon which he terms "expanded consciousness". This thesis argues that the "perceptive poets", through this expanded state of consciousness, are fully aware of the nature of their creative processes. This state of expanded consciousness is considered in this chapter as something quite distinct from the "unconscious". It was noted in the Introduction to this thesis that Symons' concept of a mystic includes various definitions related to the faculty of perception and that his group of "Symbolists" therefore contains myriad poets whose mystical qualities vary in the extreme. If the faculty of perception is taken as a key factor in assessing the mystic nature of a poet, then this narrows the definition of "mystic". Knowles, for one, recognises the mystics' capacity to "perceive things above their nature" (19), while Stace describes the mystic experience as "a non-intellectual mode of consciousness" (9). Rauhala combines these concepts when stating that "Perception is generally regarded as the most important function of consciousness" (137). It follows, therefore, that the mystic experience, as a mode of consciousness, must somehow affect the faculty of perception, or the "Perceptive Faculty".
It would appear that the poets in this study view the experience of expanded consciousness as something which results in a transformational process similar in nature to alchemy. Rauhala explains that the movement of alchemy employed "psychologico-philosophical notions, such as *imaginatio* and *meditatio*" (62). There appears to be a link, therefore, between the transformational mystic process, meditation and imagination which may have been identified by the alchemists and seems to be recognised by the poets in this thesis. Furthermore, the transformational mystic or alchemical process appears to relate to the subject of evolution and the development of the senses. These concepts are explored in this chapter in order to demonstrate that the "perceptive poet" has gnosis concerning the experience of expanded consciousness.
Analysis

Rúmi

As noted, the Sufi mystic state has been associated with music, ecstasy and Shaykh figures, but in fact its essence appears to be an expanded state of consciousness leading to an increase in perceptivity. Rúmi's mystic experience seems to have resulted in an interest in the subject of perception. His notion of "foresight" (qtd. in Nicholson, *Rúmi* 169), including references to the eyes and ways of seeing, reflect this concern. There is also evidence of his understanding of certain alchemical concepts and their relation to heightened perception along with the idea of human spiritual evolution.

The existence of two different aspects of Sufism must be recognised. The first is an ecstatic aspect, the association of Sufism with ecstatic music and Whirling Dervishes. The Whirling Dervish dance, however, was a specific dance prepared for people living in "the region of Iconium", in Asia, during Rúmi's lifetime. It was never meant to become transferred to any other part of the world. Shah explains:

There are many hundreds of people in Europe and America who practise 'dervish dance, whirling or turning' in spite of the fact that it is specifically on record in easily accessible dervish literature that this practise was especially 'prescribed', for local reasons, by Rumi for the people of Asia Minor in the region of Iconium. (22)

Shah points to a misconception linking ecstatic music to the genuine Sufi experience when he makes reference to an old Sufi saying. He quotes Ibn Hamdan, "Be sure that you do not train yourself to music, in case this holds you back from even higher
perceptions" (47). Shah also quotes two other famous Sufi masters who have commented on this problem. He refers to Naqshband's "Palace of the Enlightened":

Those who do not know this have adopted music as something sacred in itself. The feelings which they experience while indulging in it they mistake for sublime ones. In fact they are using it for the lower purpose of arousing sentiment, or emotion which is no basis for further progress. (qtd. in Shah 172)

Shah also quotes the Sufi, Hadrat Muinudin Chisti:

So they play music and cast themselves into 'states'.... Remember: Useless is a wonderful milk-yield

From a cow which kicks the pail over. (135)

These Sufi masters indicate that the essence of the Sufi state is unrelated to emotional feelings aroused through music. Shah explains that music was used by the Sufis in order to attract and gather people for the more urgent task of communicating the knowledge of Sufism. He also insists that the Sufis "pointed out the undesirable nature of indoctrination and emotion being confused with spiritual gifts" (24). It would seem, then, that the ecstatic element of Sufism should not be equated with its essence.

The second aspect of Sufism could perhaps be described as meditative and quite separate from the previously mentioned ecstatic element. Bakhtiar refers to the two Sufi aspects as a "division" within "Sufi Orders", and explains that the latter group – "known for their sobriety" (95) – is the larger. Julian Baldwick refers to both the "drunken" and "sober" traditions ("Medieval" 86). It would appear that "the making of music, chanting and the spiritual dance" (Bakhtiar 24) are elements employed by the majority of Sufis in order to eventually reach a state of meditation or "fikr" which, according to most Sufi masters, is the end goal. Reports of Rūmi composing poetry while "rotating" around a
column should not detract from the fact that he did this "slowly" and he did it while he was "in a state of trance" (Iqbal 140).

As noted, Rúmi's Sufi life was closely associated with relationships he had with three Shaykh figures. Those figures, Shams-i Tabríz, Saláhu'l-Din Farídún Zarkúb and Husámu'l-Dín represented, for Rúmi, the "Perfect" men. In Sufi life, the Shaykh, or spiritual master, is considered to be one who has the capacity to translate spiritual knowledge to the disciple. Bakhtiar explains, "The purpose of the Shaykh is to cleanse the heart of the disciple so that the disciple may then come to reflect the rays of the beauty of Divine Unity" (23). Shah explains that in Sufism, the Shaykh figures are not worshipped by the Sufi disciples as Gods, but as conductors or instructors. Shah, in fact, clearly states that "personality-worship is forbidden in Sufism" (33). The poet's expression of love and devotion to these figures is explained by Rúmi himself. The poet says:

Secret miracles and graces emanating from the Pir transform the heart of the disciple....

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 84)

Rúmi indicates that his mentors, or spiritual teachers, have so much spiritual knowledge that it is acceptable for him to describe their essence as divine. He says:

To praise and glorify him is to glorify God: Divine fruit is growing from the essential nature of his tray.

Apples grow from this basket in fine variety: 'tis no harm if you bestow on it the name of "tree". (qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 185)

The poet explains that while he reveres the Shaykh figures, he does not worship them as Gods. Whinfield appears to underrate the importance of these Shaykh figures, making only one reference to Shams, and stating only that Rúmi was "assisted in composing the Masnavi by Hasan Hasámu-'d-Dín" (x1). Presumably, Whinfield did not elaborate in
order to prevent further misunderstanding or misreading of the Sufi experience and the Shaykh-disciple relationship: while Rúmi praised the Shaykh figures through his poetry, it appears as though the figures simply acted as triggers to instigate *ma'rafat*.

Scholars of Sufism indicate that the Shaykh figure acts upon the heart of the disciple. The *ma'rafat*, or the "knowing equated with knowledge of the heart" (Nicholson, *Rúmi* 71) is attained by the disciple as a result of the Shaykh's influence. This knowledge of the heart may be equated with the "Knowledge of Reality" which is described by Ibn El-Arabi in his "Three Forms of Knowledge". He states:

> Third comes real knowledge, which is called the Knowledge of Reality. In this form, man can perceive what is right, what is true, beyond the boundaries of thought and sense. (qtd. in Shah 85) [italics inserted]

Clearly, the Sufi experience involves an attainment of *ma'rafat* or knowledge of the heart, or "Knowledge of Reality", and this is intrinsically linked to the Sufi's faculty of perception. Furthermore, the faculty of perception is unrelated to "thought" or "sense". Ibn El-Arabi explains the difference between the Sufi *ma'rafat* and other forms of knowledge. He says:

> Scholastics and scientists concentrate upon the first form of knowledge. Emotionalists and experientialists use the second form. Others use the two combined, or either one alternatively. But the people who attain to truth are those who know how to connect themselves with the reality which lies beyond both these forms of knowledge. They are the real Sufis, the Dervishes who have Attained. (qtd. in Shah 85)

The Sufi master therefore explains that *ma'rafat* is not attained through the intellect or through the emotional faculties.

> It would appear that Rúmi's particular kind of Sufi experience gave him the capacity to distinguish between various levels of human perception. In "Divine
Providence" and "Causation" within the *Masnavi i Ma'navi* this becomes clear. The poet says:

> When the barriers in front and behind are lifted, the eye penetrates and reads the tablet of the Invisible. (qtd. in Nicholson, *Rūmi* 112)

Perception is related to spiritual seeking. If the "barriers" are removed, and the soul "polishe[d]" through this process of seeking truth, then the "eye penetrates" and one sees "more clearly" depending upon how much spiritual progress has been made. Rúmi explains:

> Everyone sees the things unseen according to the measure of his illumination.
> The more he polishes the heart's mirror, the more clearly will he descry them. (qtd. in Nicholson, *Rūmi* 112)

These poems explain the method for heightening perception, however, the heightened perceptive state is apparently not attainable by everyone. Rúmi says:

> Causes are films on the eyes, for not every eye is worthy to contemplate His work.
> It needs a piercing eye to reach beyond the cause and remove the film entirely. (qtd. in Nicholson, *Rūmi* 114)

The poet's references to the eyes and to the quality of "illumination" or seeing, constitutes evidence of a poetic focus on the subject of heightened perception.

Nicholson refers to Rúmi's use of the word "foresight" in the *Masnavi i Ma'navi*, and defines it as "the mystical 'second-sight' and universal gnosis reserved for those who have been initiated by a Sufi *pir*" (*Rūmi* 169). Rúmi uses this word in his poem "The Twelve Gospels". He states:

> …Seek a master to instruct you: among the qualities derived from ancestors you will not find foresight of the end. (qtd. in Nicholson, *Rūmi* 169)
The poet indicates that "foresight", the genuine mystic's heightened quality of perception, is derived from gnosis attained through the Shaykh-disciple relationship. Shah also explains that the Sufi attains "special perceptions whose apparatus is latent in the ordinary man" (15). This corresponds to Underhill's belief that a mystic personality rises "to a level of consciousness at which it becomes aware of a new field of perception" (94).

The majority of the greatest Sufi poets have concerned themselves with the subject of perception. Concepts of sleeping and waking are intrinsic to this concern. The Sufi masters constantly insist that one must wake up, or become aware. Saadi of Shiraz, for example, says:

> When a man's sleep is better than his waking –
> It is better that he should die.
> (qtd. in Shah 95)

Waking is portrayed as a spiritual concept while sleep is a state of ignorance. Rūmi should certainly be included within this tradition. Throughout his work there are constant references to these subjects. The poet insists that the spiritual seeker must wake up. He says:

> ...why, O travellers, are you asleep?
> O soul, seek the Beloved, O friend, seek the Friend,
> O watchman, ye wake up, it behoves not a watchman to sleep.
> (qtd. in Iqbal 122)

Rūmi frequently commands the spiritual travellers to "seek" and then "see":

> Since you have seen the dust, see the Wind; since you have seen the foam, see the Ocean of Creative Energy.
> Come, see it, for insight is the only thing in you that avails: the rest of you is a piece of fat and flesh, a woof and warp (of bones and sinews).
Dissolve your whole body into Vision: become seeing, seeing, seeing!

(qtd. in Nicholson, *Rúmi* 37)

The poet implores the reader to look beyond the physical "dust" and "foam" and perceive the more invisible reality of "wind" and "energy". This insight is, according to Rúmi, the whole purpose of existence. It is therefore clear that one of the poet's main concerns was to awaken his readers to the possibility of increased awareness, or expanded consciousness.

Rúmi's intensity of perception should not be confused with such things as visions or hallucinations. The intensity of perception appears to be more associated with the recognition of a certain reality situated in the present moment. Perhaps Happold describes this heightened perceptive quality in terms of Christian contemplation. He describes it as a:

still and steady gazing, an intense concentration, so that emotion, will and thought are all fused and then lost in something which is none of them, but which embraces them all. (70)

This Sufi faculty of intense perception is sometimes referred to by Rúmi as akin to a sixth sense. The poet says:

Plug thy low sensual ear, which stuffs like cotton
Thy conscience and makes deaf thine inward ear.

(qtd. in Nicholson, *Rúmi* 74)

Rúmi's reference to the "inward ear" suggests that the poet distinguishes between ordinary sense perception and what Underhill has referred to as the mystic's "supreme perception" (84). Nicholson, in a footnote on Rúmi's "Mystical Perception", quotes Edward Carpenter to explain, "this (mystical) perception seems to be one in which all the senses unite into one sense" (*Rúmi* 101). Bakhtiar uses the phrase "suprasensible senses" (116) to describe this mystic quality of perception, and, importantly, further
defines "suprasensible senses" by saying it is "essentially an imaginative consciousness... It is not fantasy" (116).

According to Rúmi and the tradition of Sufism, the process of attaining the Sufi's intense perception is equated to spiritual alchemy. The movement from an ordinary level of consciousness towards an expanded level of consciousness, where perception becomes intensified, is quasi-chemical. The poet claims:

'Tis notorious that copper by alchemy becomes gold:

Our copper has been transmuted by this rare alchemy.

(Dívâni 15)

Rúmi indicates that the soul has been transformed into something precious and that the process is spiritual. He explains:

The method is one of spiritual alchemy. Through transformation, the substance of the soul is changed. The liquid in the cup becomes transparent, so that the container and the contained become one. (qtd. in Bakhtiar 23)

Rúmi, through this alchemical analogy, explains that his soul and the divine have become the same. He also desires for others to receive the same "grace", and experience this transformation. He says:

That country he made a home for my children and posterity, in order that, with the elixer of grace, the copper of their existences might be transmuted into gold and into philosopher-stone, they themselves being received into the communion of saints.

(Ruins 14)

Maeterlinck notes that in the tradition of alchemy "the search for gold was only a symbol, concealing the search for the divine and the divine faculties in man" (Secret 180). The "communion of saints" in Rúmi's work refers to those genuine mystics who have experienced the state of expanded consciousness and heightened perception.
Not only did Rúmi consider the intense perceptive capacity of the Sufi as being beyond ordinary senses, and attained through a quasi-chemical process, he also describes this state as a mark of human evolution. There are numerous references throughout Rúmi's work to support the idea that Rúmi believed humanity to be in an endless evolutionary movement. In the poems "Evolution" and "The Progress of Man" there is evidence of this insight. The poet explains:

From the moment you came into the world of being,
A ladder was placed before you that you might escape.
First you were mineral, later you turned to plant,
Then you became animal: how should this be a secret to you?

(Đíváni 47)

Noteworthy is Rúmi's "ladder" of evolution which eventually provides an "escape" from rebirth. The poet indicates that the process of evolution is continual and eternal. He says:

Again the wise Creator whom thou knowest
Uplifted him from animality
To Man's estate; and so from realm to realm
Advancing, he became intelligent,
Cunning and keen of wit, as he is now.
No memory of his past abides with him,
And from his present soul he shall be changed.

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 188)

It is implied that the "present soul", in the form of a human being, will become further evolved. Rúmi's concept of evolution is not physical, but spiritual. He says:

From realm to realm man went, reaching his present reasoning, knowledgeable, robust state; forgetting earlier forms of intelligence.
So too shall he pass beyond the current form of perception.
There are a thousand other forms of Mind...  (qtd. in Shah 272)
It would appear that the mystic "gift of perception" (Scott 194) is considered, by Rúmi, to be a sign of human evolution. In fact it is precisely the faculty of perception which is the evolving aspect according to the poet.

Rúmi, the Sufi poet, was clearly concerned with the function and potential of human perception. In fact, Shah suggests that Sufism itself may be thought of as a "psychology" (21). The faculty of perception, as a crucial aspect of human consciousness, appears to be altered by the Sufi mystic state. For Rúmi, the alteration of consciousness together with its associated heightened perceptive function is expressed as a constant concern for the subjects of seeing and waking. His particular perceptive intensity is a crucial aspect of his creativity, and this is discussed in the following chapter.
Kabir

In Chapter One it was established that Kabir was not a Sufi, and that his influences can be more accurately described according to Hindu and yogic traditions. His poetry provides ample detail about the exact nature of his silent, meditative state. In fact, he appears to have experienced the Hindu notion of *samādhi*, an expanded state of consciousness. His poetry evinces expressions relating to wakefulness, and ways of seeing, similar to those which have been identified in Rúmi's work. Frequent use of the language of alchemy is also apparent, along with repeated references to subjects inaccessible to the five physical senses. These features appear to be connected to the poet's belief in the transformative capacity of human beings.

Rauhala briefly investigates the difference between "Hindu psychology" and "Western psychology":

The highest-level total experience in which the entire range and intensity of consciousness is activated is termed *samādhi* in Hindu psychology. (53)

*Samādhi*, therefore, is not simply a religious-mystical term but also refers to a level of "consciousness". Nor is *samādhi* associated with the *unconscious*. Rather, it is an aspect of intensified or heightened consciousness. When Kabir's particular yogic experience of heightened consciousness is examined according to the language of Hindu psychology, his state might be referred to as one of *samādhi*. Indeed, there is much evidence throughout Kabir's work to argue that the poet experienced this state. In fact, this appears to have been the main aim of his life and work. Dwyer insists that, "It is union
with God which is Kabir's preoccupation" (27), and Kabir also declares, "I have entered sahaja samádhi" (qtd. in Dwyer 34).

Kabír makes constant reference to a particular meditative state, and implores the reader to discover that silent state for himself. He says:

Bring your mind down to silence.

*(Fish 12)*

The poet suggests a sense of unity to be experienced within mystic silence. He explains:

O my friend, Kabir went on searching until eventually he himself lost all sense of being:

when the ocean is absorbed into the drop of water then there is no point in further searching. (qtd. in Dwyer 43)

The "drop" and the "ocean" are merged so that the poet's sense of self is dissolved.

Kabír's silent state is also one he describes as enchanted or trance-like:

In that Forest where no lion roars,
where no bird takes to flight,
Where there is neither day nor night,
there dwells Kabir, entranced!

*(qtd. in Vaudeville 180)*

The poet's yogic experience is one of sublime inner silence and stillness. Allegorical descriptions of this ineffable experience are woven throughout his poetry.

Kabír insists that the essence of his meditation does not rely on any outward form, or outward experience, and is attained wholly within the physical body, with the eyes shut and the mind silenced. He declares:

The Holy One lives inside you – why open your other eyes at all?

*(Fish 4)*

Similarly:
Don't go outside your house to see flowers.
My friend, don't bother with that excursion.
Inside your body there are flowers.
One flower has a thousand petals.
That will do for a place to sit.

(Ecstatic 47)

These poems indicate that Kabîr's yogic state was not associated with gurus, music or anything external. It was unarguably an inner meditative experience. The poet asks the reader to sit "inside your body", therefore indicating that the soul is the living aspect within. The "salvation" of the soul is suggested as something occurring within the living body, not after death. The poet says:

Friend, hope for the Guest while you are alive....
What you call "salvation" belongs to the time before death.

(Ecstatic 24)

Kabîr indicates that the soul desires its own salvation, and if the strength of desire is sufficient, the soul will find satisfaction within the body through the mystic state of samádhi. He explains:

Kabir says this: When the Guest is being searched for, it is the intensity of the longing for the Guest that does all the work.

(Ecstatic 25)

The poet insists that salvation, revelation or enlightenment depend upon the intensity of the soul's desire.

Kabîr does not speak about visions or hallucinations, although at one point he does make reference to having seen something akin to God. He admits:
Kabír has seen that one who is beyond all, of glory beyond telling; the spouse who transformed me as the philosopher's stone does base metal, his limitless brilliance was encompassed by my eyes. (qtd. in Dwyer 48)

His experience, however, is solely associated with the physical body itself. He says:

Be strong then, and enter into your own body;
there you have a solid place for your feet.
Think about it carefully!
Don't go off somewhere else!

(Fish 14)

Kabír frequently emphasises this point:

On finding the Satguru the experience took place and (God) was discovered within the body.

(qtd. in Scott 170)

Similarly:

Within the body the inaccessible was found, to the inaccessible a way.

(qtd. in Scott 170)

This physical aspect of Kabír's yogic experience is essential. Scott recognises the physical body as a meeting ground, and goes so far as to say, "Here we are at a crucial point, the point at which there can exist communication between God and man" (170). The essence of Kabír's yogic experience is therefore related to inner silence, internal bliss and peace attained without external aids.

As with Rúmi, Kabír appears to have gained a particularly intense quality of perception through his meditative state of expanded consciousness. We find evidence of Kabír's concern for the perceptive capacity of human beings through constant references to waking, recognition, seeing and hearing. He commands:
Friend, wake up! Why do you go on sleeping?
The night is over – do you want to lose the day the same way?

(Ecstatic 41)

The poet's focus on waking is pervasive. He queries:

You have slept for millions and millions of years.
Why not wake up this morning.

(Fish 11)

Kabír implies that "this morning" may be the day for the soul to be satisfied. "Waking up" is the metaphor used by both Rûmi and Kabír for gaining the genuine mystic's insight of heightened perception. For the poet this experience is the only important factor in life. He asks:

why are you asleep?
... if you are in love
then why are you asleep?

(Fish 3)

Waking is considered of primary importance:

A dreamer wakes from sleep,
opens his eyes and sees
the creatures are looting each other
and nothing is lost or gained.

(Grace 122)

It appears that "nothing is lost or gained" anywhere at any time and that only the attainment of spiritual perception is purposeful. Once this is attained, the seer can perceive or recognise the truth of reality which already exists around them but cannot yet be discerned. The poet explains:

Kabir says "Where there is Nothing, find something.

Where there is Nothing, learn to recognise! (qtd. in Vaudeville 282)
The faculty of perception, however, is not associated with ordinary sight. Kabír says:

... Fire burns in water, blind eyes see.

(Grace 71)

These references to intense modes of perception are linked to the acute functioning of the physical senses. The poet queries:

Kabir asks: what can you say about people
who don't see what they're staring at?

(Grace 12)

It is particularly relevant that Kabír says:

Come and dwell \textit{in my eyes} that I may contemplate you day and night...

[italics inserted] (qtd. in Dwyer 48)

This suggests a sensory perception which is altogether beyond the ordinary limits of the five senses.

Dwyer says that the mark of the tradition of alchemy is the "belief in the possibility of man's coming into the possession of superhuman powers or \textit{siddhis}" (270), and that this mark is "conspicuously absent" (270) in Kabír's work. Vaudeville, however, explains that the Yogís, with whom Kabír was associated, were "experts in alchemy" (77), and Dwyer says that such Yogís during Kabír's time, drank chemical concoctions which they believed could "transform the mortal body and confer superhuman powers and immortality" (Dwyer 269). Vaudeville, in fact, makes reference to a particular letter, addressed to the Yogi's shrine, requesting a treatment of quicksilver (77), while Dwyer notes Kabír's comment as having "eaten of the root which has made his body 'subtle and immortal'" (270). These concepts correspond to what Underhill refers to as "spiritual alchemy" (141), where the substance or quality of the physical body is in some way altered by genuine mystic experience.
While Kabir could not be called an alchemist, and while he does not overtly insist upon the possibility of human beings obtaining "superhuman" powers, it is evident that he does employ language which suggests that his yogic experience altered his physical body in a way comparable to an alchemical process. He frequently refers to gemstones in the same manner as the alchemists who sought the "treasure hard to attain" (Rauhala 62). He says:

> The small ruby everyone wants has fallen out on the road.
> Some think it is east of us, others west of us..... Kabir's instinct told him it was inside, and what it was worth,
> and he wrapped it up carefully in his heart cloth.

*Ecstatic* 44

In this poem, Kabir recognises the alchemist's treasure, or "small ruby", as being located within himself. At other times, the treasure is referred to as a "diamond". He says:

> I know the diamond is wrapped in this cloth, so why should I open it all the time and look?

*Ecstatic* 8

The poet appears to be focused on the alchemist's treasure. At other times, he makes reference to transformational processes, sometimes in quite a similar manner to Rúmi:

> Iron is rubbed on the philosophers' stone and becomes gold....

*qtd. in Dwyer 31*

At other times he is more original and symbolic. He explains:

> It was a good thing for the frost to form on the earth, melt and as water flow away to the sea; in this way it forgot its past state.

*qtd. in Dwyer 29*

Dwyer believes that "unstable forms of water" indicate the "self in ignorance of its true nature", and melting is seen as a "symbol of re-absorption into oneness of being" (29).
Thus, it appears that not only was Kabir familiar with the language and aims of alchemy, but that he translated alchemy into spiritual terms. Rauhala describes the alchemists seeking a certain treasure. It would appear that this "superhuman power" sought by the alchemists and Yogis is comparable to the quality of intensified perception.

Throughout Kabir's poetry are references to something akin to a sixth sense which incorporates all of the senses. He frequently refers to unseen things and non-existent sensory subjects. He says:

I looked and looked – astonishing!
(Only a rare one hears me sing).
... in a dry lake the waves lashed,
without water, waterbirds splashed...

(Grace 64)

The "dry lake", which has splashing water in it, and the birds washing "without water" are symbolic of the extra dimension of heightened perception. Elsewhere the poet says:

Think about it, knower of Brahma.
It's pouring, pouring, the thunder's roaring,
but not one raindrop falls.

(Grace 29)

Water seems to symbolise the grace or mystic energy experienced by the genuine mystic whose ordinary surroundings appear desolate. The unseen things are symbols of the state of expanded consciousness. The poet asks:

Rainbird, to what far place
are you crying?
The world is overflowing
with that water.

(Grace 47)
Hess explains that the “rainbird” is "in love with the special raindrops that fall during a planetary conjunction" (viii) and that the bird is significant in Indian religious poetry as a symbol of intense devotion. In this poem, however, Kabir tells the bird that the special raindrops are already existent even though they are ordinarily not perceived. These unseen raindrops and other seemingly non-existential subjects are a major characteristic of Kabir's poetry.\(^4\) Such things are also found to a lesser extent in the poetry of Rumi who, for example, says, "Close your mouth to food and know another taste" (Ruins 34). This illustrates the poets' obvious and constant concern for a perceptive capacity which not only involves the physical senses, but moves beyond them.

Kabir does not speak as overtly about evolution as Rumi does, but references to transformational processes indicate his belief in the transformative potential of human beings. He makes specific reference to karmic rebirth. He says:

\begin{verbatim}
I was in immobile and mobile creatures, in worms and in moths;
I passed through many births of various kinds.
In this way I occupied many bodies... (qtd. in Hedayetullah 219)
\end{verbatim}

The poet indicates that he has reached a certain evolutionary stage during his lifetime. He says:

\begin{verbatim}
Though I have assumed many shapes, this is my last...
All men bound by their acts transmigrate; attentively consider this...
(qtd. in Hedayetullah 220)
\end{verbatim}

Kabir seems to imply that he is no longer "bound" to this cycle. He refers to "states" in a similar manner to Rumi and indicates, therefore, that human beings are transforming. He explains:

\begin{verbatim}
Water freezes to ice; ice in turn melts; everything that is must pass thus from one state to another; beyond this words fail me. (qtd. in Dwyer 30)
\end{verbatim}
These references to transformation and evolution are very similar to those found in the work of Rûmi and indicate the poets' *ma'rifat* concerning spiritual life.

It is clear that there are similarities between Kabîr's concern for communicating the existence of a greater human intensity of consciousness, and Rûmi's attempts to awaken his readers to the possibility of a heightened perceptive capacity. Hess believes that Kabîr's "prime interest" was in "a spiritual liberation, a transforming of consciousness" (xxi). Both poets were not only interested in expressing their particular mystic experiences but they were also keen to assert the difference between ordinary consciousness and a heightened state of consciousness and perception.
**Bashó**

It appears that Bashô's meditative state involved deep silence, corresponding to the Zen notion of *sabi*, and intensified through immersion in the natural world. This *sabi* led him to a state of expanded consciousness, detached awareness and heightened perception. His haiku place great emphasis on attentive "looking". They express Zen concepts and reach towards a method of maintaining detached attention. Whether or not Bashô attained a full state of *satori*, or simply glimpsed this Zen ideal, his poetry is characterised by a distinctively keen perceptive capacity. The poet indicates that his quality of perception is beyond ordinary sense perception. Also, his awareness of the concept of spiritual evolution is reflected in his focus on travelling as a metaphor for spiritual growth. While he may be described as having more in common with nature poets than with mystics, Bashô’s poetry reverberates with an intense quality of perception reflecting an expanded state of consciousness.

What is most noticeable in Bashô's poetry, particularly through the years 1686-1691, is the silence pervading his work and pointing towards an inner meditative experience similar to the silent state experienced by Kabir. The reader is paradoxically awakened to stillness and pervasive silence through the poet's references to single sounds. The poet declares:

    Lightning –
    heron-cry
    stabs darkness.
    *(Love 48)*

Similarly:
How quiet –
locust-shrill
pierces rock.

(Love 40)

Many of Bashō's haiku use this technique of sudden, single sounds amplifying more profound silence. The sounds themselves also take on a physical aspect. For example, the heron's cry reflects lightning and the "locust-shrill" cuts through rock. The poet perceives subtle relationships between sounds and images which, when illustrated, succeed in silencing mental thoughts in the reader. Silence is an extensive subject in Bashō's haiku. He writes:

Quietly, quietly,
Yellow mountain roses fall –
Sound of rapids.

(qtd. in Ueda, The Master 53)

The reader is struck by the beauty of yellow petals falling and moving in complete quietness where the sound of moving water seems to enhance the gentle silence of the scene. Similarly, an evening bell seems to enhance the silence and fragrant beauty of an old town:

Silent the old town...
the scent of flowers floating...
and evening bell

(Japanese 26)

To perceive and absorb this subtle quietness the poet must have been in a meditative state. This quietness has been described in Zen terms as sabi.

Ueda explains that sabi derives from the noun sabishi, originally meaning “lonely” or “solitary” and “in want of company” (The Master 51). Bashō's use of this
The notion of *sabi*, however, appears to be more accurately defined by Stryk as "contented solitariness" (*Love* 30). Bashô's most famous haiku, capturing the essence of a frog jumping into water, similarly expresses this quietness or *sabi*, and echoes with a splash awaking the reader to silence. The following two translations of the same poem emphasise different qualities of this haiku. Each translation, however, achieves the atmosphere of silence or *sabi*:

Old dark sleepy pool...
quick unexpected frog
goes plop! watersplash!

(*Japanese* 20)

Listen! A frog
Jumping into the stillness
Of an ancient pond!

(qtd. in Britton 9)

Feelings of surprise, revelation and even excitement are achieved through the translations, but perhaps Ueda's translation most fully provides the reader with the sense of revelation together with deep silence reflecting a mystic experience of meditation. Ueda's translation follows:

The old pond –
A frog leaps in,
And a splash.

(*The Master* 53)

Bashô's mystic experience can be felt through this haiku, reverberating with the Zen notion of *sabi* and reflecting a meditative state of mental stillness.
For much of his life Bashó appears to have been reliant upon nature as a catalyst to focus his attention and deepen his silent mystic state. Ueda refers to this reliance upon nature as another reflection of *sabi*. He explains that Bashó's *Narrow Roads of the Interior* was "based on 'sabi' the concept that one attains perfect spiritual serenity by immersing oneself in the egoless, impersonal life of nature" (*The Master* 30). There is no doubt that Bashó's silent state of mind was enhanced by his solitary voyages throughout Japan and his connection with the natural world. There is certain delight to be found within Bashó's nature haiku because the poet personifies all of nature. In one poem, Bashó focuses on a microcosm of nature. He personifies the bee, drunk with joy:

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From the heart
of the sweet peony,
a drunken bee

(Love 79)
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In another, peach blossoms appear to cry upon the poet's sleeve. He writes:

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Shed your tears of joy
On my sleeves,
Peach blossoms of Fushimi,
On this day of reunion.

(Narrow 61)
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The "whippoorwill" is also portrayed as a friend whose whistle aids the poet's meditation or "loneliness". The poet says:

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Twilight whippoorwill...
Whistle on, sweet deepener
of dark loneliness

(Japanese 8)
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In this poem, Bashô's state of dark loneliness is sweet to him. It could be described as a meditative state where loneliness refers more to quietness than isolation. In this state, Bashô contemplated the unity of all things, and often expressed this through the example of a solitary living thing set against an endless backdrop. Ueda analyses Bashô's atmosphere of sabi in relation to nature. He explains:

>a tiny living thing fulfils its destiny within the vast expanse of the universe... when one sees a tiny creature enduring that sadness and fulfilling its destiny one is struck with a sublime feeling. (The Master 52)

This sublime feeling is one of meditative silence. Bashô's state of meditation is thus deepened by his immersion in the natural world, however, sabi not only refers to a silent meditative peace, but also indicates the growth of a particular kind of detached perception.

Stryk explains that the notion of sabi "in Zen is associated with early monastic experience, when a high degree of detachment is cultivated" (Love 10). Sabi therefore relates to a certain state of consciousness and perception. Bashô's heightened state of perception would appear to reflect an experience of expanded consciousness. Geldard makes a statement concerning Emerson which could be applied to Bashô's poems and reflects the notion of sabi:

>Being awakened to thought, in Emerson's words, by the scream of an eagle or cry of a crow, puts us in the moment and permits a change in the quality of perception. We have, then, a chance to see. (78)

Bashô's use of these poetic techniques reflects his focus on the subject of heightened perception. His poetry is evidence of a particularly distinctive state of perception, whereby the poet grasps an underlying unity between the self and nature. He writes:
Chrysanthemum
silence – monk
sips his morning tea.

(Love 55)

There appears to be a balanced tension between monk and chrysanthemum. The haiku form is used here to portray two unrelated objects beside each other and therefore allow the reader to experience a new quality of perception. In one haiku, fragrance and breath move between orchid and butterfly. The poet sees:

Orchid – breathing
incense into
butterfly's wings.

(Love 62)

The wings of the butterfly also become the flower itself:

Butterfly–
wings curve into
white poppy.

(Love 39)

There are exchanges between objects within nature and these surprising visual images reflect Bashô's keen perceptive capacity. He views a sunset with particular intensity:

The river Mogami
Has drowned the hot, summer sun
And sunk it in the sea!

(qtd. in Britton 54)

Daisetz Suzuki describes this way of seeing as a merging of the subject and object. He explains:
This means to keep the mind in unison with the "Emptiness" or Suchness, whereby one who stands against the object ceases to be the one outside that object but transforms himself into the object itself. (32)

Bashō speaks about this merging of subject and object. He advises, "In writing do not let a hair's breadth separate yourself from the subject. Speak your mind directly; go to it without wandering thoughts" (qtd. in Higginson 10). This aspect of mental silence reflects a meditative state of mind, or expanded state of consciousness, and also suggests that the "Perceptive Faculty" is completely unrelated to the thought process.

Rauhala's description of Zen and consciousness is useful in determining the nature of the Zen meditative experience, its effect upon consciousness and its relevance to Bashō. Rauhala states:

Zen aims at an enlargement of consciousness in the same sense as Indian yoga philosophy. The counterpart of samádhi in Zen is satori, and the system of education and training leading to satori is termed koan in Japanese Zen.... Koan is concerned with spiritual concentration more exclusively than the Indian yogas.... (56)

This suggests that the meditative state of expanded consciousness known in the Hindu tradition as samádhi, and experienced to some extent by Kabír, may be similar to the state of satori touched upon by Bashó. On many occasions Bashó makes reference to a Zen detached state of seeing, and a Zen way of life which cultivates this way of seeing. For example:

Skylark on moor –
sweet song
of non-attachment.

(Love 42)

Or more subtly:
A white chrysanthemum –
However intently I gaze,
Not a speck of dust.

(qtd. in Ueda, *The Master* 67)

Bashó focuses on the subject of gazing or looking. This notion of watching, or detached observation, is discussed by Suzuki in relation to Zen. He says:

We know that seeing is not just an ordinary seeing by means of relative knowledge; it is the seeing by means of a prajna-eye [supreme wisdom] which is a special kind of intuition enabling us to penetrate right into the bedrock of Reality itself. (39)

Suzuki refers to this kind of attention as "intuitive looking-into" (qtd. in Rauhala 56) and it would seem that Bashó practised and implemented this particular way of seeing. One of Bashó's disciples explains that "a mere 'look at' an object is not enough to produce the deep seeing that begins inspiration" (qtd. in Higginson 10). Bashó's creative life, therefore, was highly reliant upon the development of a particular kind of disciplined or meditative attention.

Like Rúmi and Kabír, Bashó also combines the five senses in his poetry in such a way that the reader is forced to stretch the boundaries of sensory perception. Contemplation of an object through the five senses is not enough. The kind of perception which occurs here is "more 'real' than what the senses perceive" (Geldard 79). The poet says:

The sea darkens
And a wild duck's call
Is faintly white.

(qtd. in Ueda, *The Master* 48)

The sound of a duck seems to become the colour white, while visually the faint outline of a duck on a dark sea fades until it is reduced to only a sound. The reader is taken into
a space where sensory perception is inadequate. Similar occurrences in the poetry of some of the French Symbolists may be noted at this point. Rilke himself believed that it was:

not premature to suppose that the artist, who develops the five-fingered hand of his senses... to ever more active and more spiritual capacity, contributes more decisively than anyone else to an extension of the several sense fields. (Prose 55)

This concern for an extension of the senses, or movement beyond them, is common to each of the poets in this study.

While it would not be correct to say that Bashó employs alchemical language, he does make reference in his haiku to a process of inner transformation. His life of travelling is symbolic of his spiritual journey and is a frequent metaphor in his poetry. In the following haiku, which Bashó wrote for a friend before setting off on a journey, Stryk believes that the "plum" refers to Bashó himself. The poet writes:

Do not forget the plum
blooming
in the thicket.

(Love 31)

In this haiku, "Blooming" relates to the poet's spiritual growth. Bashó identifies himself so completely with his life of spiritual travel that he says:

First winter rain –
I plod on,
Traveller, my name.

(Love 40)

Through travel, Bashó expects transformation even in the winter rain. His last poem, before death, makes reference to eternal and therefore spiritual transformation and
travelling. The following two translations of the same poem both indicate a continuation of movement even after approaching death. The poet writes:

Sick on a journey –
over parched fields
dreams wander on.

(\textit{Love 81})

On a journey, ailing –
My dreams roam about
Over a withered moor.

(qtd. in \textit{Ueda, The Master 68})

At the time of death Bashó still spoke about spiritual growth. While his poetry does not overtly describe spiritual transformation or the evolution of human perception, it does provide evidence of his own spiritual growth and of his heightened state of consciousness.

Towards the end of his life, Bashó realised that his reliance upon nature as a catalyst for developing his particular meditative attention was not satisfactory. When he returned to the city of Edo, close to the age of fifty, he found himself removed from nature and therefore unable to focus his attention easily. While the elements of nature should have remained for him "merely useful to help concentrate one's attention" and "in no way indispensable" (Franck 43), it appears as if the poet became reliant upon the natural world for disciplining his attention. His poetry began to express bitterness. He therefore sought ways to expand his notion of \textit{sabi}, or contented solitude in nature, and thus developed the notion of "lightness". This new concept of "lightness" referred to a particularly detached acceptance of circumstances and capacity for "true concentration" (Bashó, \textit{Monkey 54}) even in the absence of nature. Ueda describes this "lightness" as
giving Bashó the capacity to stand as "a spiritual bystander" (Ueda, The Master 34) amidst the life of man, while Stryk makes associations between this "lightness" and the Zen notion of *wabi*, which refers to "an appreciation for the commonplace" (*Love* 10).

During the final period of Bashó's life, he began to look at aesthetically ordinary situations with detached acceptance. He observes:

> A bush warbler –
> It lets its droppings fall on the rice cake
> At the end of the veranda.
> (qtd. in Ueda, *The Master* 65)

The poet does not react to the bird's droppings on his food. He also finds beauty and fragrance even in a sweaty shoe. He notes:

> In the garden
> a sweaty shoe – scent
> of chrysanthemum.
> (*Love* 74)

Bashó finally manages to see beauty "when the realm of nature is expanded to include men and their daily lives" (Ueda, *The Master* 65). His theory of lightness incorporates a degree of humour. For example, Haruo Shirane suggests that in the following haiku, the poet finds humour in the sight of willows trailing in mud. The poet says:

> green willow branches
droop in the mud –
the tide gone out
(qtd. in Shirane 111)

Bashó appreciates the scene although it is not one of classic beauty. It appears as if the poet attained a spiritual vision characterised by an attitude of forgiveness and acceptance. While his poetry and his love for nature were intertwined, it seems as if the
title of "nature poet" does not give a complete picture of Bashó's increasingly spiritual perceptive capacity.

Bashó's interest in the Zen path enabled him to discipline his attention and it gave him a level of awareness which he, himself, knew was beyond the ordinary. Stryk believes that "As a mystic, he knew the unconditioned was attainable only within the conditioned.... that the illumination sought was to be found in the here and now of daily life" (Love 17). Bashó makes reference to common folk unable to see with increased awareness, or simply uninterested in looking. He perceives the chestnut to be a "holy tree" but declares:

The chestnut by the eaves
In magnificent bloom
Passes unnoticed
By men of this world.
(Narrow 108)

The heightened state of consciousness, or elevated attention of Bashó, is comparable to that of Rúmi and Kabír. The point of haiku is, as Higginson says, "not the content of experience, but the quality of experience, and of perception" (91). It appears that Bashó's poetic form of haiku is itself derived out of an intensity of perception.

Critics have been dismissive of the subject of Zen experience and its connection to the creation of haiku. R. H. Blyth, for example, has been criticised by Higginson for over-emphasising this relationship. Higginson appears quite averse to exploring this concept, referring to Blyth's comments as being often "Zen-full", and to a number of the Beat Poets as having "what Zen masters laughingly call the 'Stink of Zen'"(57-58). While this might indeed be the case, it is also a fact that Bashó, the very first master haiku poet, demonstrated a keen interest in attaining a Zen level of consciousness and
pursued this interest for some time. There is indeed evidence to suggest a genuine relationship between *ch'an*, or Zen meditation, and the creation of these essentially symbolic works, a relationship which is worthy of scholarly attention. Furthermore, Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó demonstrate an intense "Perceptive Faculty" which appears to reflect genuine mystic experience, that is, the expanded state of consciousness.
Blake

The years 1797 to 1804 seem to provide evidence of an intensity of mystic experience in Blake's life. It can be argued that this experience shaped Blake's increasing concern for the evolving nature of human perception. This is expressed through a recurring interest in the subjects of waking and seeing, and a suggestion that the highest level of "fourfold" perception is beyond ordinary sense perception. There is also evidence that Blake had some knowledge of alchemy and a concern for the subject of spiritual transformation and evolution.

The essence of Blake's mystic experience cannot be examined in isolation from his reported "visions". Davis says that "Blake spoke openly of his visions, and naturally surprised his more prosaic listeners" (62). This thesis, however, is more concerned about a particular turning point in Blake's life, which seems to have occurred some time after 1800, and is particularly noticeable in the year 1804. Blake's visions certainly influenced and inspired his art and poetry throughout his life, but the poet appears to have experienced an inner revelation in 1804, which not only resulted in an immediate restoration of his confidence, but indirectly led to the creation of some of his most profound work.

Most noticeably, on the 23rd October, 1804, Blake makes reference in his letters to his "altered state" which occurred after attending an exhibition of one thousand paintings by "old masters such as Dürer, Michelangelo and Leonardo" (Davis 114). The poet begins by referring to his previous challenging years:
For now! O Glory! and O Delight! I have entirely reduced that spectrous Fiend to his station, whose annoyance has been the ruin of my labours for the last passed twenty years of my life... (Keynes 101)

He then indicates that his confidence and "light" have been restored. He says:

Suddenly, on the day after visiting the Truchsessian Gallery of pictures, I was again enlightened with the light I enjoyed in my youth and which has for exactly twenty years been closed from me as by a door and by window-shutters. (Keynes 101)

He makes a significant reference to his changed spiritual state and also relates this to his creativity. He claims:

Consequently I can, with confidence, promise you ocular demonstration of my altered state on the plates I am now engraving after Romney, whose spiritual aid has not a little conduced to my restoration to the light of Art…. in a short time I shall make my assertion good that I am become suddenly as I was at first. (Keynes 101)

Blake continues to make reference to this particular gallery episode in subsequent letters to Hayley, and includes statements such as, "I am now satisfied and proud of my work, which I have not been for the above long period" (Keynes 103), and "I am no longer Divided nor at war with myself..." (Keynes 104). It is evident that the importance of this event in Blake's life should not be overlooked. Sloss & Wallis (viii) and Hirsch (xii) believe Blake's views and philosophies changed drastically after this point. In Sloss & Wallis the date 1797 is mentioned as the point after which "Blake's opinions underwent a striking and a far-reaching change" (viii). It would seem more accurate to say that his philosophies and views were refined by experiences he had at this time.

There is no doubt that Blake's stay at the Sussex town of Felpham from 1799-1803 involved a great deal of spiritual turbulence for the poet. Geoffrey Keynes refers to Blake's transference to this town as "one of the most important events in Blake's life" (xx). In a letter dated 1805, Blake himself speaks of "Spiritual Sufferings" and "Spirited
Victories" (Keynes 120) which occurred during these years. He speaks of performing "Spiritual Acts... even against [his] Will" and expresses gratitude to his patron Hayley for "conducting [him] thro' Three that would have been the Darkest Years that ever Mortal Suffer'd" (Keynes 55). There is evidence in Blake's letters that, despite his suffering, he gained spiritual confidence and strength from these inner revelations. It would appear that during this period, Blake came to a final decision concerning his "Parental Duty" (Keynes 87) to literature and the arts, and the importance of his "Spiritual Labours" (Keynes 121) to that end.

Many scholars (Hirsch 327; Davis 118; Lincoln, Innocence 201) have argued that Blake, at around this time, experienced a particular change in perception which led to a "radical" (Davis 118) revision of Vala (later to be called The Four Zoas), the creation of most of Milton – which he himself considered "the Grandest Poem that this World Contains" (Keynes 58), – his epic poem Jerusalem, as well as the poem "To Tirzah". This last poem in particular is described by Hirsch as "utterly unlike any of the other Songs" (281), while Lincoln believes that it was most likely written during this particular period of the poet's life characterised by "clarification of vision" (201) and much later inserted into Songs of Experience. Hirsch explains that "To Tirzah" encapsulates Blake's spiritual experiences at Felpham. Hirsch also refers to poems in the Pickering Manuscript as illustrating "Blake's first errant steps out of his despair" (124).

It would be fair to say that Blake, in his youth, already demonstrated a heightened perceptive capacity, which is noticeable in all of his writings, but that this capacity develops with particular confidence and strength in the years after his stay at Felpham. He makes early reference to this quality of perception and its importance in
1802 in a letter to Butts, through his well-known poem, "for double the vision my Eyes do see". He writes:

Now I a fourfold vision see,
And a fourfold vision is given to me;
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight
And threefold in soft Beulah's night
And twofold Always. May God us keep
From Single vision & Newton's sleep!

(Keynes 46)

Blake's fourfold vision refers to "spiritual" (Keynes 44) or "Divine" (Hirsch 141) vision, and also relates to the character Urthona in *The Four Zoas*. This poem was written two years before Blake's experience at the Gallery, so it therefore appears that Blake had a Gnostic understanding of fourfold vision prior to what has been called the "Truchsessian experience". One could venture to say that his understanding of this concept was gained through the "organ of spiritual perception" (Nicholson, *Rúmi* 301), known in the tradition of Western mysticism as *oculus cordis*, or the “eyes of the heart”. It may be pertinent to note Blake's own use of the word "ocular" in describing his "altered state" after the "Truchsessian experience".

Hirsch, who has laboured passionately to illustrate Blake's apparently changing views, comments on Blake's overall consistency with regard to certain subjects. He concludes that "a very important and consistent motif in [Blake's] work", is the acknowledgment that poetry and prophecy arise from a "common perception of a divine and extrasensory dimension of reality" (301). This statement is, in itself, strong enough evidence to indicate that one of Blake's most passionate subjects relates to heightened or increased perception. Hirsch also writes that "the idea of an inner apocalypse is one of
Blake's most consistent themes" (284). This apocalyptic process of inner revelation or transformation relates entirely to the subject of heightened awareness or increased perceptive capacity.

Throughout Blake's work there is a great deal of evidence to illustrate his concern for the subject of heightened perception. His reference to fourfold vision appears to correspond to Rûmi’s "foresight". There are a few minor differences in the way scholars define Blake's single, double and threefold vision. According to Keynes, single vision is "material", double is "intellectual" and threefold is "emotional" (44). Hirsch refers in more detail to the levels of perception, but in doing so is less precise in definition. His explanation of single vision, however, is useful. He says, "single vision perceives the dead and spiritless world of Locke's philosophy and Newton's physics. It is the world of Your Reason" (111). Blake's threefold vision relates to the character Beulah, whose beauty gradually becomes deceptive; however Blake points to fourfold vision as the greatest, most desirable level of perceptive capacity.

The poet's concern for the subject of perception is further illustrated through constant references to waking and seeing. His well-known phrase, "As a man is, So he Sees" (Keynes 9), is relevant as it indicates various levels of perception according to different levels of growth. Blake insists, in a reply to Locke, that "the notion of passive perception is tantamount to willful blindness" (qtd. in Parisi 76). He implies that heightened perception is a matter of truth and responsibility. Frank M. Parisi makes a comment concerning Blake's illustration of the human "worm". He explains:

... no longer the gnawing worm of eighteenth-century moralizing, but rather a human being who is a worm only because he is asleep. For him to become a butterfly will not be a matter of pruning his 'vain desires', but simply awakening. (76)

Blake himself, writes below his illustration of a human chrysalis:
The Sun's Light when he unfolds it
Depends on the Organ that beholds it.
("For the Sexes" 2-3)

This essentially refers again to the degrees of human perception, while pointing to the capacity for human transformation.

Hirsch believes that Blake's *Book of Urizen* is "about the way man, narrowing his perceptions, creates for himself a fallen world out of an inherently divine natural order" (73). Blake writes:

Till the shrunken eyes clouded over
Discern not the woven hypocrisy
But the streaky slime in their heavens
Brought together by narrowing perceptions
Appeard transparent air; for their eyes
Grew small like the eyes of a man

(pl. 25; 31-36)

The poet makes specific reference to "narrowing perceptions", and to the "shrunken eyes". He implies that "man" has become spiritually blind. The "woven hypocrisy" would appear to relate particularly to religious doctrine. The hypocrisy of rigid religious doctrine appears "transparent" to those whose perception is "clouded over". The poet says:

And their eyes could not discern,
Their brethren of other cities

(pl. 28; 17-18)

Blake's Gnostic understanding of this subject appears to intensify throughout his life, perhaps culminating in the awakening of Albion, "the Sleeping Humanity" (Ferguson 186) in *Jerusalem.*
Blake's interest in the subject of perception moves beyond a concern for vision and the five senses towards a concept of what one might call extra-sensory perception, in the same way as noted in the work of Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó. Blake insists that one must look "thro'" the eye and "not with it" (qtd. in Davis 133). He says:

This life's five windows of the soul
Distort the heavens from pole to pole.
And lead you to believe a lie,
When you see with not through the eye...

(qtd. in Yeats, Poems 113)

The poet therefore indicates that heightened perceptivity is not associated with the physical senses. Parisi appears to note this point when he makes reference to a number of ancient poets who "found in their blindness the freedom to sustain a piercing concentration" (92). In a similar way to Kabír, Blake makes references to the unseen. In his work titled There is No Natural Religion, Blake toys with what Hirsch refers to as "extra-organic perceptions deriving from an extra-organic sensibility". Hirsch astutely identifies this with the "Poetic or Prophetic character" (10). Blake says clearly:

Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception, he perceives more than sense
(tho' ever so acute) can discover.

(B; 1-2)

In this particular passage, Blake summarises the essence of the "Perceptive Faculty" of human beings.

As in the work of Rúmi and Kabír, there is evidence in Blake's work of the use of alchemical language to express Gnostic understanding of inner transformation. David Erdman recognises Blake's use of the term "Mne Seraphim" in Thel as a "variation on 'Bne Seraphim', a term used in the writings of the alchemist Cornelias Agrippa, and
associated with the planet Venus" (60). Beer also argues that Blake's poem "Tiriel" was alchemically influenced. Beer discusses Blake's use of mercury, sulphur and salt with reference to Paracelsus, "the alchemical philosopher" (Erdman, Selected xix), who used these terms to denote spirit, soul and body respectively (Beer, "Influence" 251-256). He extends this comparison by suggesting that these three components might correspond to Blake's threefold, twofold and single vision. Blake's knowledge of the subject of alchemy is evident when he says to his colleague Cumberland, "thou real Alchymist!" (Erdman, Complete 700). Blake's Gnostic transformational process appears to have been at once spiritual and alchemical, therefore affecting not only the perceptive capacity but also the physical body.

In the same way as Rúmi, Kabír and to a subtle degree, Bashó, make reference to evolution of the perceptive quality, Blake also indicates that the perceptive quality of human beings is transforming. In There is No Natural Religion, he says:

Reason, or the ratio of all we have already known, is not the same that it shall be when we know more. (B; 3-4)

Blake's reference to "when we know more" refers more to gnosis than to intellectual knowledge. He refers quite explicitly to the faculty of perception. He says:

From a perception of only 3 senses or 3 elements none could deduce a fourth or fifth.

(A; 5)

The poet indicates that the "Perceptive Faculty" is currently limited and does not have the capacity to perceive beyond those limitations. This concept is also expressed using simile. In All Religions Are One, he says:

As none by travelling over known lands can find out the unknown. So from already acquired knowledge Man could not acquire more.

(Principle 4)
The poet indicates that "Man" cannot imagine a future evolved state because he has not yet acquired the heightened "Perceptive Faculty" required to enable him to do so. From his "already acquired knowledge" which is limited, he cannot "acquire more". Throughout Blake's prophetic works he speaks of a future age or rather, as in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, makes reference to the five senses as being "the chief inlets of Soul in this age" [italics inserted] (pl.4; 13). With reference to Blake's *Europe* and his *Song of Los*, Hirsch says that "The millennium which Blake prophesies is still man's perception of the infinite world as it really is" (81).

As noted, the Romantic movement in general demonstrates a continual concern with concepts of waking, perceiving and becoming, however, not all poets classified as "Romantics" or "Symbolists" demonstrate a Gnostic understanding of this concept and more numerous counterparts for this can be found in the East. Hirsch refers to Blake's "date for the victory of imaginative perception" as lying in a "golden age of the past" (85), but it seems that the field of literary studies has not yet begun to recognise the kind of perceptive capacity to which Blake made reference throughout his life. If it is true that Blake displayed "astonishingly advanced insight" into such modern psychological concepts as "repressions, tensions and eruptions" occurring within the human being, "more than a century before Freud and Jung" (Davis 79), there is no reason to deny the possibility that his knowledge of the human "Perceptive Faculty" was also beyond present comprehension of the subject. Similarities between Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake concerning the subject of expanded consciousness and heightened perception suggest that there is a great deal more to be discovered and that this can be better achieved through comparative studies of this nature.
Conclusion

This chapter has explored the notion of expanded consciousness in order to discover whether the genuine mystic experience results in a state of heightened perception. It has been shown that while the nature of mystic experience may vary, the genuine mystic state of expanded consciousness does give rise to interest in the subject of heightened perception. Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake demonstrate concern for the subjects of waking, seeing, looking, observing and perceiving. It would be accurate to say that these subjects pervade their poetry.

Linked to this concern for the subject of perception are related interests in a number of esoteric subjects. The poets focus on the phenomenon of expanded sensory perception. This expansion of the senses reflects their state of expanded consciousness. The poets indicate that their ma'rifat or gnosis is attained through an additional sensory avenue. In some cases, there is also an illustrated awareness of the subject of alchemy and its relevance to mystic experience and transformation. Spiritual transformation and evolution are also linked subjects in the poetry of these "perceptive poets".

In summary, it would seem that the third main characteristic of the "perceptive poet" lies in an experience of expanded consciousness demonstrated through a display of the heightened "Perceptive Faculty", that is, the "perceptive poet" focuses on detached looking and waking. This should be distinguished from hallucination, dreaming or visualisation. This feature of heightened perception occurs in conjunction with an
interest in spiritually related subjects, especially expansion of the five senses, alchemy, evolution and transformation.
1 The article in Yoga Journal is found at www.yogajournal.com/lifestyle/159?page=8 and is authored by George Feuerstein.

2 Rūmi has at times been credited with the formation of the Order of the Whirling Dervishes (Baldwick, "Medieval" 98); however, according to Schimmel, this Order was not formalised until after Rūmi’s death (94).

3 This notion is further examined in Chapter Four.

4 These literary features are further explored in Chapter Six.
... man gains access to God not by a special pipeline to the spiritual realm but by an expanded perception of the actual world. (Hirsch 12)

... inspiration does not descend upon him, because it is in him, day and night, occasioned by every glance.... (Rilke, *Letters* 33)\(^1\)

Because verse enables the mind to preserve experiences in condensed and transformed form, it is ideal for giving shape to consciousness. (Csikszentmihalyi 130)

Imagination... is a perceptive faculty, with its own outlook on the world. (Brennan 34)
Introduction

This thesis argues that the spiritual source of inspiration accessed by the "perceptive poets", but not by all "mystic poets", is a heightened state of consciousness. The connections between the state of expanded consciousness, heightened perceptive capacity and creative inspiration itself are considered in this chapter. The nature of expanded consciousness is examined specifically in relation to the "Imaginative Faculty". Two features which seem to indicate the poets' awareness of the integral relationship between their expanded state of consciousness and their "Imaginative Faculty" are also examined. These include: the focus on the present moment, and the concept of "true authorship".

This chapter compares: the Sufi notion of "Active Imagination" and "Active Intellect" reflected in Rúmi's work (Bakhtiar 19); Kabír's concept of the man (Dwyer 145); Bashó's ideal of "butsuga ichinyo" (Shirane 266); and Blake's notion of "Genius", and "Spiritual Sensation" (Keynes 9). These ideas are investigated in order to grasp relationships between the different mystic traditions and their understanding of the connection between expanded consciousness and inspiration. The phenomenon of acute awareness of moment to moment detail is also investigated in the poetry of Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake, together with the notion of being a creative instrument. The poets' awareness of these concepts seems to reflect the realisation of their own expanded state of consciousness and its influence upon creativity.

This thesis aims to define the "perceptive poets" in order to expand investigation into the relationship between mystic experience and symbolic creativity. The first main
characteristic of the "perceptive poets" has been seen to be an intense focus on inner spiritual life. The second area of commonality is to be found in the spirit of "fükyó" and in the avoidance of emotional extremism and sensual empiricism. The third is found to be a genuine experience of expanded consciousness and heightened perception giving rise to particular interest in the subjects of perception, ways of seeing and transformational processes. The fourth lies in a Gnostic understanding of the relationship between the "Perceptive" and "Imaginative Faculties". This fourth feature is examined in this chapter.
Parameters

The "Imaginative Faculty"

The state of expanded consciousness, as both a spiritual and imaginative state, has not been completely recognised by scholars. Karen Armstrong notes the relationship between poets and mystics and recognises that sometimes their "visions" have "risen up from the subconscious with such authority that they seem given from outside" (266). She uses the word "subconscious", however, despite finding a noteworthy characteristic of intense "authority" in certain instances. Brennan notes the complicated nature of this territory. In his investigation of poetic correspondences, and the relationship between religion and literature, he theorises, "what middle term is there to unite the psychologist and the poet? If we get that, we shall have the law we require" (50). He appears to acknowledge a lack of terminology, and recognise the general field of mysticism as containing the missing link. He notes that "To Novalis mysticism was the principle which united poetry and philosophy" (108).

Early Reference to the relationship between religion and literature is found in the words of Thomas Carlyle. He says:

Literature is but a branch of Religion, and always participates in its character: however, in our time, it is the only branch that still shows any greenness, and, as some think, must one day become the main stem. (qtd. in Gascoyne 23)
Carlyle indicates that as traditional religious ideas become less acceptable, literary texts, and one might add the arts in general, become alternative religious avenues. According to David Gascoyne, Carlyle was "aware of a vocation, a duty, and responsibility: to bear witness to the Divine nature of the true man, and to speak and write the Truth..." (7). This was to be achieved through the use of his own "creative faculty" (28). In Carlyle's case traditional religion and literature meet, but this association becomes more subtle in the connection between the state of expanded consciousness and inspiration.

The previous chapter noted that Jephcott uses the term "expanded consciousness" in his study of Proust and Rilke. Jephcott believes that "the phenomenon of 'expanded consciousness' is centrally important not only for the understanding of art, but for that of human experience in general" (11). He links expanded consciousness to an experience which he calls the "privileged moment" (11). In this thesis, however, the "privileged moment" is linked essentially to intense spiritual experience, as opposed to moments of altered consciousness induced by drugs, alcohol or ecstasy. Jephcott does not distinguish between these elements and in fact purposefully selects the "most colourless of the possible terms" in order to include all reasonably similar "privileged moments" (11). This is problematic as the aim here is to define expanded consciousness as an experience primarily linked to spirituality and genuine mystic states. For this reason, the term "privileged moment" is not employed. Jephcott, in fact, notes that "exact terminology" for describing the "privileged moment" and the state of expanded consciousness, "has not yet been invented" (11). This thesis examines expanded consciousness solely in relation to spiritual life.

Expanded consciousness seems to relate not only to the subject of perception but to the subject of time, or perception of the present moment. One could say that perhaps
the nature of this awareness seems to find reflection in the following account by Rilke.

The poet writes:

A periwinkle standing near, whose blue gaze he had often already seen, came to him now from a more spiritual distance, but with such inexhaustible significance, as if nothing more were now to be concealed.... Altogether he became aware that all objects appeared to him now more distant and at the same time, somehow or other, more true.

(Prose 34-36)

It is the poet's intense focus on details of the present moment which is noteworthy. Armstrong also notes Wordsworth's poetic "spots of time" and she employs the term "mystical moments" (268) but, like Jephcott, uses these phrases quite generally.

While numerous scholars have noted connections between mysticism and poetry, the words "subconscious" and "unconscious" are usually employed in relation to the subject of inspiration. For example R. Maritain speaks of the "spiritual unconscious" ("Sense" 80) as the poet's source of inspiration. For Emerson inspiration is a spiritual process. He speaks of "Omniscience" in spiritual terms and says, "The same Omniscience flows into the intellect, and makes what we call genius..." (Essays 161). Emerson combines the "intellect" with spirituality and also with "genius" or the "Imaginative Faculty". In this chapter the state of expanded consciousness, as a spiritual phenomenon, is examined in relation to the "Imaginative Faculty".
Analysis

Rúmi

Rúmi's state of expanded consciousness may be referred to as a highly perceptive state where the Sufi notion of 'Active Imagination', or the 'Imaginative Faculty', comes into play. The working of this 'Active Imagination' signifies the point at which human imagination is expanded through mystic experience. In this section two signs of this 'Active Imagination' are briefly examined: Rúmi's focus upon the present moment and his recognition of what Barks refers to as 'true authorship' (Rumi, 17).

Rúmi describes himself as 'impelled by some great purpose to write poetry' (qtd. in Lewis 238). He defines the source of his inspiration in spiritual and esoteric terms. According to the poet inspiration is a spiritual act associated with the soul, and not associated with either the mind or reason. The poet says:

Thus the ear of the soul becomes the place of inspiration;
And what is inspiration but speech concealed from the senses?
There is no perception of it but to the ear and eye of the soul;
The ear of the mind and the eye of reason are devoid of it.

(qtd. in Levy 58)

The 'soul' is the 'place of inspiration' and this 'soul' is clearly separate from mind, reason or senses. Indeed, inspiration is 'concealed from the senses' and also from the 'mind' and from 'reason'. The poet attempts to explain the connection between spiritual life and inspiration.
Rúmi's source of inspiration is an eternal source comparable to a running fountain. He explains:

Whereas the spring-head is undying, its branch gives water continually;
Since neither can cease, why are you lamenting?
Conceive the Soul as a fountain, and these created things as rivers:
While the fountain flows, the rivers run from it.

(Dívání 47)

The poet equates the soul with a fountain and implies that the soul therefore “flows”. The reader wonders how the soul “flows” if not through an increase in spiritual life. When the soul or fountain "flows", or grows spiritually, it results in "created things" which are compared to “the rivers” which “run from it”. Rúmi links “created things”, such as poetry and music, to the soul's "fountain" or associated symbols of "wine" or "nectar". In "The Song of the Reed" he says:

'Tis the flame of Love that fired me,
'Tis the wine of Love inspired me.

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 31).

The distinction between Rúmi's concept of "Love" which is spiritual, and earthly love which is emotional, has already been noted. His inspiration is solidly connected to his spiritual life. He writes quite explicitly:

In your light I learn how to live.
In your beauty, how to make poems.

You dance inside my chest
where no one sees you,

but sometimes I do,
The poet celebrates his spiritual relationship with the Shaykh figure, but also directly with God. This spiritual relationship teaches him "how to make poems" and when he recognises the beauty of his soul, "that sight becomes [his] art". His state of expanded consciousness, experienced through his Sufi mystic path, is equated with a complete experience of love. He says:

I open and fill with love
and what is not love evaporates.

All the learning in books stays put
on the shelf. Poetry, the dear

words and images of song, comes down
over me like mountain water.

Again, the creative result of the poet's spiritual state is compared to water. The soul's fountain is a source of inspiration and it "comes down over" the poet.

At times, Rúmi compares his body to a house which keeps the "drunken" soul within. He says:

This house wherein is continually the sound of the viol,
Ask of the master what house is this....

In this house is a treasure which the universe is too small to hold;
This house and this master is all acting and pretence.
Lay no hand on the house, for this house is a talisman;
Speak not with the master, for he is drunken overnight.
The dust and rubbish of this house is all musk and perfume;
The roof and door of this house is all verse and melody....

(Diváni 59)

In this verse, Rúmi associates the "sound of the viol" with a house containing one who is spiritually "drunk". The poet also suggests that the "roof" and "door", or those things which keep the soul protected within its body-house, are "verse and melody". There is therefore a reciprocal relationship between creativity and spirituality. The experience of expanded consciousness leads to the creation of sounds and beauty:

Love's way becomes a pen sometimes
writing g-sounds....

(Ecstasy 60)

This created beauty then nourishes the soul and its spiritual life. There is evidence within all of these poems of the close association between the poet's expanded state of consciousness and his "Imaginative Faculty".

In the Sufi tradition, the capacity for accessing the vital state of expanded consciousness, or what can be simply equated with the "Imaginative Faculty", is termed "Active Imagination". Bakhtiar explains that within the Sufi tradition there are five internal senses which are "common sense, imagination, intelligence, memory and Active Imagination or Intellect" (19). Obviously, this "Active Imagination" is considered to be something entirely different from ordinary "imagination" or ordinary "intelligence". Bakhtiar, in his discussion of artistic symbols, explains that the symbol of oil relates to "the faculty that is sacred within the human form, the spiritual Heart, or Active Imagination, or Active Intellect: the Spirit of God within us" (20). The connection here between spirituality and creativity in Sufism is made concrete. Bakhtiar continues to solidify the relationship between the Sufi mystic experience and Sufi creative work. He
states that the spiritual strength of a Sufi master and his disciples is determined by the continued high-quality creative output of the guild's craftsmen, whose main purpose is to recall their mystic knowledge through artistic expression (94).

It appears as if the state of expanded consciousness manifests in poetry through the poet's highly perceptive focus on the present tense. Iqbal describes Rúmi as a poet who wrote with "direct explosive force of expression" (142), while Helminski recognises Rúmi's poetry as an "elaboration of an instant hereness, the immediate inner song of experience" (Ruins 12). Barks describes Rúmi's work as progressing "toward a moment when consciousness breaks open and the Friendship is felt here and now" (Ecstasy 150). Rúmi in fact calls himself "the son of the moment" (qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 176). He says:

My poetry resembles Egyptian bread:
When a night passes over it you cannot eat it any more.
Eat it at this point when it is fresh
Before dust settles upon it!
(qtd. in Schimmel 96)

This kind of analysis by Rúmi of his own work seems to suggest that without an insight into the poet's spiritual life, his poetry cannot be fully appreciated. The poet emphasises the spontaneity of his work:

This poetry. I never know what I'm going to say.
I don't plan it.
When I'm outside the saying of it,
I get very quiet and rarely speak at all.
(qtd. in Barks, Rumí 2)
An aspect of immediacy reveals the poet's capacity for intense perception in the present moment. Rúmi declares:

The mystic ascends to the Throne in a moment;  
the ascetic needs a month for one day's journey.  
(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 102)

The focus of the poet's attention is fixed in the poetic moment itself. He says:

I have closed the passage of the lips, and opened the secret way;  
I am free in one moment from the desire of speech.  
(Díváni 157)

Rúmi's use of the phrase "free in one moment" is noticeable in this couplet. The poet is aware of "every instant". He exclaims:

This is love: to fly heavenward,  
To rend, every instant, a hundred veils.  
The first moment, to renounce life;  
The last step, to fare without feet.  
(Díváni 137)

In this poem the force behind Rúmi's expression comes from the intensity of consciousness. His heightened perception and poetic inspiration occur almost simultaneously. This is the imagination in its most spiritual capacity. Brennan's understanding of the "Imaginative Faculty" is relevant here. Brennan theorises:

What is it that is necessary to convert an impulse, already admirable in itself, into true poetical inspiration? The answer is, imagination. A transformation of force is necessary, in the spiritual world, before an enthusiasm, moral or sensuous, can produce poetry....  
(14)

The "Imaginative Faculty" of the "perceptive poet" is most active when the poet is experiencing a heightened state of expanded consciousness: in this moment, perception and poetry occur simultaneously.
Another important characteristic of Rúmi and the "perceptive poets" is the acknowledgment of "true authorship". Scholars have spent much time pondering the reasons why Rúmi, "who ranks with Firdausí and Háfiz" (*Díváni xvi*), would assign his poetry to Shams who is described by some as "a vagabond alchemist" (*Ruins* 10). In traditional Persian poetry it is common for a poet to conclude, or sign, his work with his own name or reference to himself. Rúmi dispenses with this tradition and replaces his name with the name of Shams, or a name other than his own. Rúmi ends his verse "Enough Words" with the question, "Who am I, my friend?” (qtd. in Barks, *Rumi* 21), instead of leaving the traditional signature. If there is no name associated to his verse, then he makes reference to silence instead. He indicates, therefore, that the silence he has experienced through his relationship with the Shaykh figures, is the source or author of his work. Barks explains that more than one thousand of Rúmi's poems are dedicated to Shams while five hundred of his *ghazals* "conclude with Khamush, silence" (*Rumi* 17).

In this section, it has been argued that Rúmi's source of inspiration was a heightened perceptive state or synonymously, the "Active Imagination" or "Active Intellect". Through his experience of a certain state of expanded consciousness, Rúmi attained a particularly intense perceptive capacity and an awareness of the link between this and his creative life. This awareness is reflected in his poetry through a focus on the present moment and through an association of his own creativity with his spiritual life. His expanded state of consciousness is, therefore, in itself synonymous with his "Imaginative Faculty".
Kabír

It would seem that Kabír's main source of creative inspiration was his heightened state of perception. He frequently makes reference to a higher function of the mind or the *man* which according to the poet becomes active in the state of *ulatí*, or meditation. As with Rúmi, two main characteristics of the heightened perceptive state can also be identified in Kabír's poetry. There is evidence of immediate, direct and simple expression focusing upon the present moment and the poet's recognition of "true authorship".

Kabír's inspiration is directly linked to his expanded state of consciousness. The poet says:

\begin{quote}
Do one thing completely, all is done; 
try to do all, you lose the one. 
To get your fill of flowers and fruit, 
water the root. (Grace 116)
\end{quote}

The "root" is Kabír's spiritual life. He suggests that if his focus remains fixed upon nourishing his spiritual life then he gets his "fill of flowers and fruit" which represents everything else including the beauty of art. Kabír also says, "with exultation in my *man* I sing my *pads*, and with joy I recite my *sákhis*" (qtd. in Dwyer 145). There is a connection between Kabír's recital of poetry, and his spiritual joy and exultation. Noticeable again is the same reciprocal relationship, as has been discussed within Rúmi's work, between the heightened state of awareness, or exulted *man*, which leads to creativity while this process of creativity itself compliments the state of expanded consciousness.
Kabir's poems are, in fact, songs recited by the poet. Dwyer links Kabir's musical creativity with his meditative state. He explains:

The continuous singing of the divine praises results in an ever deepening divine union....

The devotee becomes enamoured of the glory and beauty of God and strives to take part in it; the singing over of the divine qualities is a means of drawing the devotee into a participation in them. (219)

Dwyer describes this deepening of the silent meditative state as a process of "interiorization and concentration" (146), and Kabir refers to it as a movement toward the state of "ulati" (qtd. in Dwyer 146). The poet makes frequent use of musical imagery, in which his body becomes an instrument played by the living soul or "jiv". For Kabir, "everyman [sic] is a lyre on which Brahma, the source of all music, plays" ("Says Kabir" xiii). The poet imagines:

The musician plays a peerless instrument
with eight sky-mouths thundering.
Only you are played, only you
thunder, your hand alone
runs up and down.
In one sound thirty-six ragas, speaking
an endless word.
The mouth's a shaft,
the ear a sounding gourd –
the true teacher made the instrument.
The tongue a string,
the nose a peg –
he rubs on the wax of Maya.
Light bursts in the sky-temple
at a sudden
reversal.

Kabir says, clarity comes
when the musician lives
in your heart.

(Grace 44)

In this extended metaphor, Kabír recognises a relationship between God and creativity in general. God is "the musician", playing "ragas" or songs, upon an instrument. The instrument becomes the human body whose tongue is "a string" and whose nose is a tuning "peg". The poem concludes by stating that the musician lives in the heart, therefore associating creativity with the soul. The connection between spirituality and Kabír's source of creativity becomes clear.

In this investigation of the link between Kabír's expanded state of consciousness and his "Imaginative Faculty", the term "man" becomes particularly relevant. Kabír says:

Between the conscious and the unconscious, the mind has put up a swing....

Kabir saw that for fifteen seconds, and it made him a servant for life.

(Ecstatic 11)

The poet indicates that the mind, or the lower function of the man, oscillates between conscious and unconscious states, and the poet, obviously through a particularly heightened state of awareness, comes to witness this constant flux. The higher function of the man becomes active at this point. Kabír explains:

Serve Sri Narahari in such a fashion
that the man's internal conflict will be removed by the man itself.

(qtd. in Dwyer 143)

It is apparently the higher function of the man, which has the potential to reduce the fluctuations of the mind and the attention. Dwyer concludes that "The higher man is the
faculty of meditation (dhyán) by which it rises above the body and discovers the ultimate reality" (143). But not only is this process associated with an activity of the mind, it is the man itself which becomes associated with Rám as the source of creative work. Dwyer believes, "it is reasonably clear from this and comparable texts that [Kabír] is indicating they will find Rám in, and united to, the man" (146). At this point, one might consider the word samádhi and its use in referring to both a particular state of consciousness as well as a certain spiritual state. The higher function of the man would appear to be closely associated with the experience of samádhi.

Examining Kabír and the Hindu tradition brings to light concepts similar to the Sufi's "Active Intellect" or "Active Imagination". It was found through an examination of Rúmi that the Sufi's "Active Intellect" seems to refer to a state in which ordinary intellect and consciousness are expanded towards a more highly perceptive state. In comparison, Rauhala states that "samádhi amounts to a kind of understanding which is beyond the scope of the other, limited acts of apprehension" (55), and it appears as if Kabír's reference to the man in its higher form, relates to the "Active Intellect" and also to the state of samádhi. Kabír says:

When my man concentrated I forgot the body and discovered the reality (tat-tattv).

(qtd. in Dwyer 143)

The poet associates the man with spiritual experience. Similarly:

When the man has taken up its abode within itself it becomes extremely subtle.

(qtd. in Dwyer 145)

The man appears to transform into a more "subtle" character, in the same way as the "intellect" may be differentiated from the "Active Intellect". The poet says:

I gave my heart to my beloved and in a trance beheld nirajan.

(qtd. in Dwyer 112)
Dwyer describes Kabir's use of the word "trance" as referring to the "state of ulati". He explains that ulati is a technical Hathayog term referring to the "process of reverse and sublimation of all psycho-somatic processes". This suggests a state whereby the physical and emotional body is transcended. Thus the emotional, physical and intellectual functions are transcended as a result of the higher function of the man, "Active Intellect" or "Active Imagination".

In this meditative state, Kabir experienced intensity of perception in the present moment in the same way as Rumi. Hess describes Kabir's poetry as "directly available" and having "Immediacy: without mediation" (Kabir, Grace vii). His poetry springs from a genuine experience of expanded consciousness. Dwyer explains:

Kabir was a mystic and much of his verse bears the mark of genuine personal experience.... There is no other way to depict fairly Kabir's mysticism than to take up his own witness, on the grounds that he is recording his experiences very directly.... (43-45)

Often, the reader hears the voice of one who, at the time of writing, was within a particularly heightened state of consciousness. Kabir's poetry is therefore direct, simple and uncluttered by excess intellectual or ornamental phrases. For example:

In the wood where lions
don't tread
and birds don't fly,
Kabir ranges
in empty meditation
(Grace 117)

The poet also often writes in the present tense:

I hear Music of His flute
And I can't contain myself.
Ere the spring a flower blooms
And the black bee's invited.

Lightning flashes, heavens roar.

Storm arises in my heart.

It starts raining and my heart

Thirsts and hankers for my lord.

My heart has arrived where

Song of spheres soars and falls,

Where hid banners fly in the void.

Says Kabir: though breathing, my

Heart today is going to die.

(Ecstatic 47)

This poem describes the poet's experience of joy as occurring in the present moment. His poetry and his heightened perceptive state are occurring simultaneously. The only point at which the poet departs from the present tense is in the last line, "Says Kabir: though breathing, my / Heart today is going to die". He refers to the future, but even so, his spiritual death is going to happen "today". For Kabír, death symbolises a mystic absorption into God where the ego-oriented self dies in order to experience this union which occurs in a short moment, in the present tense, as described above. When Kabír speaks about the subject of physical death, it often causes him to become even more focused in the present moment. The poet says:

You simple-minded people!

As water enters water, so Kabir

will meet with dust....

The bee has flown, the heron remains.

Night is over,

day is going too.
The Perceptive Poets: “Inspired by Expanded Consciousness”  
Michelle Shete p. 229

The young girl quakes and shivers,
not knowing what her lover
will do.
Water won't stay
in unbaked clay.
The swan flutters, the body withers.
Beating at crows, the arm grieves.
Says Kabir, the story sputters
and goes out here.

(Grace 66)

This poem begins with the poet's statement about the inevitability of death. It then moves through more metaphorical language where the "young girl", or soul, shivers before meeting with God. The poem ends in short phrases and "sputters", and eventually "goes out" as images of a dying body also come to an end. The subject of death then ends with the word "here". The poet therefore ends the story about death by taking the reader to the present moment and to the point at which the poet himself has become absorbed in a meditative state of silence. Kabir is concerned about the mortality of the body and the immortality of the spirit, but ironically this subject is often dealt with in the present tense. Kabir's state of meditation, therefore, appears to bring him into a heightened state of awareness of the existing moment.

While Kabir includes his name within most of his work as was traditionally expected within his culture it is evident that he acknowledges the source of his inspiration as something other than his own self. He recognises a difference between an actual source of inspiration, and creative output itself. He asks the question:

Is it the Veds which are important or the one from whom they originated?

(qtd. in Dwyer 121)
He indicates that sacred writing, or scriptures, come from a divine source. Like Rúmi, Kabír attributes his creative work to something or someone other than himself. While he was actively creating poetry, singing songs and also living the life of a weaver, he appears to have taken no pride in being "an artist" as such. The poet was active "in the joy of a hundred arts" and yet spoke about the "creator" as responsible for his creation. He exclaims:

Dance with zest today, my heart!
Love songs fill the days N nights. [sic]
All are listening to this strain.
Mountains, earth and oceans prance.
People dance in joy and grief.
Why do you don a hermit's robe
And stay vainly out of the world?
Look! How my heart shakes a leg
in the joy of a hundred arts.
And creator is much pleased.
("Says Kabír" 85)

Not only is the "creator" added to the ending of the poem as a detached witness, but the "creator" is "pleased" with the "arts" and also the "joy" which comes from the arts, including this poet's "zest". God is viewed as the one who has created the art which comes through the poet in the same manner as it comes across the sky. For example:

On that canopy of the sky,
stars appear:
Who is the clever artist
who painted them?
(qtd. in Vaudeville 285)
Clearly, Kabir was a poet who considered himself simply a vehicle or instrument for God who was his ultimate creator and ultimate artist. This seemingly fundamentalist religious view was not simply a mental concept but appears to have arisen as a result of a genuine mystic experience, that is, the state of expanded consciousness.

Kabir's "Imaginative Faculty" was his expanded state of consciousness. The higher function of the *man* enabled Kabir to intensify his perceptive capacity and heighten his awareness towards a state of *ulati*, transcendence or meditation. Kabir's concept of the higher function of the *man* compares with the Sufi's "Active Intellect". It is this faculty which leads to both *ulati* and *samadhi*. Kabir's heightened perceptive capacity is expressed in his poetry through immediate direct expression and focus on the present tense, as it is in Rumi's work. Similarly, Kabir's recognition of "true authorship" is evident in his poetry. Rumi and Kabir both share an understanding of a crucial link between spirituality and creative work and, more specifically, between expanded consciousness, heightened perception and inspiration.
Bashó

The influence of Zen upon Bashó's creative life is even more significant to note than the influence of mystic traditions upon Rûmi, Kabîr or Blake, because Zen and the arts have always been closely associated. In this section Bashó's work is examined in order to discover whether or not there is evidence of a particular focus upon the present moment, and whether or not Bashó worked according to a theory of "true authorship".

It is the heightened state of awareness itself which was the source of Bashó's inspiration. This would appear to be a particularly sharp and yet a non-intellectual mode of consciousness. Ueda believes that for a poet like Bashó, the "poetic mode of perception, becomes a moral discipline, almost a religion" (The Master 168), while Raissa Maritain says that this state of mind, or withdrawal, "is a psychological phenomenon analogically common to the poetic state and to mystical contemplation" ("Magic" 16). The poet himself has been described as one who "immersed himself in even the tiniest things, and with religious fervor [sic] and sure craftsmanship converted them into poetry" (Japanese 2). Yasuda seems to recognise this as "the haiku attitude" or "a state of readiness for an experience which can be aesthetic" (11).2 This haiku attitude would appear to be a state of heightened perception. Bashó sat amidst nature but was often left unsatisfied, while at other times he managed to enter the state of loneliness or meditation and spontaneously produce poetry, particularly towards the end of his life. Bashó explains:

A good poet does not "make" a poem; he keeps contemplating his subject until it "becomes" a poem. A poem forms itself spontaneously. If the poet labors to compose a
poem out of his own self, it will impair the "soul" of his subject. (qtd. in Ueda, The Master 168)

It appears, however, that this state of readiness, or Yasuda's "haiku attitude", does not always ensure the poetic moment. Yasuda explains that "a haiku attitude does not necessarily cause an experience to be aesthetic" (12).

Throughout Bashó's prose and poetry there is a great deal of evidence of the close association between the poet's spiritual experience and his craft. His most ambitious work, The Narrow Roads of the Interior, has been described as a "study in eternity" (Narrow 37) and in it Bashó spends as much time climbing mountains to reach shrines, temples and holy men, or view statues of Gods and Goddesses, as he does observing nature. The poet relates:

The following morning, I rose early and did homage to the great god of the Myōjin Shrine of Shiogama.... I was deeply impressed by the fact that the divine power of the gods had penetrated even to the extreme north of our country, and I bowed in humble reverence before the altar. (Narrow 114)

The poet's excursions were not simply nature journeys. His travels were spiritually motivated. An obvious example is his work entitled, A Visit to Kashima Shrine, which is the direct result of Bashó's spiritual journey to an old hut which belonged to his previous Zen master. In this work the poet experiences "profound" inner silence as a result of his journeys to sacred sites. He writes:

The tranquillity of the priest's hermitage was such that it inspired, in the words of an ancient poet, 'a profound sense of meditation' in my heart, and for a while at least I was able to forget the fretful feeling I had about not being able to see the full moon....

(Narrow 67)

Intensely spiritual words like "miraculous" and "sacred" are employed by the poet. For example:
Indeed the whole mountain is filled with miraculous inspiration and sacred awe. Its glory will never perish as long as man continues to live on the earth.... Here the Doctrine of Absolute Meditation preached in the Tendai sect shines forth like the clear beams of the moon.... (Narrow 125)

There is therefore evidence to argue that Bashō's creative inspiration came from spiritual experience of a meditative kind. Bashō's most famous haiku, noted as being "indescribably mysterious, emancipated, profound, and delicate" (Moran qtd. in Ueda, Basho 140), has also been analysed with reference to the Zen experience and philosophy. The poem, previously mentioned in Chapter Three, follows:

the old pond – 
a frog jumps in, 
water's sound

(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 140)

Dorothy Britton refers to this poem's "profound, underlying mysticism" (8) and Shinten-ó Nobutane compares it to the Zen monk Hakuin's reference to the sound of one hand clapping (qtd. in Ueda, Basho 140). One of Bashō's disciples also explains that Bashō was "deeply immersed in meditation" during the creation of this haiku. This disciple was so impressed by the way Bashō ended the haiku that he said "It is only he who has dug deep into the mystery of the universe that can choose a phrase like this" (Narrow 32).

The link between Bashō's expanded state of consciousness and his creative inspiration is apparent. Bashō's disciple suggests that the depth of his master's meditation, or the height of his perceptivity, led to an intensified "Imaginative Faculty".

Bashō’s spiritually motivated travel led to the creation of his greatest work. From the age of forty-two, and between the years 1686 and 1691, Bashō wrote A Visit to the Kashima Shrine, The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel, A Visit to Sarashina Village,
The Narrow Roads of the Interior, The Saga Diary and The Monkey's Cloak. Stryk believes this time of the poet's life was not only "by far his most productive period" but also "one of deep Zen involvement" (Stryk, Zen xxiv). There is, therefore, little doubt that Bashó was most productive at the point in his life when poetic ambition had subsided and spiritual life had become his priority. It is clear that Bashó had a good understanding and experience of Zen meditation and particular characteristics of Zen affected his creative work. Stryk explains:

Zen is unique as a religion-philosophy of artistic manifestation, the attainments of its practitioners often gauged by the works of art they make. The disciple is expected to compose poetry of a very special kind (toki-no-ge in Japanese or "verse of mutual understanding"). (Zen xxx)

The Zen philosophy therefore supports creativity and is, at the same time, supported by creativity. As previously mentioned in relation to Rúmi, the strength of a Sufi guild is, similarly, determined by the quality of its creative output.

The influence of Zen on Bashó's creativity is evident when the poet speaks of a Zen process of merging with an object. This concept of "butsuga ichinyo" (Shirane 266) is described by Shirane as Bashó's "spiritual ideal of 'object and self as one'" (266). Bashó explains:

...'learn' means to enter into the object, perceive its delicate life and feel its feelings, whereupon a poem forms itself. A lucid description of the object is not enough... it will show the object and the poet's self as two separate entities. (qtd. in Ueda, The Master 168)

Evidence of this merging of subject and object is found in many of Bashó's haiku and especially in those most often discussed by scholars. In The Narrow Roads of the Interior Bashó visits a temple and says he feels "the purifying power of this holy
environment pervading [his] whole being". This prose is immediately followed by one of his most frequently discussed haiku:

In the utter silence
Of a temple,
A cicada's voice alone
Penetrates the rocks

*(Narrow 122)*

The "utter silence" experienced by the poet during his meditation directly affects his "Imaginative Faculty" and leads to the creation of this commended haiku. Sanga says of this haiku that its meaning "goes beyond its words and points towards the profound secrets of Zen" (qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 249), while Nobutane notes the cicada cry as a metaphor for men's earthly desires and he believes the poem signifies vanishing desires "in the court of Buddha's Law" (qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 249). Most aptly Ueda says that Bashó's poems frequently focus upon the absorption of something finite and small into the infinite (*The Master* 52). It is this merging of subject and object which is most relevant to this discussion of Bashó's source of inspiration and his state of heightened perception. Shirane describes the process of merging as "a selfless state free of personal desire" (266). He says:

Without spiritual cultivation and the ability to enter into objects, the haikai poet will not have the powers to discover the high in the low, to find the beauty in the mundane.

*(266)*

The concept of *butsuga ichinyo* is therefore associated with Bashó's ideal of lightness. The merging of subject and object which occurs in the state of expanded consciousness, leads to objectivity or lightness.
The creative spontaneity of Bashó is an essential characteristic of the "perceptive poet". The poet experiences a heightened state of perception in the present moment together with simultaneous creative inspiration. Scholars have noted that Bashó wrote "poetry of the moment" (*Monkey* 13), and his poem about the frog, cited above, has been complimented for having "no breadth in time or space" (Masaoka Shiki qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 141). Bashó says the two acts of perceiving and expressing "ideally occur as one" (qtd. in Higginson 10), while Suzuki, speaking of the Zen tradition, explains that "Knowing and seeing are... generally united.... Seeing is experiencing enlightenment" (46). Yasuda's concept of the "haiku attitude" is also relevant. As can be seen from Yasuda's own explanation, it is a difficult concept to comprehend intellectually as opposed to experientially. Yasuda explains:

[The poet] is like a tuning fork placed before a vibrating one of the same frequency.
When he contemplates the impassionate, living object he immediately realizes its quality just as the sound from the tuning forks will become audible. He is in a state of aesthetic resonance. (15)

Despite the ethereal nature of this concept, it would seem particularly relevant to Bashó. The poet advises, "No matter what we may be doing at a given moment, we must not forget that it has a bearing upon our everlasting self which is poetry" (*Narrow* 28). It would not be an exaggeration to say that the aim of Bashó's life was to be constantly in this state of aesthetic resonance where he could receive and return the "haiku moment".

The overall majority of Bashó's haiku are illustrations of a particular moment in time. The poet takes common situations and paints them more vividly than they are ordinarily perceived. He writes:
Under the tree
soup, fish salad, and all –
cherry blossoms.
(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 286)

Of this poem, Utsubo notes that Bashó achieved the difficult feat of creating haiku out of the common Japanese pastime of blossom viewing. Bashó's haiku are sometimes accompanied by simple visual illustrations of the same image. Bashó paints white snow on green daffodil leaves to accompany this haiku:

the first snow
just enough to bend
the daffodil leaves.
(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 149)

Kató Shúson notes that Bashó "saw the scene of first snow with the innocent eyes of a child" (qtd. in Ueda, Basho 149). The simplicity of observation contrasts to the poet's complexity of philosophy and personality. It is the intense awareness of minute details which gives Bashó's haiku its power. He writes:

Awaiting snow
poets in their cups
see lightning flash.
(Love 58)

Emerson speaks constantly about an “awareness of existence on a moment-by-moment basis" (qtd. in Geldard 9), and this is precisely what constitutes the core of haiku.

Bashó also appears to have recognised the existence of a creative energy working through him. Shirane states that Bashó's aim was "to realize the creative force of the universe within oneself" (260). The poet's subtle portrayal of this concept is disguised in nature images. Bashó writes:
gathering the rains
of the wet season, how swiftly flows
the Mogami River!
(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 251)

While this poem appears quite simple, Handa Ryóhei suggests that the poet "saw the torrential current not from a materialists point of view but as something alive, as something gigantic that was breathing like himself" (qtd. in Ueda, Basho 251). The poet, "gathering the rains" of his own spiritual life, finds that his poetry "swiftly flows" like the Mogami River. Bashó recognises, through his heightened state of perception and his silent state of meditation, that the source of his inspiration is spirituality, or the state of expanded consciousness itself.

While the "Way of Poetry" existed in Bashó’s culture, it was not poetry alone which satisfied this poet. He sought a meditative experience prior to the process of creation, or preferably at the same time as the process of creation. Shirane states, however, that for Bashó, "the way of art (fúga), the way of the inner spirit (kokoro) and the way of the cosmos (zóka)" eventually "become inseparable" (260). Bashó writes:

not grown to a butterfly
this late in autumn
a caterpillar
(qtd. in Ueda, Interpreters 271)

Shúson believes that Bashó, through this poem, expresses the predicament of his attachment to poetry which had restricted him from living an ordinary life (Ueda, Interpreters 271). In this respect, the Zen "Way of Poetry" appears to have posed a challenge for the poet whose first priority was spiritual life because the concept of "true authorship" was not clearly defined for him.
Most discussion of Bashò recognises him as a nature poet having some kind of underlying mysticism, but it has been argued in this section that it was not nature itself which inspired Bashò, but a particular serene state of meditation or expanded state of consciousness, in which the poet's perceptive capacity was heightened. This poet, like Rúmi and Kabír, became intensely aware of the present moment as a result of his state of consciousness. He was aware of himself during the creative process and also aware of his insignificance in the overall creative act. "The Way of Poetry", however, being a particular Zen path, seems to have caused some difficulty for this poet whose expanded state of consciousness would appear to have been minimised by an attachment to poetry itself. Bashò did not entirely manage to detach himself from this mystic tradition which, ironically, curbed his mystic quest. Despite this, there is evidence to suggest that he considered his attachment to poetry as a fault which was hindering his spiritual life.
Blake

Blake's source of creativity was thoroughly connected to his heightened perceptive capacity. His constant concern for the subject of imagination, as "Spiritual Sensation", and his notion of "genius", are paramount in any discussion of Blake's artistic life. His experience of an expanded state of consciousness resulted in a concern for communicating the importance of perceiving "Minute Particulars" ("Jerusalem" pl. 45; 20) in the present tense. He was also adamant that the "true author" of his work was not himself. These similarities between Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake suggest that a study of the perceptive quality of the poets results in a more productive method of understanding key concepts explored by the poets themselves.

In Blake's mind, inspired poetry and prophecy had the same source which he termed "Imagination". According to Blake, imagination was interchangeable with the phrase "Spiritual Sensation" (Keynes 9). When his spiritual life was in torment, his creativity suffered. During his spiritual struggles at Felpham he was in a largely unproductive phase, but after the year 1804, he gathered spiritual confidence and embarked upon a period of intense productive and creative life. It is worth noting that after Blake's stay at Felpham he produced the majority of his greatest paintings, including the design for "The Last Judgment" which he kept with him "until his death" (Davis 133), and of which he was "particularly fond" (Davis 133). Brennan defines "Imagination" in Blakean terms and links this to spiritual life. He says:
...imagination itself is to us a symbol of the spiritual principle, a closer approach to it than any other form of conscious life; being an intensive union and fusion of all the modes of mental activity. (38)

He also links it to the "Perceptive Faculty":

Imagination, then, as manifested in art, is a perceptive act; the perception of analogies and correspondences, whereby things which in ordinary consciousness led a separate existence are fused into unity, so that sensuous facts become symbols.... (33)

In Blake's work, imagination is symbolised by the character Urthona, "the prophet of Divine fourfold Vision" (Hirsch 128). Blake writes:

Los saw & was comforted at his Furnaces uttering thus his voice.
I know I am Urthona keeper of the Gates of Heaven.
And that I can at will expatiate in the Gardens of bliss;

(Jerusalem pl. 82; 80-83)

Los expatiates, or writes at length, in the "Gardens of bliss", thus the inspiration of Los is associated with both "bliss" and Urthoana.³ Lincoln describes Urthoana as "the last of man's powers to be renewed" and goes on to explain that this character "finally emerges to take control of human thought" (Zoas 217). Lincoln also describes Urthoana as "the archetypal poet whose imaginative creations resound in the ear..." (Zoas 236). Rosso views Urthoana as "the most creative zoa", and addresses the important issue of Blake's use of the character. He says, "Urthoana does not reverse the world for Blake's audience; he attempts to enact symbolically a mode of perception that, if adopted, can affect a change of perspective that leads to 'vision'" (150). Rosso believes that Blake wanted his readers to "alter their ingrained perceptions of reality" (151), but it must be recognised that, according to Blake, this process of altering perception refers to a spiritual awakening, not to a mental process.
Blake makes a distinction between "Imagination", which he directly substitutes for the words "Holy Ghost", and other levels of consciousness. He says:

... the Goddess Nature Memory is his inspirer & not Imagination the Holy Ghost.

(qtd. in Davis 155).

Blunt explains that in Blake's view, allegory and fable were associated with the Greeks, while imagination was associated with the prophets of the Old Testament. Blake states:

Vision or imagination is a Representation of what Eternally Exists, Really and Unchangeably. Fable or Allegory is Form'd by the daughters of Memory, Imagination is surrounded by the daughters of Inspiration. (qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 87)

Blake makes certain distinction between "Genius" and "Memory" in his marginalia on the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds. He says:

Reynold's Opinion was that Genius May be Taught & that all Pretence to Inspiration is a Lie & a Deceit, to say the least of it. For if it is a Deceit, the whole Bible is Madness.

This Opinion originates in the Greeks' Calling the Muses Daughters of Memory.

(Erdman, Complete 642)

Blake seems to indicate the existence of a confused association between the concept of "the Muses", or a genuine source of creative inspiration on the one hand, and "Memory" on the other. In Blake's opinion, memory which is clearly associated with the subconscious or unconscious mind is not associated with his notion of "Inspiration" or "Spiritual Sensation". Throughout the poet's work there is a passionate concern for the issue of freedom in all its forms, but especially spiritual freedom. Beer states that, "Above all, I would take a passion for human liberty to be the single most persistent element in [Blake's] continuous thought" (Influence 202). Brennan further explains that:

Liberty for Blake is the untrammelled life of the imagination, without discord or division... it is innocence and joy, knowing nothing of good and evil – the Golden Age, to restore which was, as Blake said, the aim of his art. (91)
In this context "imagination" is a spiritual term denoting the state of expanded consciousness, and Blake's preoccupation with the issue of freedom reflects his desire to fight against anything which restricted his spiritual-creative life.

It would appear that Blake's notion of the "poetic genius" is comparable to the Sufi notion of "Active Intellect", or "Active Imagination" and also comparable to Kabir's notion of the higher function of the mind, or "man". Emerson states that "genius is religious" (Essays 161) and certainly, as far as Blake is concerned, the term "poetic genius" alludes not only to a particularly gifted intellectual capacity but to a spiritual intellect, which is, as Emerson says "inebriated by nectar" (Essays 218). Blake associates "Imagination" with the "poetic genius" and it appears as if his "poetic genius", or what is also referred to as "the spirit of prophecy", indicates a particular state of consciousness. This state of consciousness is one which has risen above ordinary intellect and become inspired in an extraordinary manner. Sorensen explains that for Blake ordinary intellect cannot conceive of such a state of consciousness. He says:

As Blake points out in his early tractates, the fallen, mortal mind cannot contemplate a third possibility without the help of the "poetic genius" (the divine, ecstatic knowledge the poet-prophet shares in his poetry). (93)

All talk of such a state of being becomes in itself, therefore, ironic and problematic. Sorensen also suggests that for Blake, "poetic genius indeed creates reality" (121). "Poetic genius" above all would appear to be, therefore, an altered state of perception which is ordinarily incomprehensible. According to Murry, the "poetic genius" refers to "total soul", which is comparable to the Sufi notion of the completed or universal man. Murray believes:

Blake's name for this total soul changed from time to time: he began by calling it The Poetic Genius or True Man. Later he called it the Eternal, or Universal Man. And as he
developed the extraordinary subtlety the process of its re-creation 'in visionary forms
dramatic', it became the regenerated Albion. [italics inserted] (qtd. in O'Neill, Critics
31)

Seen in this light, Blake's concepts of "Imagination" and "poetic genius" are significantly associated with the human intellect. Blake writes:

... Urthona rises from the ruinous Walls
In all his ancient strength to form the golden armour of science
For Intellectual War. The war of swords departed now,
The dark Religions are departed & sweet Science reigns.

(qtd. in Frye, Blake 243)

Blake's reference to "sweet Science" is related to gnosis or spiritual knowledge. The following chapter looks more closely at the "Active Imagination", its association with the intellect and the difficulty experienced by the "perceptive poets" in their efforts to speak about such an incomprehensible state of consciousness. In this section the point is made that Blake's "poetic genius" is certainly a spiritual term, not exactly "interchangeable with godhead" as Sorensen suggests (120), but rather, implying an intellect affected by an expanded state of consciousness, comparable to the Sufi's "Active Intellect".

In the work of Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó it is evident that there is an emphasis on the present tense or present moment as being a particular characteristic of the "perceptive poet". So too in Blake's work, as in a number of other poets referred to as "Romantic", there is a preoccupation with "Minute Particulars" in the present moment. Almost half of Blake's early poems in Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience are written in the present tense, including "The Voice of the Ancient Bard", "The Chimney Sweeper" and "Holy Thursday" from Songs of Experience, and "The Tyger", "The
Lamb", "The Ecchoing Green" and "Spring" from *Songs of Innocence*. In "London", one of Blake's most famous lyrical poems, the reader becomes aware of the poet's intense perception of the present moment, through repetition and rhythm building an anxious, desperate tone. The poet says:

> In every cry of every Man,  
> In every Infant's cry of fear,  
> In every voice, in every ban,  
> The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.  

(*Songs*, Song 46; 5-8)

In contrast, the miracle of birth expressed in "Infant Joy" is made all the more intense through the use of the first person voice of the newborn child. Blake writes:

> I have no name:  
> I am but two days old –  
> What shall I call thee?  
> I happy am,  
> Joy is my name, –  
> Sweet joy befall thee!  

(*Songs*, Song 25; 1-6)

The reader is taken into the consciousness of the newborn child, whose only knowledge is of the present moment. Barnstone, in his exploration of poetry and ecstasy mentions both Rúmi and Blake. He declares that:

> the most meaningful tie between the poets is probably in their perception of visual realities. Beyond all concern for spatial and temporal essences, the place and time in their poems is predominantly here and now. (210)

Joy is therefore associated with the purity of knowing only the present moment, and it would appear that the "perceptive poets" are more focused upon the importance of *perceiving* that reality than in the emotion of joy itself.
Blake's use of the present tense becomes more emphatic towards the end of his life through his prophecies. It would seem as if much of Blake's later work involves the expansion of certain visions he experienced. Thus Blake often retells visions with the poem presented as drama played out in the present tense. For example:

So Los, in fury & strength: in indignation & burning wrath
Shuddring the Spectre howls, his howlings terrify the night
He stamps around the Anvil, beating blows of stern despair
He curses Heaven & Earth, Day & Night & Sun & moon....

(From *Jerusalem* p. 10: 22-25)

Blake begins many of his prophecies as a narrator speaking about the past, but the evolving drama of the poem frequently takes place in the present tense. One of Blake's poems actually dealing with the subject of awareness of the present moment is his "Auguries of Innocence". He writes:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

(1-4)

This particular stanza has been compared by scholars such as Frye, to the Christian concept of the "fullness of time," or the sudden critical widening of the present moment expressed by the word *kairos* (Vision 55). It is within this same poem of Blake's that the poet again insists:

We are led to Believe a Lie
When we see not Thro' the eye.

(124-125)
T.S. Eliot's reference to Blake's "untaught spontaneity" (qtd. in O'Neill, *Critics* 25) is also relevant. The spontaneous creation of poetry occurs in Blake's "fiery forge" described by Hirsch as "a place where incandescent energy and artistic control meet" (245). The "perceptive poets" appear to struggle in that fiery forge, perhaps more than usual, to impose structure and order upon spontaneous inspiration occurring in a moment of intense perception.

Blake, like Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó, was confident in declaring himself to be an instrument of the divine. His perception of his creativity as spiritually inspired has prompted many to consider whether or not he had hallucinations or mental problems. If he had been writing within an Eastern culture, however, this issue would probably not have been so predominant in critical discussion of his work. It seems he was speaking with quite literal intentions when he wrote to Butts about the divine nature of his poetry. He describes *Milton* as his "Grand Poem". He then declares:

I may praise it, since I dare not pretend to be any other than the Secretary;
the Authors are in Eternity.

(Keynes 57-58)

There are numerous examples of Blake removing himself from the authorship of his work and referring to himself as the instrument or secretary, however, while he was admittedly exceedingly self-confident about his literary success and capacities, he was, like Rúmi, equally humble when it came to acknowledging the source of his inspiration. What appears on the surface to be a stubborn obstinate will was, in Blake's own mind, his poetical and spiritual calling. Blake seems to have believed that there was little difference between his own actions and God's will. Blake says that his poems were dictated to him, but Blunt makes the point of mentioning that Blake was "at liberty to choose his own metre" (qtd. in O'Neill, *Critics* 85), which demonstrates that the so-
called dictation was associated more with ideas and visions than with actual language. Blake, nevertheless, acknowledged the point that his inspiration came to him from somewhere other than his own self. His efforts were focused upon infusing the arts with spirituality and while he vigorously defended his work, on his death-bed he assured his wife:

My beloved! they are not mine! No! They are not mine

(qtd. in Yeats, Poems xivii)

He therefore insisted that his inspiration was not emerging from his own self.

It would appear that Blake's life and work are a testimony to the reality of a strong connection between heightened perception attained through a state of expanded consciousness, and the "Imaginative Faculty". Throughout his life, Blake examined this relationship and seems to have lived for the purpose of translating this gnosis into words. His insistence upon perceiving details of the present moment and his acknowledgement of "true authorship" show that he appears particularly comfortable beside Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó. These poets were fully aware of the nature of their gnosis concerning the "Imaginative Faculty" as a spiritual faculty in itself. Their dilemma in communicating this knowledge, however, is a different matter and this is examined in the next chapter.
Conclusion

It has become apparent that Bashó's culture attempted to support his spiritual and artistic endeavours while Blake's did not. This distinction should be emphasised. The Zen belief that the creative process itself can lead to spiritual experience seems to have been a hindrance for Bashó. His most acclaimed poems have, contrarily, come essentially from meditation, not vice versa. Blake's creative dilemma seems to have been an opposite one in which Western culture, intolerant of art which is not of a particular professional kind, undermined his work. At this point, the need for a sympathetic framework in which to examine the "perceptive poets" becomes evident. In the following chapters, the poets' creative dilemmas become more pronounced.

The similarity between Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake in terms of their awareness of the relationship between the expanded state of consciousness and the "Imaginative Faculty" is pertinent. Comparison of these four poets suggests that they were not only similarly motivated by spiritual calling and linked in their attempts to communicate the existence of a highly perceptive state of consciousness, but that this particular expanded state of consciousness was the source of their creative inspiration. While their traditions vary greatly, these poets are united in ways which appear highly significant within the general field of "mystic poetry". In this chapter, a fourth common characteristic has been examined: the poets consciously recognise a link between their expanded state of consciousness and their "Imaginative Faculty". Furthermore, this particular feature becomes evident through the poets' focus on the present moment and their acknowledgement of "true authorship".
1 Rilke speaks of painter Auguste Rodin in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salome in 1903.

2 Similarities between Bashó and Rilke might be noted here. It is also worth noting at this point that Rilke, himself, attempted what he called "haikai" in French and German: "Little moths reel, shuddering, out of the boxwood; / they'll die this evening and never be the wise, / that it is not spring" (qtd. in Higginson 55).

3 The role of Los as poet is further examined in Chapter Six.

4 While this may be a Romantic conviction, it does not, in itself, suggest that all Romantic poets have experience a state of expanded consciousness.
CHAPTER FIVE

Beyond Language and Reason:

the Perceptive Poet and the Issue of Silence

It happens that imagination is a little more difficult to analyse and explain than sensation or reason: a difficulty increased by the fact that those who have tried to explain it have generally possessed it in a lower degree, while those who enjoyed a fullness of it have seldom cared to speak about it... (Brennan 35)

...language has evolved for describing experiences of the five senses only. (Happold 68)

A donkey laden with books is neither an intellectual nor a wise man.

Empty of essence, what learning has he –

(Saadi of Shiraz qtd. in Shah 96)
Introduction

In this chapter, Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake are considered as “perceptive poets” who find the task of communicating their inexpressible experiences somewhat futile. Regardless of their level of education, these poets express doubt in their capacity to complete the task they feel spiritually obliged to perform. Essentially, the poets doubt the capacity of language and at times even express anxiety at having to communicate at all. They often resort to silence and the subject of silence itself becomes significant. Nevertheless, these poets persist in their efforts to communicate, and this persistence appears to reflect the existence of a greater creative force.

The poets also express enormous doubt in the capacity of human rationality and reason. They do not attempt to "naturalize the supernatural" or "humanize the divine" (Abrams, Natural 68), as the English Romantics may have done. Indeed, they contradict the Romantic notion of the "power of the mind" (Abrams, Natural 70). The mind is considered incapable of comprehending gnosis. The poets concern themselves with the intellectual faculty’s characteristics of analysis and criticism and with the limits of these. They seem to recognise a large gap between their own gnosis and that of their readers, and it seems that they do not expect the majority of their readers to understand them at all.

This chapter examines the poets' sceptical attitude towards language, their sense of poetic frustration and their concern for the issue of silence. The chapter also examines the poets' efforts at communicating the inadequacy of reason and demonstrates the sense
of distance existing between them and their readers. The fifth feature of these poets is recognised in this chapter as the clear identification of the limits of language and reason in the expression of *ma'rifat* or gnosis.
The Issue of Silence

It seems that within the field of literary studies, poetry and mystic silence clash and spark in a volatile space. This would appear to be because, as noted, there is no understanding within this field as to what, in fact, constitutes a mystic. For example, R. Maritain suggests that "the poet, returning from his withdrawal into himself, will write a poem; but the mystic, moved, stirred by his God, will intensify his contemplative life" ("Magic" 18). This concept is shared by Symons who compares the mystic to a drunkard and says the mystic is "too full of God to speak intelligibly to the world" (36). For Symons, the mystic is not only unintelligible and isolated, he is also (at times) situated in direct conflict with the poet because, as Maritain suggests, "the poet progresses toward the word" while "the mystic tends towards Silence" ("Magic" 34).

The poets dealt with in this thesis certainly face the problem of language and its inadequacy in the expression of *ma'rifat* or gnosis. In fact, at the heart of their creative life is an innate distrust and, at times, a dislike for poetry and even for words in general. Not only do they express doubt in language but they constantly express their dislike for philosophy, intellectualism and the rational faculty of human beings. Their opposition to these things, however, seems to situate them in a different place to the Symbolists when it comes to the subject of both silence and symbolism. Their dilemma is different in that...
they never really believe that poetry alone can "deliver the transcendence" (Niebylski 18).

Maurice Blanchot believes "silence is what we prefer for speaking of the mystery" (59). The subject of silence is an essential preoccupation of the Symbolists, however there appears to be a difference between their silence and that of the poets in this thesis. Niebylski in her study, *The Poem on the Edge of the Word: The Limits of Language and the Uses of Silence*, comments on Mallarmé's struggle with language. His discovery that "poetry cannot deliver the transcendence" leads to a sense of failure. This situation is described as:

the dark silence of his famed crisis years, a kind of purgatory the poet had to endure before he was able to regain his voice. The voice regained would henceforth bear the permanent mark of the speechless abyss. (18)

While the poets of this thesis are often silent and speechless, one could not say that "the speechless abyss" is heard or felt within their work.

Niebylski refers to George Steiner's concept of a "crisis of language (in modern European literature and thought)" (Niebylski 5), and George Poulet summarises this. He explains:

The irony is the act of negation whereby, everything being reduced to nothing, it appears clearly that there is no longer anything to say, that the poet can do no more than to be silent. (qtd. in Niebylski 42)

Steiner, however, makes a clear distinction between the modernist threat of literary silence, and the subject of silence as it occurred in literature prior to the modern era. He considers the modern self-reflexive literary tendency, and associated fascination with silence, as different from "older instances of this anxious and sometimes hostile relationship towards the verbal medium" (qtd. in Niebylski 4). For Steiner, Mallarmé's
silence and Dante's silence are quite different. While Mallarmé is darkened by "the confounding shadow of present doubt and unbelief", Dante is not (qtd. in Niebylski 4). It appears that Mallarmé personifies a certain kind of creative despair which contrasts to the poets in this thesis.

Porter, in his study *The Crisis of French Symbolism*, examines the unreliability of language as a tool of expression (xii). In his overview of the French Symbolists, Porter concludes with a firm belief that the poets have almost nothing in common except a tendency "to despair of the success of the communicative process". He declares that "such despair is what characterizes Symbolism proper" (11). This definition seems, indeed, to be accurate in relation to the French Symbolists. Porter says of them, "Bound down to the material order, poetry could escape it only through vagueness or negation. For the poet, either of these solutions was a form of suicide" (253). He further explains that French Symbolism essentially "becomes self-reflexive, focused on the poet and poetry" (18). This preoccupation with the problem of language characterises the Symbolists.

It would not be accurate to say that the poets of this thesis "despair of the success of the communicate process". There is no sense of creative despair because the poets are not attached to the creative process. The poets realise and fully accept that *ma'rifat* or gnosis is simply not transferable through words. This solid point of knowledge lies at the beginning, and in fact at the heart, of their poetry. Unlike the Symbolists, these poets do not find language and the process of its manipulation to be a pivotal focus. On the contrary, the poets express dislike and antagonism towards language as deceptive, insufficient and divisive. The pivotal focus for these poets is always spiritual life while
poetry is firmly in second place. Thus there is no sense of a void or abyss felt within their work because the poets are primarily inspired and fulfilled by spiritual experience.

While Mallarmé seeks "direct correspondence between words and what they signify" (Blanchot 37-38), the poets of this thesis seek new ways to express the reality of their spiritual life. In addition, the intense intellectual analysis of language, which appears common in the work of the Symbolists, does not occur in the work of these poets. On the contrary, the poets criticise excessive intellectualism. The inadequacy of language is simply taken as a given, which needs to be transcended. Their dilemma has more to do with their full realisation that poetry "cannot deliver the transcendence" to their readers. They are therefore aware that the majority of their readers will not comprehend their work and yet the poets remain spiritually motivated to continue their efforts at communicating gnosis.
Analysis

Rúmi

As a Sufi, Rúmi was aware of the limits of language, and yet he spent most of his life struggling with language in an effort to transfer some kind of knowledge to his readers. Frustrated with his role as a poet, he sometimes appears unwilling to speak and his poetry becomes preoccupied with the subject of silence. There is enormous paradox existing within this poetic silence. As the nature of his knowledge was beyond ordinary mental comprehension, so too, was it beyond language. Doubting the intellectual faculties of human beings, he did not expect his readers to understand his truth, and yet he persisted in his efforts. The space he occupies as a poet lies, therefore, somewhere between the fields of literature and religion.

While Rúmi's poetic gifts are widely acknowledged, it is not so commonly known that this poet expressed dislike for poetic endeavours. According to Annemarie Schimmel, he called poetry "despicable" and confessed to be "not at all interested in poetry" (95). Scholars explain that this poet was "not at all proud of the excellence of his verse" but confessed that he used it "only as an aid to sell his wares" (Iqbal 154). The poet himself declares:

...Ideas, language, even the phrase, each other,

doesn't make any sense. (Ecstasy 123)

The poet realised the divisive nature of language. He also realised that language does not have the capacity to convey spiritual truth. He asks:
How can anyone say what happens, even if each of us
dips a pen a hundred times into ink?
(qtd. in Barks, *Rumi* 39)

Helminski believes that "Rumi did not make too much of his own poetry" (14). Rūmi himself was very direct on the subject. The following poem, quoted in full, illustrates Rūmi’s dissatisfaction with the process of writing poetry. He writes:

I used to want buyers for my words.
Now I wish someone would buy me away from words.

I've made a lot of charmingly profound images,
scenes with Abraham and his father Azar,
who was famous for icons.

I'm so tired of what I've been doing.
Then one image without form came.
and I quit.

Look for someone else to tend the shop.
I'm out of the image-making business.

Finally I know the freedom
of madness.

A random image arrives. I scream,
"Get out!" It disintegrates.
Only love.
Only the holder of the flag fits into,
no flag.

(Ecstasy 163)

The poet indicates that he "quit" from his attachment to words and philosophy when "one image without form came". In other words, his mystic experience led to the realisation of the inadequacy of words. Despite his understanding of these concepts he seems bombarded with poetic inspiration. Screaming at his own imagination he insists that "the flag", or the poem itself, is not a necessary object. Rúmi declares:

What have I to do with poetry: By Allah, I care nothing for poetry, and there is nothing worse in my eyes than that. It has become incumbent upon me, as when a man plunges his hands into tripe and washes it out for the sake of a guest's appetite, because the guest's appetite is for tripe. (Rúmi qtd. in Morrison 57)

Rúmi "plunges his hands" into poetry in order to communicate ma'rifat because he must somehow attempt to share his knowledge. Rúmi knew, however, that the message he wanted to convey was not going to be expressed through poetry alone. In his Masnavi i Ma'navi, he says:

If your knowledge of fire has been ascertained from words alone, seek to be cooked by fire!

There is no intuitive certainty until you burn: if you desire that certainty, sit down in the fire! (qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 99)

For Rúmi, words were insufficient tools inherently incapable of transferring mystic knowledge, gnosis or ma'rifat.

Through poetry, Rúmi indicates that his spiritual knowledge is too great for words. He tries to express this poetic dilemma through simile. He says:
...I'm like
an ant that's gotten into the granary,
ludicrously happy, and trying to lug out
a grain that's way too big. (Ecstasy 177)

The poet considers himself too insignificant and language too inadequate to attempt communicating ma’rifat. Metaphorically, the "grain" of his ma’rifat is "too big" to share. His poems are frequently about this subject. In the poem "Birdsong from Inside the Egg", Rūmi compares ma’rifat to a camel, and then to a lion. He writes:

This fainting is because lovers want so much.
A chicken invites a camel into her henhouse,
and the whole structure is demolished.

A rabbit nestles down with its eyes closed
in the arms of a lion. There is an excess in
spiritual searching that is profound ignorance.
(Ecstasy 161)

The mystic is compared to a chicken who has invited something enormous into her personal place. As a consequence of the experience of expanded consciousness, the "whole structure" of ordinary consciousness is "demolished". The rabbit, or mystic, "nestles down" in this unknown place and in doing so appears naive. The ma’rifat is so incommunicable that it can only be experienced and shared in silence. This concept is explored through analogy:

But if the frog could be completely silent,
then the snake would go back to sleeping,
and the frog could reach the barley.
The Perceptive Poets: “Beyond Language and Reason”  
Michelle Shete p. 263

The soul lives there in the silent breath.
And that grain of barley is such that,
when you put it in the ground,
it grows.

Are these enough words,
or shall I squeeze more juice from this?
Who am I, my friend? (qtd. in Barks, Rumi 21)

The poet suggests that at best, words can only evoke the *ma'rifat* of the mystic. It is silence, rather, which is the space of communication.

Within Sufi poetic tradition, this understanding of the inadequacy of language is thoroughly established. Shah quotes the Sufi Ajmal of Badakhshan, who explains the purpose of Sufi literature. He says:

If you present what will serve them best, the worst is that, misunderstanding, they may oppose you. But if you have served them thus, whatever the appearances, you have served them... (244)

Simplified, this indicates that the purpose of the mystic poet is to make an honest effort to transmit *ma'rifat* to the reader, regardless of whether or not the reader is able to receive the message. Shah also quotes Ibn Ata, who explains the greatest problem faced by Sufi poets. Ibn Ata states:

We give our strange phrases to ordinary people because our experiences cannot be put in their ordinary phrases. I have known that which cannot be described, through and through, and that which is in it overwhelms all ordinary definition. (267)

It would appear that the genuine Sufi mystic experience results in a heightened perceptive state which is difficult to communicate. It would also appear that the majority of Sufi Masters are poets and that they generally recognise this problem concerning the
inadequacy of language. The poets appear to receive inspiration from a particular state of consciousness from which they do not wish to be removed. Rūmī explains this situation in the couplet "Religious Controversy". He says:

The lover fears to answer back, lest the mystic pearl drop from his mouth.
'Tis as though a marvellous bird perched on your head, and your soul trembled for fear of its flitting. (qtd. in Nicholson, Rūmī 173)

Poetry, being an activity demanding a certain amount of linear thought and concentration, has the capacity to remove the Sufi poet from the source of inspiration itself. The "lover", or Sufi, therefore "fears to answer back" in case the mystic state of silence is lost. It is essential to note at this point that despite this fear of losing silence, Rūmī persists in his poetic struggle. He is not simply a mystic in a state of silence; he is also a poet.

Rūmī, however, expresses anxiety and frustration at having to persist with writing poetry, as if he has no choice in the matter. He declares:

I am giving people what they want. I am reciting poetry because people desire it as an entertainment.

In my own country, people do not like poetry. I have long searched for people who want action, but all they want is words. I am ready to show you action; but none will patronize this action. So I present you with – words. (qtd. in Shah 117)

The poet makes reference to "my own country" which seems to indicate a certain populace of kindred spirits rather than a literal, geographical region. Quite often he complains about his role as a poet. For example:

Enough of phrases and conceits and metaphors!

I want burning, burning: become familiar with that burning!

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rūmī 170)
He makes a distinction between kindred spirits whose souls are "burning" and others who will not appreciate his poetry. He says, "they that know the conventions are of one sort, they whose souls burn are of another" (qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 170).¹ Therefore he identifies kindred spirits as those who are essentially concerned with spiritual life, not with literary conventions.

The subject of silence becomes paramount. In many instances Rúmi appears unwilling, or unable, to translate his ma'rifat into words. At times he even would appear to abandon the task:

Mine eye, then, is from that source and from another universe;
Here a world and there a world: I am seated on the threshold.
On the threshold are they alone whose eloquence is mute;
'Tis enough to utter this intimation: say no more, draw back thy tongue.

(Divāni 145)

The poet appears "on the threshold" between the world of poetry and the world of spirit. Unable to communicate his ma'rifat, he concludes "draw back thy tongue", in other words, be silent. This mystical ode from the Divāni Shams-i Tabrīz provides insight into Rúmi's special perceptive capacity, his source of inspiration, and his recognition of being one among few whose "eloquence is mute". He makes reference in a parable to his knowledge as a dangerously serious secret. He says:

They rarely spoke
because of the dangerous seriousness
of the secret they knew.

So these kings talk in low tones,
and carefully. Only God knows what they say.

(Ecstasy 17)
The "kings" who "talk in low tones" are those who have experienced the state of expanded consciousness leading to an incapacity to communicate. They realise that the nature of *ma'rifat* cannot be understood by readers unless the readers have already experienced the same state of heightened perception. Rúmi's spiritual teacher, Shams explains, "He's silent not because he lacks the meaning, but because it has filled him up" (Shams 193). In Rúmi's couplet, "Those who Know, Cannot Tell", the poet explains that he has experienced knowledge about perception, which he succinctly calls "the Consciousness", and which he is incapable of explaining. He states:

> Whenever the Secrets of Perception are taught to anyone
> His lips are sewn against speaking of the Consciousness
> (qtd. in Shah 114)

This solidifies the importance of Rúmi's perceptive capacity attained through his heightened state of consciousness. In this state he has, in fact, no desire to use speech or words at all. He says:

> I have closed the passage of the lips, and opened the secret way;
> I am free in one moment from the desire of speech. (*Divāni* 157)

While the poet does not desire speech, he continues:

> These words I'm saying so much begin to lose meaning:
> existence, emptiness, mountain, straw: words
> and what they try to say swept
> out the window, down the slant of the roof.
> (qtd. in Barks, *Rumi* 22)

Rúmi's imagery of words being swept about like straw, indicates the poet's frustration. He concludes:

> There are mysteries I'm not telling you. (*Ecstasy* 111)
The poet can only go so far in his efforts to deliver *ma'rifat* to readers. His poetic life is, therefore, a paradox in itself. It is this irony, however, which adorns Rúmi’s poetry.

Despite doubting his capacity to communicate, Rúmi persists and, as Schimmel notes, this sometimes results in irony as, for example, when the poet at one point "continues in five more verses to explain that he is silent" (98). The imagery of silence is felt throughout. He confesses:

This is how it always is
when I finish a poem.

A great silence overcomes me,
and I wonder why I ever thought
to use language.

(qtd. in Barks, *Rumi* 20)

While, on the one hand, poetry has the capacity to remove the Sufi from the state of silence, on the other hand, it has the capacity to increase the joy and silence of the mystic state. Rúmi says:

Heart has plundered mind of its eloquence.

Love writes a transparent calligraphy, so on
the empty page my soul can read and recollect. (*Ecstasy* 36)

Poetry seems to assist Rúmi to "recollect" his mystic state. Poetry does not actually *give* the transcendence, but it echoes mystic experience and, in doing so, eventually allows the poet to resume silence. Rúmi continues to struggle with words and yet never fully delivers his message. He says:

Let thy mind go, then be mindful! Close thine ear, then listen!

Nay, I will not tell, for thou art still unripe: thou art in they springtime, thou hast not seen the summer. (qtd. in Nicholson, *Rumi* 189)
Despite moving away from scholarly life towards poetry in an effort to find a vehicle most suited to the expression of *ma'rifat*, Rúmi still found it impossible to explain his spiritual truth. Even the inspirational figure, Shams, apparently warned Rúmi not to speak about his spiritual knowledge, saying to him, "Tell not any one what thou hast seen!" (qtd. in Nicholson, *Rúmi* 183).

It is well established in the Sufi tradition, and among scholars of mysticism, that mystic experience brings with it a certain state of incommunicable silence. Shah quotes from the Sufi Nizami's verse titled "Dumbness". Nizami says:

> He takes the tongue from those who share the secret:
> So that they may not again speak the king's secret. (245)

This notion of "dumbness" finds parallel in the words of Dionysius the Areopagite, the Christian mystic. King comments with reference to Dionysius, "Yet the more the soul soars upwards, the more brevity comes into its own, until the soul is reduced 'to absolute dumbness both of speech and thought'" (57). Considering this crucial phenomenon, it becomes apparent that the work of these poets cannot be appreciated according to ordinary methods of literary evaluation.

Rúmi spent the major part of his life disparaging the intellectual faculty of human beings. In the same way as Dionysius referred to the "knowledge that exceeds understanding" (qtd. in King 57), so too Rúmi made reference to knowledge as beyond reasoning and rationality. According to Bakhtiar, the Sufis believe that the mystic "must leave reason behind" before he can enter the "Garden of the Heart" which is ruled by the "Active Intellect, known traditionally as the instrument of gnosis, or illumined knowledge" (29). Rúmi distinguished between spiritual knowledge and philosophical knowledge. As mentioned in Chapter One, he disliked the concept of philosophy. For
Rúmi, "Philosopher" was not a respectable title. He declares in his couplet "The Sceptic":

Whoever feels doubt in his heart is a secret philosopher.

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 75)

While born into a scholarly family, Rúmi took a decisive turn away from scholarly life towards poetry and music after his meeting with Shams. Throughout Rúmi's poetry are many examples of the poet's concern for establishing the limitations of reason. He says:

Don't open the door to the study
and begin reading. Take down a musical instrument. (Ecstasy 123)

This reference to music is pertinent in the poet's movement beyond language and reason.

According to Nicholson, the Sufi "Knowledge of Reality" is attained through the "qalb" (Mystics 68), or “heart”, as opposed to the intellect. Nicholson says that Rúmi "appeals to the heart more than to the head, scorns the logic of schools, and nowhere does he embody in philosophical language even the elements of a system" (Rúmi 24). Rúmi simply says:

Reason, explaining love can naught but flounder.

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 43)

The poet suggests that logic and rationality cannot make sense of ma'rifat nor achieve this knowledge of the heart. He says:

Avoid complicated thinking; the explanation is in higher worlds. Limit your talk for the sake of eternal communication. (Ruins 34)

"Complicated thinking" and intellectualism are dismissed. The poet explains:

A pen went scribbling along.

When it tried to write love, it broke.
If you want to

expound on love, take your intellect out and let it

lie down in the mud....

(Ecstasy 114)

Intellect and Rûmi's mystic ma'rifat have little to do with each other. To understand Rûmi's poetry, the reader must experience Rûmi's concept of "love" which cannot be explained. This understanding of the limited powers of philosophy and reason is again illustrated by Rûmi through the couplet "Feeling and Thinking". He relates:

Was the sound caused by my hand or by your neck, O pride of the noble?

Zayd said, "The pain I am suffering leaves me no time to reflect on this problem.

Ponder it yourself: he who feels the pain cannot think of things like this.

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rûmi 100)

Nicholson believes that in this couplet Rûmi indicates "the futility of intellectual speculation in face of mystical truth" (Rûmi 100). It is clear that despite Rûmi's own intelligence, he was acutely aware of the limitations of both language and the intellectual faculty.

Rûmi did not expect his readers to comprehend his poetry nor did he bend to the expectations of his readership. Levy comments on Rûmi's attitude towards critics. He says, "as a mystic he was too much in earnest to care for, even if he observed, the incongruities which draw upon him the censure of fastidious critics" (59). Rûmi believed that only a portion of his readers had the capacity to understand the meaning of his poetry. In his "Song of the Reed" he remarks:

Only to the senseless is this sense confided.

(Ruins 19)

He elaborates on this concept in his poem "Ripeness is All", when he refers to his reader as being "still unripe". He writes:
The unripe fruit clings to the bough, because they are not fit for the palace;
But when they have ripened and become sweet and delicious – after that, they lose hold
of the bough....
Something remains untold, but the Holy Spirit will tell thee without me as the medium...
(qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 190)

Rúmi goes so far as to explain that one needs to become "ripe", or ready to receive ma'rifat, so that the "bough" he "clings to" can be surrendered. The reader needs, in effect, to be ready to fall, having surrendered his ego. Rúmi is unable to explain any more than this, as if the process of surrendering to gravity, or natural forces, is beyond reasoning. The extent of Rúmi's ma'rifat apparently seems beyond the limitations of poetry. His poetry stands more as evidence of an expanded state of consciousness.

Rúmi has a complete understanding of his inadequacies as a poet. He advises:

Do not speak, so that thou mayst hear from the Speakers what cannot be uttered or described... (qtd. in Nicholson, Rúmi 190)

His poetry is not of an ordinary kind but is intrinsically connected to his mystic life. Rúmi the poet and Rúmi the mystic seem at times to be at odds with one another, yet it is this friction itself which ignites Rúmi's poetry. Employing language while maintaining silence, and communicating non-rational subjects using logocentric means, are concepts which come to the fore in a study of this poet. This comparative thesis situates Rúmi in a framework which is sympathetic to these issues and provides a new set of criteria for evaluating this specific kind of poetry.
Kabír

Despite Kabír's distinctly different level of education, like Rúmi, he expresses frustration at having to use words as a medium. The poet considers language inadequate, divisive and incapable of expressing mystic knowledge. His poetry reflects music and linguistic silence. He criticises "book-learning" and the acquisition of mental knowledge and he is also aware of a gap existing between his heightened perceptive capacity and that of his readers. It appears that these features form a fifth characteristic common to the poets of this study.

It is surprising to find that the majority of scholars believe Kabír to have been illiterate (Vaudeville 12; Dwyer 66; Scott 66). Hess, in fact, declares that "Most traditions say he was illiterate" (Kabír, Grace xvii). It is widely accepted that the poet was born into a low caste of weavers (Scott 4; Vaudeville 12) and that he was most likely uneducated. Prabhakar Machwe says that it is unanimously accepted by scholars that Kabír "was not educated in the sense that he did not attend any school or undergo a regular training in language or philosophy or even in the technical skill of weaving" (11). Muhammad Hedayetullah states that Kabír was probably "unable to read or write" (132) and describes Kabír's style as "unpolished" (134). Hedayetullah finds evidence in Kabír's words:

I touch not ink nor paper,

nor take pen in my hand;

of the greatness of the four ages
Kabir has given instruction
with his lips

(qtd. in Hedayetullah 132)

Hess also notes this same poem as evidence of Kabir's illiteracy:

I don't touch ink or paper,
this hand never grasped a pen.
The greatness of four ages
Kabir tells with his mouth alone.

(Grace 109)

Vaudeville believes "there is no evidence that Kabir ever composed a single work or even wrote a single verse" (109), although she says that it is most likely that Kabir's poems and songs were composed orally and transcribed by his disciples. Scott explains:

Unfortunately, we know of no anthology of works directly from Kabir's own hand.
Indeed, it seems likely that he never wrote anything, whether due to his supposed illiteracy... or because of his professed disdain for books, as for all written matter. (66)

It would appear then, that placing Kabir beside more literary poets and evaluating his work according to usual literary methods or without a proper understanding of his mystic life, cannot be productive.

Moreover, not only was Kabir most likely illiterate, but it appears he was actually antagonistic towards language. Vaudeville goes so far as to say that Kabir had "contempt for the written word" (110) and Dwyer says the poet admitted that "in the long run all his efforts to give words to his experience of God must come to naught" (69). Through his poetry, Kabir often expresses frustration at having to communicate his spiritual truth through words alone:
Where's the need of words
When love thrills the heart
("Says Kabir" 54)

This concept is frequent in Kabir's work. He comments:

Says Kabir, I have no words
To describe that which He is.
("Says Kabir" 75)

The poet recognises a difference between "words", or knowledge gained from books, and "love" or ma'rifat. He finds poetry meaningless and believes there are no words to describe mystic experience. He asks:

shall I flail with words when love has made the space inside me full of light? (Fish 7)

Music becomes more capable of imparting spiritual experience than words. Verma says Kabir "chanted his rapturous songs of divine love at the heart of common life" ("Says Kabir" xii). References to music are frequent throughout Kabir's poetry. He exclaims:

I can't forget Him at all
For His music reverberates
In my ears all the time.
Says Kabir my heart's mad
I'm lost in that great bliss
Which surounds all joy N grief. [sic]
("Says Kabir" 44)

For Kabir, spiritual life and the realisation of eventual death are more important than poetry. Simply put, he says "Lyricists die reciting rhymes" ("Says Kabir" 32). Kabir's spiritual reality was much greater than his interest in writing.

As it was for Rumi, so too for Kabir, language was an inadequate tool. Kabir was often preoccupied with the divisive nature of language. He queries:
Same are the river and its waves.
What's the difference between the two?
'Tis water when breakers rise
And same water when they fall.
How will you tell them apart?
Just because 'tis called a wave
Isn't it water any more?
("Says Kabir" 73)

Kabir uses the symbol of water to examine the inadequacy of language in describing "mystical" knowledge. The divisive nature of language, which distinguishes between the "river" and its "waves", cannot communicate gnosis without causing misunderstanding.

Elsewhere, Kabir continues this theme:

Pitcher dipped in water has
Water within and without.
Pray do not give it a name,
It can be misunderstood.
("Says Kabir" 42)

Kabir's pitcher symbolises the human form filled with divine grace. He suggests that there is no difference between the energy within man and the energy surrounding him.

Kabir was always careful not to give God a fixed name or form. He declares:

We mustn't give it a name, lest silly people start talking...
(Fish 4)

The poet explains that God should not be named, and uses the analogy of an Indian wife traditionally avoiding the use of her husband’s name. He states:

Name you may not chant
If love's in your heart.
Fond wife worships her
Husband, names him not.

("Says Kabir" 107)

It appears that Kabir's deity is nameless in order to avoid the multiplication of "vulgarities", or the division of God into different categories according to different religions. He says:

What to say of speech, O friend!
Through talk meaning gets eclipsed
And vulgarities multiply

("Says Kabir" 95)

For Kabir, therefore, language was not a sufficient tool for the communication of *ma'rifat*. In this he is directly comparable to Rumi. Kabir was aware of his incapacity to express fully his spiritual truth. He illustrates the inadequacy of poetry:

If I made the seven seas my ink,
and all the trees of the forest my pen,
And the whole expanse of the earth my paper,
still I could not write the greatness of Râm!

(qtd. in Vaudeville 177)

These concepts appear throughout Kabir's work:

Kabir says,
I've said and I've said.
I'm tired of saying.

(Grace xxvi)

Despite this awareness, the poet persisted in his endeavour to express himself. He knew that:

Those who went never came back
none ever came back to tell about it! (qtd. in Vaudeville 179)
Nevertheless, he continued his efforts to transmit *ma'rifat*.

Kabir's incapacity to communicate his *ma'rifat* led him to the subject of silence. As Rumi spent much time describing his state of silence, so did Kabir. Kabir advises his reader to:

Make silence your earrings, mercy your bag, and meditation your begging cup

(qtd. in Scott 203)

The reader is also asked to:

Meditate on God

And be tight-lipped

Shut the outer gates

Open inner doors

("Says Kabir" 109)

In this poem, the "inner doors" refer to the house of the soul. Kabir requests the reader to be "tight-lipped" or quiet. His concern for achieving mental silence is constant throughout his poetry. Speech and words are often considered a waste of time. He reflects:

Why don't you meditate in silence?

Should you meet a saint, exchange a few words,

Should you meet a sinner, then keep quiet.

Conversation with a sage is a real boon –

Talking with fools is a mere waste of time!

Says Kabir, it's the half-empty pot that makes noise:

Once full, it's heard no more.

(qtd. in Vaudeville 240-241)

Kabir suggests that the "saint" speaks only "few words" and that only "the half-empty pot", or the one with no spiritual substance, is heard "making noise". Scott declares:
There is evidently much that must remain obscure in Kabír's attempts to describe his 
experiences, for they were of a fundamentally mystical quality and ultimately 
inexpressible. (39)

The inexpressible nature of mystic experience appears to set it in opposition to poetry, 
yet these poets struggle between silence and poetry in a space where the latter must 
stretch to its limits.²

Through simple language Kabír effectively exposes the limits of human reason 
and intellectualism. He constantly advocates experience as opposed to mental 
comprehension. He says:

O Qázi,
what is this book you are explaining?
Day after day, you kept reading it
yet of the true Path, you know nothing.
(qtd. in Vaudeville 226)

The poet indicates that books do not contain the essence of spiritual knowledge. He says:

The Sacred Books of the East are nothing but words.
I looked through their covers one day sideways.
What Kabír talks about is only what he has lived through.
If you have not lived through something, it is not true.

(Ecstatic 37)

According to Kabír, the intellect alone cannot fathom spiritual reality. It is only 
 experiential knowledge or ma'rifat which attains truth. Vaudeville states plainly that 
Kabír "says the intellect is severely limited" (169) and Dwyer describes the poet as 
"foremost a poet and mystic, not an intellectual" (25). It appears, therefore, that Kabír 
was as antagonistic towards philosophy as Rúmi was. Kabír states:
But for water nothing's there...

Purana and Koran are just words
I've ransacked them, I know
From experience, says Kabir,
All else is but make-believe

("Says Kabir" 40)

The "Purana" of the Hindus and the "Koran" of the Muslims are considered to be just words. The poet asks:

What value reading, what memorizing,
What listening to the Veda and Puránas?
What avails reading and listening,
If the Experience is not attained?

(qtd. in Scott 198)

Kabir suggests that all sacred books are limited because they do not deliver reality to readers. In the end, only death comes to the learned Brahmin. The poet says:

Brahmins die reciting Ved.

("Says Kabir" 32)

This is also the fate of intellectuals. He declares:

Brainy men who talk
Wisdom also die.

("Says Kabir" 7)

This attack against the rational faculty of human beings is directly related to the poet's experience of the state of expanded consciousness. The poet realises that his readers will not comprehend the nature of heightened perception through the mental faculty alone. Dwyer describes this as "the point where language breaks down, on the threshold of supernatural experience" (72). There is a sense of futility found in the poet's efforts. He complains:
I say what I see
You quote from the books.
Simple are my words
You startle and vex.
Keep awake, I urge
You sleep all the time.
("Says Kabír" 3)

The poet illustrates the distance between his *ma'rifat* and traditional knowledge. He urges the reader to "keep awake" but there is a final sense of inevitable distance between the poet and his reader.

Like Rúmi, Kabír was fully conscious of the disparity between his perceptive capacity and that of his readers and for this reason he did not expect them to understand his poetry. In the following *dohá* we are reminded of Rúmi's reference to his "own country" of kindred spirits. Kabír says:

my language is of the east:
none can understand me –
He alone will understand my language
who really is an Easterner!

(qtd. in Vaudeville 195)

It would appear that Kabír's use of the word "Easterner" in this poem is not meant to refer to every person born in an Eastern country, or in the East of India, but to a particular kind of person who has attained *ma'rifat* or gnosis. Vaudeville argues that, for Kabír, the "Eastern" language meant "a cryptic language, understandable only to the Yogís and Siddhas..." (119). Kabír explains:
Kabir, he who has been enlightened understands,
By the guru's grace he perceives all.
(qtd. in Scott 195)

The poet speaks to the "enlightened" and to the saints:

Pandits sat and read the law,
babbled of what they never saw.
Who understands Kabir's rhyme
is a true saint to the end of time.

(Gravity 64)

Kabir did not expect the majority of his readers or listeners to comprehend his meaning, although it is to the majority that he tried to communicate. Scott explains that the "company of true believers (the satsang)" (213) is symbolised in Kabir's work by the sandalwood tree. It was this group of enlightened saints whose company Kabir sought. He refers to this group in this dohá:

Kabir, just as the fragrance of the sandal tree pervades the dhak-palas,
It has made all the surrounds it like itself.
(qtd. in Scott 214)

In the same way that Rumi refers to the "unripe" readers, Kabir requests the reader to look within until the time is right for the moment of heightened perception. He advises:

Stay at home and you'll get
Everything when time is ripe.
("Says Kabir" 81)

Scott summarises this situation by saying, "In order for the guru's voice to be heard there must be a prior gift of perception and this gift comes by divine grace. If it is given, the Word may be perceived, but if it is not there is nothing a person can do" (194) [italics inserted]. This concept appears to have been voiced by both Rumi and Kabir.
During his own lifetime Kabír was "physically maltreated" (Machwe 13) and not honoured as a great poet. Vaudeville believes that "No Indian mystic was so much quoted and misquoted, so lavishly praised – and so misunderstood" (35) as Kabír. It appears that the poet was well aware of his situation. He says:

A lotus has blossomed within, where brahmin resides;
Where the bee-like man was imprisoned, but will any one understand?

(qtd. in Scott 219)

Kabír seems to have accepted his predicament of being unappreciated and misunderstood. The riddles inherent in this poet's work cannot be appreciated until his mystic life is taken into full consideration. Dwyer believes that "some familiarity with yog as propounded by Patanjali and Suátmárám, as well as the exposition of the Náth sect is essential for understanding Kabír" (12-13). The poets of this thesis express similar perceptive insight and their poetry and ideas are, therefore, best appreciated through comparative studies of their work beside that of their kindred spirits whether from East or West.
Matsuo Bashó, like the other poets in this study, acknowledged the inadequacy of words in communicating spiritual experience. Often, he expressed frustration at the apparent futility of his creative work. At the same time, being supported by both the aesthetically sensitive culture of Japan, and the artistic element within Zen, he became attached to poetic life. For Bashó, the state of silence was the source of creativity and yet, as a poet he found it difficult to maintain that silence, becoming distracted by creativity itself. He moved away from intellectualism toward simplicity, "lightness" and silence. He seems to have recognised a gap between his own state of heightened consciousness and that of his readers, but still attempted to communicate gnosis through the creation of poetry.

Bashó often expresses his realisation of the inadequacy of language in the communication of spiritual experience. Through prose and poetry, especially in *The Narrow Roads of the Interior*, the poet regularly describes a state of wordlessness. During his visit to Mount Nikkó, he finds it futile and somehow irrelevant to use words. He writes:

> ... the mountain is now the seat of the most sacred of all shrines, and its benevolent power prevails throughout the land, embracing the entire people, like the bright beams of the sun. To say more about the shrine would be to violate its holiness.

    It was with awe
    That I beheld
    Fresh leaves, green leaves
    Bright in the sun. (*Narrow* 100)
At the point of epiphany, the poet turns from prose to poetry, creating what is termed haibun. Yet very little is said in this poem. Everything is simply "fresh", "green" and "bright", as if the poet restrains himself from further expression. Bashō suggests that words are not adequate to describe either the beauty of nature or the truth of mystic experience. He ponders:

> Were these islands created by the Great God of the Mountains, in the distant Age of the Gods? Ah! Who could possibly do justice with his brush to this wonderful divine work of the Creator of the Universe or presume to describe it adequately in words!

(qtd. in Britton 44)

The poet often expresses this predicament. He remarks:

> ... who else could have created such beauty but the great god of nature himself? My pen strove in vain to equal this superb creation of divine artifice. (Narrow 116)

In one of his critical commentaries, Bashō evaluates an anthology of poetry and comments that some haiku are overwritten. He asks "Is there any good in saying everything?" (qtd. in Ueda, The Master 162). Ueda suggests that in Bashō's opinion "the very merit of the haiku form was that its extreme brevity enhanced poetic suggestiveness" (The Master 162). Ueda explains that an overwritten haiku "does not induce [the reader] to undergo the experience himself" (The Master 162). It appears that the aim of these poets was to create poetry almost capable of awakening the reader to an experience beyond words and reason.

Despite his love for poetry, at times Bashō expresses a certain feeling of artistic futility. While he is confident of his talents as a poet, he also criticises his poetic life. He writes:
Saying "the moon and snow",
Idled away in arrogance
Till the end of the year.

*(Haiku 51)*

Bashó indicates that he is arrogantly passing his life away by writing poetry about the "moon and snow". Oseko comments on the following haiku:

My haikai (haiku) is just like a fireplace in summer
and a fan in winter.

*(Haiku Intro 4i)*

Oseko believes that Bashó compares his haiku to "unnecessary objects", but the scholar also insists that this poem still retains an air of the poet's belief in the "high artistic value" of his work. Often the poet's frustration at not being able to express himself fully becomes evident. Bashó writes:

If I'd the knack
I'd sing like
cherry flakes falling

*(Love 32)*

This is translated also by Oseko:

If I had a good voice,
I would like to recite.
Cherry blossoms falling.

*(Haiku 97)*

The poet desires a "good voice" or the "knack" to express the beauty of nature, but he also describes this desire as "stupidity". He writes:

My stupidity in repeating "the moon and flowers",
Should be pricked with a needle
As we enter the coldest season. *(Haiku 257)*
It must be said that in Bashó, "an unquenchable love of poetry" (Bashó, *Narrow* 71) is found and this is almost equally as intense as the poet's desire for mystic experience. The poet hopes to attain meditative silence through the creative process itself because his creative process involves meditation. This becomes problematic for the poet because while he seeks to create in order to experience a state of silence, he is, at the same time, disturbed by his creative output. He writes about his desire to create:

> It must be admitted, however, that there were times when it sank into such dejection that it was almost ready to drop its pursuit, or again times when it was so puffed up with pride that it exulted in vain victories over others. Indeed, ever since it began to write poetry, it has never found peace with itself... (*Narrow* 71)

The poet's use of the pronoun "it" and his avoidance of the personal pronoun "I", reflects his understanding of creative inspiration coming to him from somewhere other than from his own emotional or intellectual self. He was, nevertheless, so attached to his creative life that when poetic inspiration came upon him, he became so focused on the creative output that he struggled to maintain his original meditative silence. This dilemma seems to be particular to Bashó and due to the nature of his mystic life.

A state of meditative silence is certainly felt throughout Bashó's work. In Chapter Three this silence, referred to as *sabi*, was discussed in some detail. The poet manages successfully to transfer his state of silence to the reader. He writes:

> The voice of a cuckoo
> Dropped to the lake
> Where it lay floating
> On the surface

(*Silence* 34)

In this haiku, Bashó silences even the solitary sound of the cuckoo by laying it upon the still lake. Many of Bashó's haiku are illustrated by the poet. We find him travelling with
"ink and brushes" (Britton 28) not only for calligraphy but also for illustration. He was, therefore, like Rúmi and Kabír, moving beyond words into other less logocentric fields of art. It seems to have been Bashó's calling to share his silence with readers. He says:

I tried to give up poetry and remain silent, but every time I did so a poetic sentiment would solicit my heart and something would flicker in my mind.

(qtd. in Ueda, *The Master* 169)

In Bashó's understanding, spiritual experience, or the attainment of a state of meditative silence, should have taken priority over creative life, but he seems to have been captured by poetry. He recognised this as a problem and his astute awareness of this predicament makes him comparable to the other poets in this study: Bashó did not lose the understanding that his creativity came to him from his state of silence. It was, as Suzuki states, a dilemma of "how to communicate in silence without going out of it" (29).

As a result of needing to maintain a state of silence, Bashó opposed excess mental activity and intellectualism. His love for the "artless" poem, or poetry free of mental formulation and showing no signs of deliberate construction, became transferred into his concept of "lightness" (Ueda, *The Master* 158). At the time of developing these concepts, Bashó ceased writing critical commentaries on poetry (Ueda, *The Master* 154). He moved away from mental complexity and analysis, and closer to simplicity. He writes:

Not knowing

The name of the tree,

I stood in the flood

Of its sweet smell.

(*Silence* 19)
In this haiku, the poet does not care for names. He recognises the beauty of simplicity. This is felt again in the following haiku:

Villagers singing
While planting rice, are as graceful
As poets in the capital.

(Haiku 105)

These poems exhibit a theory of simplicity in which knowledge of intellectual things is considered inferior to such things as "singing" and simple fragrance. Bashó refers to his theory of lightness as that of "Karumi" (Bashó, Haiku Intro. 4g). Suzuki has examined the influence of Zen on Bashó's movement towards simplicity (87), while Ueda explains that for Bashó, the simplicity inherent within a poem reflected "the degree of knowledge" attained (The Master 32). Therefore, Bashó's concept of lightness may be considered as a spiritual theory of poetry. According to the Zen Master, Nanrei Kobori, Zen is "Not giving in to that temptation to formulate" (qtd. in Franck 139). The simple form of haiku is, therefore, an appropriate vehicle for expressing the "typical Zen experience" (Stryk, Zen xix).

Despite this connection between Zen and Bashó's haiku, Bashó himself criticises those who use haiku to preach Zen philosophy. In a letter to one Kyokusui, Bashó writes the following:

A high priest says "A superficial knowledge of Zen causes great harm". I appreciate his comment.

Looking at lightning,
The one who does not talk wisely,
Is honorable. (Haiku 220)

Bashó implies that haiku is not a vehicle for philosophy. For Bashó, the purpose of haiku is to encapsulate a moment of intensity and impart the experience to the reader. Stryk
explains that Bashó renovated the haiku poem which was "expiring of artificiality" (Love 9), having been subjected to royal rules of formation, and tradition. Bashó took haiku out of the hands of intellectuals, at times inserted his own colloquial language, and injected haiku with simplicity. For example:

On a withered bough

a crow

alone is perching.

(Narrow 5)

Yuasa compares this haiku of Bashó with the work of Imagist poet William Carlos Williams and concludes that Williams' poems do not achieve the same result as Bashó's because Williams relies upon the readers "logical reasoning" (5). Yuasa points out Williams' use of the phrase "so much depends upon" and contrasts this to Bashó's avoidance of reasoning language. An echo of Ernest Fenollosa's examination of the visual and symbolic nature of the "Chinese Written Character" is heard at this point. Fenollosa believed that "the moment we use the copula (is), the moment we express subjective inclusions, poetry evaporates" (28). Oseko quotes the following poems of Bashó as examples of the poet's lightness, or avoidance of thought. The first describes a scene with slight amusement but no analysis. Bashó writes:

Fireplace opening

The plasterer is getting old

With frost in his sidelocks.

(Haiku 273)

Another relates a narrative that eschews metaphoric interpretation. The poet observes:

In the saddle of a horse,

A small boy nestsles quietly,

While his parents pulling out daikon. (radish) [sic] (Haiku 286)
There is no hint of reasoning or philosophy in these poems. There is only lightness in the beauty of the poet's detached observance.

Rúmi and Kabír recognise the existence of a gap in perceptive capacity between their readers and themselves, and it seems that Bashó also realises this. Bashó has been portrayed as a wanderer who did not comfortably fit within the norms of society. At one point he is even described as "a social misfit, an introverted dreamer and an eternal wanderer" (Ueda, *The Master* 177). Oseko, commenting on the following haiku, believes that Bashó was sketching the "road of life and art". The poet says:

> This road!
> No one goes along it.
> An autumn evening.

(*Haiku 325*)

Metaphorically, it would appear that this haiku makes a statement concerning the existing gap between Bashó's knowledge or perception, or way of life, and that of his readers. The poet also seems to indicate that his readers will not fully comprehend his poetry unless they have already taken to the same life of meditative silence and creativity. He writes:

> After sleeping on your journey
> Then, read my haiku.
> The autumn wind.

(*Haiku 82*)

Bashó's "journey" is ultimately one in search of mystic experience and inspiration, so he frequently employs the metaphor of the journey to represent spiritual life. His haiku are pregnant with meaning despite their apparent simplicity. The aim of his journey is always to attain a high level of spiritual life, but he recognises the importance of
attempting to share whatever insight he gains along the way. Oseko translates Bashó's own statement concerning this subject:

Spirit should be held aloft with highly elevated poetical elegance, and return to the secular life of the ordinary people. (*Haiku Intro. 3h*)

Clearly, Bashó makes a distinction between himself and "the ordinary people" whose perceptive capacity is not heightened, or elevated, like his own.

This instinctive and religiously responsible notion of having to return from a state of expanded consciousness in order to communicate the experience, is a concept crucial to this thesis. It would appear that this instinct is responsible for the existence of all sacred scriptures. It is because of this phenomenon also that we find statements such as this:

All masters have discouraged their disciples from pious as well as secular reading, urging them to concentrate upon zazen (sitting in Zen) or koan training to gain satori. And yet the fact is that numberless Zenists have had an awakening while reading a Buddhist *sutra* or a Zen writing, or hearing a *sutra* recited or listening to words uttered in a *mondo* (Zen question and answer). (Stryk, *Zen* xviii)

It is the experience of expanded consciousness which gives rise to the creation of sacred scriptures; and it is the genius of the "perceptive poet" which enables the reader to glimpse the reality of the existence of such genuinely heightened states of perception. It appears that Bashó, like Rúmi and Kabír, was impelled to "return to the secular life of the ordinary people" and attempt to communicate his state of *satori* through poetry. The communication process itself seems to have been the more meaningful and poignant part of his mystic life. Without an understanding of these poets' genuine mystic experiences, their poetry loses the majority of its meaning. Similarly, with a closer comprehension of
The state of expanded consciousness and the spiritual concerns of these "perceptive poets", their poetry collectively gains significance.
Blake

Blake's poetic world is described by Lincoln as one which contains "ambiguous syntax and elusive ironies" (Lincoln, *Innocence* 15). While being aware of the limitations of language it seems this poet enjoyed exploring the potential ambiguity inherent in his craft. He adopted the problem of linguistic ambiguity itself and made it his spiritual mission to wield a sword of language in the face of reason. Through his efforts, he strove to take his readers beyond language and reason towards a state of acknowledging the inadequacy of both. Blake explored the limitations of the uninspired intellect by adopting the premise of his intellectual opponents and eventually defeating them. Like the other poets in this study, Blake was constantly aware of an enormous gap existing between himself and his readers, and realised that language would never bridge that distance.

While Blake taught himself various languages and indeed appears to have had a fascination for language (Hilton 15), it is also true that, as a number of scholars have pointed out, Blake seems to have found the nature of language deceptive. The poet was not formally educated and appears quite proud of this fact. He declares:

Thank God I never was sent to school
To be Flogd into following the Style of a Fool.

(Erdman, *Selected* 288)

Despite his lack of formal education, his keen intelligence found the deceptive nature of language intriguing and alluring. He is described as "the trickster poet" who realised that in a fallen world "deep dissimulation is the only defence an honest man has left" (Easson, "Jerusalem" 311). Parisi believes that for Blake:
The history of language was seen as a devolution from the pristine communion of Adam and God, to the 'hieroglyphicks' of the Egyptians, then to the parables of the Hebrews, and finally to the rational, discursive language of the classical times. (73)

Despite Blake's awareness of the deceptive nature of language, he became determined to shape language until it suited his purpose.

Through his early *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, Blake adopted the problem of ambiguous language together with its moral, religious and ethical connotations and employed these problems for his own means. Heather Glen notes that Blake's early poetry appears to be concerned particularly with Christian language. In his poem "The Human Abstract", previously quoted in Chapter Two in relation to Blake's dislike for emotionalism, Blake toys with the words "mercy" and "pity". He removes them from their Christian moral context, examines them and returns them to the Christian reader. He declares:

Pity would be no more
If we did not make somebody Poor:
And Mercy no more could be,
If all were as happy as we;

(*Songs*, Song 47; 1-4)

According to Glen, Blake felt that language had "become disturbingly ambivalent and 'cheating'" (59). Again in "The Chimney Sweeper" poems, the word "duty" appears to come under the poet's scrutiny. Blake writes:

And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm,
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

(*Songs*, Song 12; 21-24)
The chimney sweeper character, fulfilling his expected role, unexpectedly meets with a life of misery in the second poem. The character says:

Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil'd among the winter snow:
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

(Songs, Song 37; 5-8)

The factual statement in the first poem "Tom was happy & warm", therefore becomes transparent in the second poem as the chimney sweeper indicates that his happiness was illusory. The statement of fact "if all do their duty, they need not fear harm" also becomes exposed as fallacy.

Some scholars have gone so far as to insinuate that much of Blake's poetry is purposefully meaningless and that Blake's whole intention was to create ambiguity. In discussing Blake's poem "The Tyger", for example, Jerome J. McGann concludes that "The poem has no meaning" (12). At the opposite end of the scale, however, scholars such as Nelson Hilton argue that "ambiguity is not an appropriate word to apply to Blake", and that Blake "condemns ambiguous words” as “blasphemous” (10). This opinion appears to place Blake at the same level as his apparent enemies Newton, Locke and Bacon, who strived for "unambiguous, univocal language" (Hilton 13). Regardless of these differing opinions as to the ambiguous nature of Blake's language, it is certain that Blake demonstrates awareness of the inadequacies of language, and with conscious effort explores and exposes this issue itself.

In The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, the poet baffles the reader with his "Proverbs of Hell" which appear, on the contrary, to contain the poet's unorthodox
spiritual wisdom. This wisdom of "Hell" is apparent in some of the more simple statements. For example:

The most sublime act is to set another before you.

(pl. 7; 17)

In these same "proverbs", however, the poet declares:

Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not be believ'd.

(pl. 10; 69)

This peculiar statement, when analysed in relation to the poet's incommunicable gnosis, becomes more comprehensible. The poet declares that "Truth" of spiritual life is experiential. It cannot be communicated with words. If it is understood at all, then it will be through personal experience and therefore essentially "believ'd". In this same poem, Blake's "Angel" is satirised as one who reacts rigidly when hearing the poet's gnosis:

The Angel hearing this became almost blue, but mastering himself he grew yellow, & at last white, pink & smiling... (pl. 23; 2-3)

The angel then becomes "a Devil". The poet toys with religious language in order to expose Christian judgment in the reader. Through the manipulation of language, Blake forges ahead in his mission to communicate spiritual truth as far as his craft will allow.

The poet's activity in the literary and artistic realms was a spiritual pursuit and, as such, his attitude was one of unwavering determination. While Rúmi, Kabir and Bashó express frustration at having to employ language in order to communicate their spirituality, Blake enthusiastically adopts this mission as his spiritual goal. He continues to struggle with his spiritual-artistic mission even though he apparently writes "against [his] Will" (Keynes 55), and sometimes complains about his writing life. For example:

I labour incessantly & accomplish not one half of what I intend....

(Keynes 34)
I was commanded by my Spiritual friends to bear all, to be silent, & to go thro' all without murmuring...

(Keynes 58)

His literature and art denote a spiritual mode of perception which, Blake felt, should not be challenged. He declares:

It is the Greatest of Crimes to Depress True Art & Science.

(Keynes 121)

This mode of perception is associated with the "lost Art of the Greeks" (Keynes 6). In a letter to Rev. Dr. Trusler in 1799 he writes:

The Nature of my Work is Visionary or Imaginative; it is an Endevour [sic] to Restore what the Ancients call'd the Golden Age.

(qtd. in Hirsch 293)

"True Art" for Blake is that which accompanies heightened perception or genuine inspiration.

A number of scholars (Hirsch 116; Sloss & Wallis viii) have argued that Blake's poems are frustrated expressions of the poet's spiritual struggles. While Blake's characters do not necessarily need to be translated from his poetry to his life, there does seem to be a great deal of evidence to support these arguments. The irony of the mute poet, so clearly felt in the individual poems of the other poets in this thesis, is explored in a much larger way in the whole of Blake's work. Hirsch, among others, argues that "Blake's own tumultuous spiritual history is a central theme of The Four Zoas and Jerusalem" (vii). Hirsch also believes that "The substance of Blake's work from 1790 to the end of his life consists largely of self-commentary" (4). If this opinion is accepted,
then the "Voice of the Ancient Bard", heard in *America a Prophecy*, becomes the frustrated voice of the poet himself:

The stern Bard ceas'd, asham'd of his own song; enrag'd he swung
His harp aloft sounding, then dash'd its shining frame against
A ruin'd pillar in glitt'ring fragments;
silent he turn'd away,
And wander'd down the vales of Kent in sick & drear lamentings.

(pl. 2; 18-21)

While this may be the frustrated voice of one disillusioned with prophetic intuition, it is also apparent that this poetic extract expresses frustration of one in the midst of the creative process. The "Bard" is "asham'd of his own song" and the "harp" is "dash'd" against the pillar. Parisi explores similar ideas of the poet's dilemma. Speaking of Blake, Parisi says:

He knows that he ought to be able to forge the image of himself and his world as he would have them, but the danger constantly facing him is that he will not be able to take the task firmly in hand or to escape the burden of it. (109)

This burden of having to communicate spiritual gnosis despite realising the impossibility of the task is a characteristic common to each of the poets in this thesis.

As Rúmi and Kabír attempted to move beyond language towards music, and Bashó moved towards visual art forms, Blake, similarly, extended his creative capacity beyond language into both the visual arts and music. It must be recognised that Blake, the artist, is equally as significant as Blake the poet, since all of his poems are accompanied by designs which assist in conveying meaning. Parisi examines Blake's *Gates of Paradise* and makes the point that Blake chose to work with emblems because this mode gave him greater capacity to communicate spiritual matters (73). This suggests the absolute connection between Blake's spiritual vocation and both his literary
and artistic pursuits. Despite Blake's apparent fascination for language, it seems, in fact, to be the direct simplicity of inspiration which appealed more to this poet than complexity of thought. In S. Foster Damon's words:

Music is the most direct communication with Eternity, as it does not utilize the intervention of words or images. Therefore while poetry and painting are prayer, the Bread of life, music is the Wine. (289)

Damon believes that for Blake, music was greater than language. The prosodic elements of Blake's lyrical poetry demonstrate his awareness of musicality. The poet apparently had a natural capacity for music. John Thomas Smith says:

...and although, according to his confession, he was entirely unacquainted with the science of music, his ear was so good, that his tunes were sometimes most singularly beautiful, and noted down by musical professors. (qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 17)

"A Cradle Song", in Songs of Innocence and of Experience for example, reflects the poet's keen sense of music through its simple melodic rhythm and simple lyrics. Its title clearly indicates that it is a "Song":

Sweet dreams form a shade.
O'er my lovely infant's head:
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams,
By happy silent moony beams.
(Songs, Song 16; 1-4)

Noteworthy is Blake's use of the word "moony", sweetly adding a last necessary beat to sustain the rhythm. Through eight stanzas the poet continues this melodic, lullaby rhythm. Through regular rhythms and regular rhyming schemes Blake achieves musicality in most of the poems in Songs of Innocence and of Experience. Damon explains that music is portrayed by Blake as a daughter of "Job in his Prosperity", while visual art and poetry are portrayed as sons. Music is wordless and does not involve the
thinking process, and being such, it is beyond the mind. Damon also explains that Blake was fond of simple melody as opposed to complexity of harmony. This, together with the simplicity on the surface of his early poetry and his concern for the state of innocence, reveals a super-intelligent mind which recognised the need to move beyond itself. Emerson reflects this concept in his statement:

It is a secret which every intellectual man quickly learns, that, beyond the energy of his possessed and conscious intellect, he is capable of a new energy (as of an intellect doubled on itself).... (218)

The intellect of Blake similarly recognised its own incapacity.

While Blake did not speak overtly about achieving a state of mental silence, he strove to impart to the reader a momentary glimpse of the inadequacy of the intellect. While he was aware of the importance of moving beyond mental thoughts, his poetic method was different from traditional, Christian mystics in their resort to the way of negation (Armstrong 27). The via negativa (apophatic way), or way of negation, is a method of defeating the intellect which involves the concentration of attention upon what God is not, as opposed to what he may be (Happold 63). The human mind is, in this case, considered incapable of describing God, thus God becomes "divine darkness" or the "cloud of unknowing" (King 21). Blake does not employ this Christian mystic method, and Désirée Hirst suggests that, as an artist and as a rebel against Puritanism, this path was not suitable for him because it would have included asceticism and the rejection of images (Riches 304). Instead, Blake tackled the problem of the uninspired, spiritually impoverished Western mind by absorbing the problem itself in order to expose it.

Through Blake's technique of adopting his opponents’ ideas and theories, and winding them into knots, he attempted to silence the mind of the reader. Hirsch
describes this technique as the "quietly satirical one of adopting the opponent's own premises and then disclosing the dead end to which they lead" (10). This technique is particularly noticeable in Blake's early work, *There is No Natural Religion*. Blake begins by stating the given intellectual opinion that:

Man cannot naturally Perceive, but through his natural or bodily organs.

(A; 5)

He continues logically until he reaches a point which expands the first statement. That is:

Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception, he perceives more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover. (B; 1-2)

In this work Blake uses keen intellectual insight to expose the folly of the unenlightened intellect itself. Hirsch believes that Blake "consciously exploits explosive materials" (184). Blake's poetry attacks intellectual opinions lacking in spiritual gnosis. In this way he indirectly criticises the acquisition of mental knowledge in contrast to the understanding gained through spiritual experience. While his poetry is, indeed, highly intellectual at points, simultaneously it acknowledges the existence of a creative force beyond the intellect and emotion. This acknowledgement, however, is not intellectual, but experiential. It should be noted at this point that Blake distinguishes sharply between uninspired intellect devoid of spiritual experience, and intellect combined with spiritual knowledge which appears to relate more to the character Urthona.

Investigating Blake's opinion of the human intellect is a study of a "mental prince" (O'Percival qtd. in O'Neill, *Critics* 33) endowed with "acute logical talent" (Hirsch 299) so intense that it perceived its own potential destructive capacity. His constant fight against single-minded reason devoid of spirituality and symbolised by figures such as Locke and Newton, and his attack against the religion of Deism,
illustrate his passionate concern for what may simply be described as the destructive nature of ego isolated from spiritual life. For Blake this concern was even greater than for Rûmi, Kabîr or Bashô, whose cultures were not antagonistic towards spirituality. In this battle, Blake faced enormous opposition. His poetry and prose is often fuelled by his reactions to uninspired comments made by various intellectuals. For example:

You don't believe I wont attempt to make ye
You are asleep I wont attempt to wake ye
Sleep on Sleep on while in your pleasant dreams
Of Reason you may drink of Life's clear streams.
Reason and Newton, they are quite two things
For so the Swallow & the Sparrow sings
Reason says Miracle Newton says Doubt –
Aye thats the way to make all Nature out
("You don't believe" 1-7)

Blake's notion of "reason" is associated with an enlightened science having nothing to do with Newton's science. For Blake, "reason says Miracle" in the same way as his own reasoning capacity concludes that "Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception". Unenlightened scientific ideas become reduced to "sand" beside the brighter glory of Blake's enlightened science. He says:

Mock on, Mock on Voltaire, Rousseau
Mock on, Mock on: 'tis all in vain!
You throw the sand against the wind
And the wind blows it back again.

And every sand becomes a Gem
Reflected in the beams divine
Blown back they blind the mocking Eye
But still in Israel's paths they shine.

The Atoms of Democritus
And Newton's Particles of light
are sands upon the Red sea shore
Where Israel's tents do shine so bright.

("Mock on Mock on" 1-13)

Blake's imagery suggests that forces of the "divine" and nature are stronger than the human hand which throws "the sand against the wind" in effect challenging its power. The wind and sun blow the sand back to "blind the mocking Eye" of the unenlightened scientific observer. The science of "Atoms" and "Particles" is reduced to "sand" but at the same time this science supports Blake's greater science in which "every sand becomes a Gem". For Blake science only demonstrates the existence of a greater spiritual science.

In Blake's poem *Milton*, many passages derive their subject matter from the basic problem Blake had with the uninspired rational faculty. Towards the end of the poem, Ololon speaks:

... Of these Religions, how is this thing? this Newtonian Phantasm
This Voltaire & Rousseau: this Hume & Gibbon &
Bolingbroke,
This Natural Religion! this impossible absurdity

(pl. 40; 11-13)

Through Ololon, Blake attacks unenlightened science, calling it absurd. According to Blake, science which deletes spiritual life is incomplete. Milton's answer to Ololon is
drawn from this criticism of uninspired mental life. The passage is long but particularly relevant. The passage follows:

The Negation is the Spectre; the Reasoning Power in Man
This is a false body: an Incrustation over my Immortal Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated....

To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration
To cast off Bacon, Locke & Newton from Albion's covering
To take off his filthy garments & clothe him with Imagination
To caste aside from Poetry, all that is not Inspiration
That it no longer shall dare to mock with the aspersion of Madness....

To cast off the idiot Questioner who is always questioning,
But never capable of answering; who sits with a sly grin
Silent plotting when to question, like a thief in a cave;
Who publishes doubt & calls it knowledge; whose Science is Despair,
Whose pretence to knowledge is Envy, whose whole Science is
to destroy the wisdom of ages to gratify ravenous Envy....

These are the destroyers of Jerusalem....

(pl. 40; 35-60)

It can be seen through this extract that Blake's concern for the limitations of the human intellect was an all-pervading theme in his work. Blake considered man's "Reasoning Power" to be a "false body" and an obstacle or "Incrustation" preventing spiritual life.
"Inspiration" and "Imagination" are the preferable "garments" for Albion, while reason symbolised by Bacon, Locke and Newton, together with "Memory" and subconscious, are considered "filthy". Poetry must "cast off" these things and become associated only with spiritual life, not with "Madness". Blake considers the "idiot Questioner" who has no answers and whose "Science is Despair", to be one of the "Destroyers of Jerusalem" or of spiritual and creative life. Blake may not be as direct as Rúmi or Kabír in their criticism of philosophy, but the same concerns are certainly present.

Blake recognised the existence of a gap between himself and his readers in the same way as Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó. Having experienced a certain state of expanded consciousness, Blake found that his perceptive capacity was beyond that of his readers. He appears to have known that most of his readers would not perceive what he had to tell them. Thus he writes:

He's a Blockhead who wants a proof of what he can't Perceive,
And he's a Fool who tries to make such a Blockhead believe.
(qtd. in Stevenson 156)

Rather than trying to close this gap between himself and his readers, which he realised could not be done unless his readers experienced the same state of expanded consciousness as he had, he chose to baffle the intellect of his readers to the point where they must admit that the meaning in Blake’s poems is beyond mere mental comprehension. In *Milton*, for example, Blake's symbolic language is difficult to comprehend. The poet recognises this fact:

This Wine-press is call'd War on Earth, it is the Printing-Press
Of Los; and here he lays his words in order above the mortal brain
As cogs are formd in a wheel to turn the cogs of the adverse wheel.
(pl. 27; 8-10)
The poet's words are placed "in order" but "above the mortal brain". The "cogs" of the poet's work are made in such a way as to affect the "cogs" of the reader's brain. This effect is indirect and achieved through symbolism. It should be emphasised that there certainly is meaning in Blake's poetry, but not of the logical, unifying kind. Discussing the *Songs of Innocence*, Hirsch says that these works "place greater demands on the reader... not greater intellectual demands, of course, but greater imaginative and emotional ones" (43). Blake's famous statements concerning the increasingly difficult nature of his poetry make this point clear. He declares:

You say that I want somebody to Elucidate my Ideas. But you ought to know that What is Grand is necessarily obscure to Weak men. That which can be made Explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care. The wisest of the Ancients consider'd what is not too Explicit as the fittest for Instruction, because it rouzes the faculties to act. (Keynes 8)

Blake does not mention anything about the mental faculties. Readers have supposed that Blake addresses his poetry to the intellect, but it is the "intellect with imagination (Urthona)" (Hirsch 135) which Blake addresses, that is the "intellectual powers" synonymous with Rúmi's spiritual "Active Intellect".

Palmer, respectfully speaking about Blake's poems, remarks that, "To the multitude they were Unintelligible" (Keynes 177). Much less respectfully, Blake's contemporaries described the poet as having "mental delusion" (R. H. Cromek qtd. in Keynes 124), and more modern critics continue to argue the justifiable point that Blake's work is lacking in "clarity" (Butter 157) and is "uneven" (Butter 163). The most ironic point made about Blake is that his "command of language is not equal to the reach of his imagination" (Butter 163). King appears to defend the poets of this thesis when she says:
Whatever mystics try to convey about their knowledge and experience of god, however rapturously and ecstatically they express it, their vision far transcends, in fact explodes all limits of human language. (21)

Concern for the limitations of language and intellect appear to be a special dilemma inherent in the work of Blake. The fact that the state of expanded consciousness is inexpressible and that language is insufficient is not a criticism of the poet, but rather an inherent dilemma within Blake's life which itself expanded the depth of his poetry. Focusing on the methods employed by the poet in his attempts to overcome these special problems seems to be a more sympathetic avenue for scholars to take. The following chapter examines the significance of symbolism in relation to Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake in light of this dilemma concerning language and intellect.
Conclusion

As a result of the tension existing between the silent state of expanded consciousness and poetry, there has been a tendency among scholars and artists to divide the "mystics" from the "poets". The "perceptive poets" investigated in this thesis, however, were in fact motivated by mystic experience to create poetry. Poetry and art appear to represent the final stage of their mystic life. Returning to the "secular life of the ordinary people", and attempting to offer poetry, or other art objects, as proof of the state of expanded consciousness and heightened perception, is essentially a spiritual-artistic pursuit. This pursuit is characteristic of the "perceptive poet".

It has been shown in this chapter that Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake were poets who struggled within a space of silence. While silence and poetry appear to clash, it is actually this tension which forms the basis of their work. This tension is one of the most characteristic features of the "perceptive poets". It gives rise to the poetic subject, mood and tone of silence. It is the force which moves these genuine mystics beyond language and into alternative art forms, as well as to the poetic device of symbolism which is investigated in the following chapter.

This chapter has examined the poets' sceptical attitude towards language and poetry and also their criticism of philosophy and intellectualism. In summary, it can be said that the fifth main feature of the "perceptive poet" is an awareness of the limitations of both language and intellect in the communication of ma'rifat or gnosis. Furthermore, it may be said that the "perceptive poet" expresses awareness that the majority of readers
will misunderstand his poetry. As a result of these issues, the "perceptive poet" is at times reasonably antagonistic towards poetry or poetic life, and is often preoccupied with the subject of silence. Despite these dilemmas, he persists in his poetic and artistic efforts to communicate *ma'rifat* or gnosis.
1 This phrase is reminiscent of Emerson's distinction between "teachers sacred or literary" as discussed in the Introduction.

2 The symbolism employed by these poets is examined in detail in the following chapter.

3 Section on "Bashō's Haiku and his Cultural Background".

4 Noteworthy are connections between calligraphy and visual symbolics. Ernest Fenollosa believed "poetic language is always vibrant but in Chinese the visibility of the metaphor tends to raise this quality to its intensest power" (25).

5 Originally, the haiku poem of seventeen syllables performed the role of beginning a renga series of linked poems. This collective, poetic event was an activity practised by "the intellectual, aesthetic Heian courtiers" (Britton 12).

6 This is further discussed in the following chapter through an examination of the figures: Los, Urizen and Jerusalem.

7 This symbolism is examined further in the following chapter.
CHAPTER SIX

Expressing the Inexpressible:

the Perceptive Poet and the use of Symbolism

When language, asked to express inexpressible experiences... is pushed against its limitations, the outcome is the end of speech.... the poetic syntax must capitulate to silence. (Niebylski 68)

It is here, it seems to me, that imagination comes to its own. What cannot be described can be adumbrated through symbol, can be hinted at through analogies. (Brennan 38)

The mystical text... records an unverifiable area where conviction depends on the verbal genius of the mystic.... (Barnstone 22)
Introduction

In this chapter, the symbolism employed in the poetry of Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake is examined. The close connection between the heightened state of consciousness and the use of poetic symbols becomes apparent. These poets, facing the dilemma of having to express the inexpressible, firstly move towards poetry and secondly, utilise the literary device of symbolism. While they appear to be employing traditional literary techniques, it seems that this occurs mainly as a consequence of their inner spiritual life. Poetic signification is sought in order to attempt transmitting gnosis to the reader.

The poets employ similar symbols in their work and some of these have been briefly discussed in previous chapters. This chapter more closely analyses the following key symbols of the poets: Rúmi’s concept of death and his symbols of water and moon; Kabír's symbolic references to conjugal love, together with his symbols of unheard music and blossoming trees; Bashó's symbols of moon, the cuckoo and other birds; and Blake's characters of Los, Urizen and Jerusalem.

The issue of translation is of relevance. Only one of the selected poets, Blake, provides primary material in an original English form. Apart from the issue of whether translations are of genuinely original works, one is faced with the loss of poetic devices in translation. Close textual analysis of assonance, word-play, rhyme, rhythm, and other literary techniques is thus difficult to achieve. Together with this, there is also the issue of communication itself. These poets, already experiencing a state of wordlessness,
employ symbols which require a familiarity with specific cultural traditions. Underhill alludes to this problem when she says:

The mystic, too, tries very hard to tell an unwilling world his secret. But in his case, the difficulties are enormously increased. First, there is the huge disparity between his unspeakable experience and the language which will most nearly suggest it. Next, there is the great gulf fixed between his mind and the mind of the world. (76)

Despite these issues, the following discussion investigates a phenomenon whereby these poets are acted upon by their spiritual experience and driven to impart gnosis using the only tool available, language. Parrinder makes an astute observation when he declares, "Yet it is strange that mystics, with their unutterable claims, have uttered a great deal" (4). And Emerson seems to offer an explanation when he says, almost in reply, "For the soul's communication of truth is the highest event in nature..." (Essays 157). In this chapter the sixth main characteristic of the "perceptive poet" is put forward as being a final utilisation of the literary device of symbolism in the effort to transmit gnosis.
Defining Symbolism

In defining symbolism, it seems necessary to consider the Symbolists first and Mallarmé in particular. Mallarmé’s consideration of symbolism is perhaps the most well-known. His *Crisis in Verse* examines a "fundamental" (Mallarmé 2) change in French poetry, that is, a freedom of form and prosody together with an accent on "cratylism" (Porter 12) which concerns itself with the corresponding association between the sound of an object and the object itself. Mallarmé says:

> with several words the line of verse constructs a completely new word, foreign to the language and a part, it seems, of an incantation... whilst, at the same time, your recollection of the object named bathes in a new atmosphere. (10)

Porter further explains:

> Cratylism is Mallarmé’s resort – he believes the sound of an object and the object are intertwined – the shape of the letters – and the sound – and etymology innate deeper meanings (12).

Mallarmé’s symbolism therefore constitutes a semi-mystical theory concerning expression. Rather than reflecting mystic experience, however, his highly intellectual analysis of language and its limitations represents what could be described as a philosophical outlook.

In discussing the aspect of symbolism in particular, one can assert that the difference between the poets recognised as Symbolists and the poets of this thesis is that
the former represent a certain intellectual literary movement, whereas the latter employ the device of symbolism in order to communicate the experience of expanded consciousness. Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake utilise symbolism because they seek to transfer a sense of their expanded state of consciousness to the reader and this device best suits their purpose. These poets attempt to express the ineffable experience which is not only beyond words but also beyond reason and ordinary intellect. They can only impart a small portion of ma'rifat or gnosis through words, and in fact this part is merely an impression. While many poets use symbolism in their poetry, these poets use it essentially in order to share their gnosis of the divine.

Yeats and Emerson both appear to have comprehended the significant relationship between the state of expanded consciousness and symbolism. In his work on symbolism, Yeats makes an effort to distinguish between metaphor and symbol. He refers to symbolism's "element of evocation" ("Symbolism" 15) as one of its main characteristics and relates symbol to sound, colour and music (16-17). He makes reference to the "imagination" in spiritual terms and speaks of being in "profound meditation" during the process of writing "a very symbolical and abstract poem" ("Symbolism" 19). He asks the essential question:

How can the arts overcome the slow dying of men's hearts that we call the progress of the world, and lay their hands upon men's heart-strings again without becoming the garment of religion as in old times? ("Symbolism" 21)

In this excerpt, Yeats recognises a problem also identified by Emerson. For Emerson, literary symbolism is problematic because spiritual literary symbols tend to become "too stark and solid" and therefore represent the cause of "religious error" (Essays 223). The problem concerning the poetic symbol is that it may defeat its own purpose. In attempting to symbolise the inexpressible, the poet runs the risk of reducing the
inexpressible to a fixed, solid form. This is in fact a particular concern for Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake and is explored in detail in this chapter especially in relation to Blake.

Brennan is another who recognises the close association between genuine mystic experience and symbolism. He attempts a definition of "symbolism" simply because he recognises that some poets have managed to create great work through "mere juxtaposition of images". As a result of such poetry, he says, "a mood is flashed upon us suddenly, directly, and completely..." and he asks the relevant question, "Whence do these poems derive their power?" (51). His definition of the literary "symbol" is, "that image which, for the special purpose in hand, condenses in itself the greatest number of correspondences. It is the meeting-point of many analogies" (60). Brennan makes reference here to Baudelaire's spiritual-literary theory of correspondences, "things above are as the things below" (32). He also explains, however, that Baudelaire, the father of the French Symbolist movement, actually revised Boehme's Law of Signatures and "claimed it as literary property" (54), calling it the Law of Correspondences. This literary notion of correspondence therefore derives from the mystic work of Boehme.

Brennan states that "the mystics have, in the matter of formulating the law, left the poets far behind" (52). He believes the "symbolic" poem, "rises out" of the symbol as though the symbol, external to the poet (and seen in a particular manner, with a definite mystic perception) gives rise to the poem. Viewed in this manner, the relevance of the "Perceptive Faculty" in the creation of symbolic language becomes apparent. Brennan clearly notes this when he says:

The images of which the artist makes use are not invented by him; they exist already in the world of sense:  *his imaginative labour consists in perceiving them in relation to their significance*...  [italics inserted] (31)
In exploring this connection between genuine mystic perception and symbolism, Brennan's realisation that symbolism and Gnosticism are linked should be noted when he suggests that the knowledge of symbolism was "swelling high" among the Gnostic cults (52). The fact that the term "mysticism" itself evolved from the Gnostic's word muein should also be recalled. Brennan realises that the mystics Boehme and Swedenborg were early influences in symbolism, and is therefore astute to suggest that "we must go far abroad to find. We must knock at the door of the mystics. They are in possession of the law of correspondences and that it is which we are in search of" (51).

Brennan therefore recognises the point that the field of literary studies needs to extend itself into the field of religious studies in order to define literary symbolism in its association to genuine mystic experience.

In this chapter, symbolism is examined in the work of Râmi, Kabîr, Bashó and Blake, four poets who have been referred to as "mystics" and whose work has also been described as highly "symbolic". The poets' focus on inner spiritual life which led them to mystic paths and to the state of expanded consciousness, gives rise to symbolic poetry. It appears that this attempt to express gnosis or ma'rifat through poetic symbolism represents a final stage of the "perceptive poets'" mystic life. For these poets, it is not a stage which can be separated from its initial spiritual focus.
Analysis

Rúmi

While it appears as if Rúmi simply adopted Sufi poetic tradition, it can be argued that the poet not only adopted this tradition but also utilised a method of writing which best enabled him to stretch the boundaries of language. Rúmi overwhelms the rational critical reader with rich symbolism evolving both out of Sufi poetic tradition and his own experience of expanded consciousness. In this section, Rúmi's approach to the problem of incommunicable experience is examined along with three symbols commonly used throughout his poetry: death, water and the moon.

Bakhtiar states that "Symbolism is perhaps the most sacred of Sufi sciences" (25) and Whinfield explains that the history of this is said to begin with the Sufi poet Abu-l-Khair who "gave the Sufis their poetic symbolism" (Rúmi, Masnavi xxiv). Levy also mentions this poet as the one who "revived and popularized the quatrain as a verse form and established its position as a common vehicle of mystical thought" (36). The traditions of Sufi symbolism, in fact, come mostly from tenth century Persia (Bakhtiar 112), however, it is pertinent to note that this tradition is essentially a mystic tradition, not solely a literary one. Rúmi, like the Sufis before him, adopted certain methods and styles of poetry which best suited his needs as a mystic attempting to communicate ma'rifat.

As a result of his heightened perceptive state, Rúmi was no longer able to communicate in an ordinary manner. While the poet adopted "ornate rhyming prose,
with plenty of parables and protracted digressions" (Baldwick, "Medieval" 99) from the Persian tradition, he also found more unusual methods of expressing himself. Schimmel comments on Rúmi's use of symbolic language. She says, "there is such variety in his poetic descriptions that they seem to include all the symbols ever used by mystics in East and West" (101). Ironically, it was the feeling of not being able to communicate fully which led Rúmi towards the use of symbols. Baldwick identifies particularly original qualities in Rúmi's poetry. He believes the lyricism of Rúmi's Dívání "reveals heights unequalled in the rest of Persian poetry, from which it stands apart in the peculiarity of its style, the wealth of evocations of personal experience, and its domination by the figure of Shams-i Tabriz, Rúmi's guide and mystical beloved" ("Persian" 127). Helminski believes that "Rúmi's work can be considered a synthesis of all that Islamic culture has assimilated from Arab, Hellenistic, Hermetic, Christian, Jewish, Persian and Indian sources" (9).

Rúmi's poetry can be read on various levels and Shah comments on its "kaleidoscopic effect" (29). Shah explains:

Rúmi, like other Sufi authors, plants his teachings within a framework which as effectively screens its inner meaning as displays it. This technique fulfils the function of preventing those who are incapable of using the material on a higher level from experimenting effectively with it, allowing those who want poetry to select poetry; giving entertainment to people who want stories; stimulating the intellect in those who prize such experiences. (110)

This "kaleidoscopic effect" is a literary tradition of the Sufis. Rúmi explains in his "Doctrine of Reserve" the reason for his densely symbolic poetry. He says:

Better that the secret of the Friend should be disguised: do thou hearken to it as implied in the contents of the tale.
Better that the lovers' secret should be told (allegorically) in the talk of others.

(qtd. in Nicholson, Rûmi 176)

The "lover's secret", the Sufi ma'rifat, is expressed "allegorically" and through use of symbols. Many of Rûmi's symbols are adopted from Sufi tradition which is almost scientific in its designation of meaning to matter. Nicholson explains, for example, that in Sufi poetry the "white pearl" indicates the spiritual essence of man (Rûmi 134). Bakhtiar examines Sufi symbols in detail in his work Sufi Expressions of the Mystic Quest. This science of Sufi symbols is expanded by each Sufi poet who, having experienced expanded states of consciousness, attempts to build upon the expression and communication of ma'rifat.

For Rûmi, death was an appropriate concept to symbolise the Sufi's defeat of ego. In previous chapters, Kabîr's penchant for using death as a symbol of spiritual awakening was noted. In the same manner, Rûmi implores the reader to surrender the transitory material world and seek the symbolic death of spiritual awakening. He says:

You've only been here a few days
and you've become so friendly with life.
I can't even talk about death anymore.

(qtd. in Friedlander 61)

Inherent within this poem is the poet's concept of rebirth. It appears that the soul has been reborn with the purpose of transcending the material world, but once it is born, the soul forgets its purpose. The symbolic death of spiritual awakening is associated with the state of silence:

Slide out the side. Die,
and be quiet. Quietness is the surest
sign that you've died.

(Ecstasy 33)
The power of the following poem is mainly attained through the death symbol, which relates to the surrendering of the ego-self. Rūmi says:

The Friend, who knows a lot more than you do,
will bring difficulties and grief and sickness,
as medicine, as happiness, as the moment

when you're beaten, when you hear Checkmate,
and can finally say with Hallaj's voice,

I trust you to kill me.

(Ecstasy 127)

In this poem, "The Friend", God, brings "sickness, as medicine", in order to awaken the human being into realisation of his mortality. The final word "Checkmate", brings surrender at which point the ego is symbolically killed and spiritual life begins within the human being. The poet says:

We're friends with one who kills us,
who gives us to the ocean waves.

(Ecstasy 153)

The concept of death is combined with the symbol of water. Similarly:

The body's death now to me is like going to sleep.
No fear of drowning. I'm in another water.

(Ecstasy 125)

In this poem, "the friend", or spiritual teacher representing God, gives one the enlightenment, symbolised as death or drowning in the ocean, which itself, is a symbol of all-surrounding love. Rūmi's poetic symbols merge in single short couplets encapsulating enormous spiritual themes and concisely conveying overwhelming messages.
The Perceptive Poets: “Expressing the Inexpressible”

Oceans, water, fountains, rivers, streams and the notion of thirst appear frequently in Rúmi's work and are associated with love and ma’rifat. Rúmi uses the symbol of water to indicate the existence of divine love, which he believed was everywhere but not ordinarily experienced. The poet writes:

Sloshing knee-deep in fresh riverwater,

yet you keep asking for other people's waterbags.

Water is everywhere around you, but you see
only barriers that keep you from water.

(Ecstasy 66)

Rúmi makes subtle reference to the "Perceptive Faculty". Not everyone is able to perceive the existence of the water. In fact, some are purposefully attempting to avoid spiritual life. Rúmi portrays their attempts to stay "dry":

You've been walking the ocean's edge,
holding up your robes to keep them dry.

You must dive naked under and deeper under,
a thousand times deeper! Love flows down.

(Ecstasy 48)

Throughout his poetry, Rúmi indicates that ordinary human perception cannot grasp the existence of an all-surrounding divine ocean, thus people remain thirsty for spiritual knowledge. He states:

Whereas this is how
most people live: sleeping on the bank
of a freshwater stream, lips dry with thirst.

(Ecstasy 108)

The symbol of spiritual thirst is common in his work. He says:
Mad with thirst, you can't drink from the stream
running close by your face....

(Ecstasy 66)

Rûmi merges large poetic symbols to create a new level of language. He describes the "sleeping" people who cannot perceive the mystic ma'rifat and who "thirst" for spiritual knowledge without realising that the "stream" is just beside them. In fact, according to the poet, the stream, channel or fountain, is within the human being. The poet makes a connection between the fountain of spiritual knowledge, or ma'rifat, potentially found within the human being, and the greater ocean. He says:

There is a fountain inside you.

Don't walk around with an empty bucket.

You have a channel into the ocean,
yet you ask for water from a little pool.

(Ecstasy 66)

This notion is found frequently. In many poems Rûmi suggests unity between the mystic and the ocean of love. For example:

The ocean pours through a jar,
and you might say it swims inside
the fish! (Ecstasy 21)

The ocean, or divine love, is alive and "swims" through the fish, or the one in a state of expanded consciousness. Rûmi illustrates his own desire to be submerged within this ocean. He says:

When the ocean surges, don't let me
just hear it. Let it splash inside my chest!

(Ecstasy 145).
He urges the reader to experience a state of expanded consciousness, and break through intellectual and physical boundaries. He tells the reader:

Break your pitcher
against a rock. We don't need any longer
to haul pieces of the ocean around.

(Ecstasy 93)

Elsewhere, the poet implores the reader to experience oneness with the all-surrounding energy. He writes:

Breathe water. Become river head to foot.

(Ecstasy 94)

Unable to share his *ma'rifat* using ordinary methods, Rúmi attempts to do so through the symbol of water.

Bakhtiar describes the moon as a symbol of "the mystic's spiritual heart" (45) and Rúmi frequently employs this symbol. For Rúmi, the "speechless" full moon is a symbol of the complete experience of expanded consciousness which is silent and overwhelming. He says:

your old life was a frantic running
from silence.

The speechless full moon comes out now.

(Ecstasy 33)

The poet does not explain the connection between the moon and the previous statement but achieves an unstated, automatic connection. Reference made to the moon in the poem above appears almost as a revelation. Bakhtiar explains that in the Sufi tradition, "the soul of the mystic is symbolized by the moon which reflects the light of the sun" (59), and Barks describes Rúmi's symbol of the moon as "the reflected light of the
"divine" (Ecstasy 32). In the following poem, the moon is related to the heart, love and silence. Rûmi states:

At night, I open the window and ask
the moon to come and press its
face against mine.

Breathe into me. Close
the language-door and open the love-window.
The moon won't use the door,
only the window.

(Ecstasy 34)

The moon, personified with a face, is associated with the "love-window". The strong imagery here is lyrical in itself, with the poet gazing at the moon, but the moon's significance is also raised to the level of symbol as it becomes associated with a silent state beyond language. It is also associated with energy as it "Breaths into" the poet.

Rûmi expands on the symbol of moon by merging it with the symbol of water. For example, he writes:

Thirst drove me down to the water
where I drank the moon's reflection.

(Ecstasy 103)

The poet's spiritual thirst moves him towards the water, or the source of spiritual fulfilment, where he not only submerges himself, but drinks the whole of the moon's divine light. It could be said, perhaps, that the poet is seeing his own reflection. His Shaykh, Shams, explains:

Mawlana [Rûmi] is moonlight. Eyes do not reach the sunlight of my existence, but they do reach the moon. Because of the extreme radiance and brightness of the sun, eyes do
not have the capacity for it. Even that moon will not reach the sun, unless perhaps the
sun reaches the moon. *The eyes do not perceive Him, but He perceives the eyes.* (218)

Rúmi, as the moon, becomes one with himself. He is so full of *ma'rifat* that he refers to
his body as a vessel containing the knowledge given to him by Shams, who is often
referred to as the sun. For example:

I have been given a glass
that has the fountain of the sun inside.

*(Ecstasy 6)*

Rúmi is not using metaphor in this poem. He is not saying the moon is a speechless man,
or his body is a glass, or the sun is Shams. Rather, his poetry is thick with cumulative
symbols. Bakhtiar explains, with reference to Sufi symbolism, that "these poetic images
are not simply metaphors.... On the contrary, the vision or image is the metaphor, and
this is why the terms... are really symbols" (112). Rúmi says:

What I say makes me drunk.

Nightingale, iris, parrot, jasmine,

I speak those languages, along with
the idiom of my longing for Shamsi Tabriz.

*(Ecstasy 43)*

Rúmi speaks the language of symbolism and this symbolic poetry makes him "drunk"
with spiritual joy.

Rúmi's role was not only to create poetry in a certain tradition or with a certain
aesthetic quality. Instead, he insists:

My work is to carry this love
as comfort for those who long for you....

*(Ecstasy 51)*
As one who has experienced a state of expanded consciousness, his role was to create evidence of the existence of the divine, but he was aware of his incapacity to achieve this. He concludes:

\[
\text{master to the pure masters,}
\]
\[
\text{if my human throat were not so narrow,}
\]
\[
\text{I would praise you as you should be praised,}
\]
\[
\text{in some language other than this word-language,}
\]
\[
\text{but a domestic fowl is not a falcon.}
\]
\[
\text{We must mix the varnish we have}
\]
\[
\text{and brush it on.}
\]
\[
\text{(qtd. in Barks, Rumi 64)}
\]

Rúmi had no longing to succeed in literary endeavours. Lewis declares that Rúmi "was not a professional poet, like Sa'di in his own time" (327). This fact should be acknowledged and a place should be established within Western tradition for these poets of both East and West whose literary eloquence could never match their communicative task. Rúmi explains:

\[
\text{Just because you can't drink all that falls}
\]
\[
\text{doesn't mean you give up taking sips}
\]
\[
\text{of rainwater. If the nut}
\]
\[
\text{of the mystery can't be held,}
\]
\[
\text{at least let me touch the shell.}
\]
\[
\text{(qtd. in Barks, Rumi 65)}
\]

Rúmi, as a "perceptive poet", was simply a “Symbolist” by necessity. Furthermore, his poetic symbolism was only one key feature of his life and work and in order to appreciate it fully, one must examine his work within a suitable literary framework.
which includes a detailed examination of his spiritual life and its effect upon his creativity.
Kabír

Unable to communicate gnosis because of the limitations of language and logic, Kabír, like Rúmi, employed symbolism. Kabír often used water and death as symbols in the same manner as Rúmi. He also readily used the symbol of intoxication to refer to his state of expanded consciousness. This section, however, examines three other symbols employed frequently in Kabír's work: the use of the concept of marriage to symbolise divine union, and the more esoteric symbols of unheard music and blossoming trees associated with the Náth tradition.

It is said that Kabír was one of the most influential poets of the Sant tradition. Vaudeville names the poet Námdev as Kabír's literary predecessor (127), and Námdev is also considered the first of the Sants being described as the "oldest poet in the Sant parampara" (128). Námdev and Ramananda are the Sant poets traditionally preceding Kabír. While Kabír may have been influenced by these poets, his own symbolism arose predominantly from his personal experience of expanded consciousness. The Sant poets themselves are considered to be only loosely linked in their inner devotion to a divine principle. Kabír's symbolism arose out of his own ma'rifat. He says:

That which you do see is naught
And what is, you can't express

("Says Kabír" 50)

Scott explains that the poet was faced "with the ineffable" and had to be "content with descriptions which impart only a fragment of understanding" (219). Kabír's symbolism was not taken from the Sant poetic tradition, but rather emerged from inner knowledge of Náthism, which is simply mystic ma'rifat.
Kabír frequently employs the notion of marriage and human love to symbolise mystic union of the soul-bride with God. This concept of the soul-bride, or the soul-wife, is commonly adopted by mystic poets.¹ Master Sanai of the eleventh and twelfth century is considered to be the "earliest Afghan teacher to use the love-motif in Sufism" (107) and Verma suggests that Kabír was familiar with Rūmi, who himself might have been influenced by Master Sanai in this tradition ("Says Kabír" xxii). Scott explains that the genuine mystic experience of union is such that it "transcends all human expression" (197), and therefore often becomes translated into the symbol of worldly love. In one dohá, Kabír speaks of his meditations in a romantic, sensual manner:

Now I won't let You go,
O Rám, my Beloved:
So long as You please
may You be mine!

After a long separation,
I've found Hari –
So great is my blessing:
I just sat at home and He came!

Clinging to his feet,
I do Him service,
And I keep Him entangled
in the bonds of my Love.

Stay, O Stay,
in the pure mansion of my heart –
Says Kabir

do not betray me with another!

(qtd. in Vaudeville 279)

In this verse, the poet adopts the feminine voice in order to express his love for "Hari", "Rám" or God. His imagery portrays the traditional wife figure "clinging" to her husband's feet. Significantly, the soul-wife simply sits "at home", or within the physical body, waiting for the God-husband's presence to be felt. This situation of soul-bride or soul-wife becomes extended until marriage itself becomes a symbol of spiritual experience. The poet says:

    In the Joy of the wedding-song,
    my soul is enraptured
    And my tongue savours
    the life-giving nectar of Rám.

(qtd. in Vaudeville 278)

In this poem, the wedding becomes a symbol of samádhi. Parrinder finds that Kabír uses love symbolism "not in any erotic manner" but as "a way of apprehending the divine being and finally merging into it" (104). It would be perhaps more accurate, however, to say that the poet uses this love symbolism because he has already apprehended "the divine". For Kabír the language and emotion surrounding the human love relationship is the closest he can come to sharing his experience.

Scott believes that Kabír's poetry employs love symbolism in a slightly different manner to the general Bhakti tradition.² He believes it is more frequently "separation" (206) which becomes Kabír's focus, rather than the pleasure of love apparent in the Bhakti tradition. For example, in the following poem Kabír suggest restlessness:

    Come home, my sweet-heart
    My body and mind
Ache for want of you.
When they call me your
Bride, I have to blush....
................................
As the thirsty seek
Water, so does bride
Covet her sweetheart.
Restless is Kabir
Longing for his Lord.
("Says Kabir" 84)

Kabir repeatedly uses verbs indicating longing and separation: "ache", "thirsty", "restless". Scott believes this is not common in the Bhakti tradition. It seems the love motif itself is not necessarily learnt or adopted by poets but rather created out of the necessity to communicate ma'rifat or gnosis, which involves an experience of love. For this reason, it has occurred in various mystic traditions.

Kabir's poetry often uses the symbol of unheard music to signify the experience of expanded consciousness. Kabir tells the reader:

Listen to the secret sound, the real sound, which is inside you.

(Fish 7)

This concept forces the reader to resort to the imagination in order to partake in the meaning of the poem. Unlike the love symbol, the symbol of unheard music raises no connotations. The reader's thought process ceases for a short instant as the concept of unheard music stupefies the intellect. Kabir says:

Don't you hear the melodies
That my unstruck music plays?

("Says Kabir" 37)
In this stanza, the poet asks the reader to hear the sound of "unstruck music" which is impossible. Similarly:

Where spring, lord of seasons, plays
There the unstruck melodies ring...

("Says Kabir" 80)

No sound, silence, is the first reaction of the reader's imagination. Scott explains that the concept of unheard music has its source in Náth tradition and relates to the heart (186). He describes it as "a mystical vibration audible only to the adept who has succeeded in arousing the Kundalini and caused it to ascend along the susumna" (186). The symbol of unstruck music is one of Kabir's more esoteric symbols, which he did not expect the majority of readers to comprehend. He says:

Lyre sings in murmurs and
Movelessly goes on the dance.
Nobody's fingers touch the harp
Yet the music is put forth.
And 'Tis heard without ears.
For the lord alone can hark.
Door is locked but in the room
There's perfume and we meet.
But no one can witness us.
Well, the wise shall understand.

("Says Kabir" 90)

The "dance" is motionless, and therefore symbolic of the mystic's joy. The music is heard without the senses, indicating the increased perceptive capacity of the genuine mystic. The meeting of the soul with God occurs within the "room" of the body. In
poems like this, Kabir is at his most puzzling. The poet accumulates symbols until language is raised to another dimension.

Even more esoteric than the symbol of unheard music, is Kabir's use of symbols associated with flowering trees. The symbols and terminology of both unheard music and flowering trees also find their source in Nath traditions. Without an understanding of the Nath concepts associated with the flowering tree, the reader would find Kabir's poetry, at times, incomprehensible. For example, in one hymn he depicts an elaborate system of branches and creepers. He says:

If you can see that tree
you'll be free
from age and death.
The tree is a whole world.
From one trunk burst three boughs,
the middle bough has four fruits,
and leaves and branches – who can count them?
A creeper clings to the three
spheres, wraps tight
so even the wise ones
can't get free.
Kabir says, I go on shouting
and the pandits go on thinking.

(Grace 33)

The tree with "three boughs" seems to correlate with the "tree of life" where the boughs represent three nadis or channels within the spiritual body or soul. The "creeper" appears to relate to the coiled energy or kundalini. Scott explains in some detail the esoteric terminology associated with the Nath Yogi traditions (15-19). The terminology is
created around the concept of the physical body containing a spiritual body, somewhat like a soul, which has certain characteristics of its own. Scott refers to this mystical knowledge as a "mystical physiological geography" (17). In other words, it is a knowledge concerning the structure or qualities of the soul. In this tradition there are numerous "lotuses" (energy centres, or *chakras*), as well as *nadis* (channels or rivers) representing the energy of both moon (feminine) and sun (masculine). Together with this is a vital "coiled energy" (18) (or *kundalini*) contained at the base of the spine. The complex nature of this spiritual body gives rise to a completely separate vocabulary. Kabír, therefore, creates a poem which, on one level is a riddle about a tree, and on another level contains an entirely separate language of symbols.

Kabír's poetry continues to make reference to the spiritual body through symbols of lotus flowers and other blossoming images. In the following poem, the blossoming flowers refer to the wheels of energy within the spiritual body. The poet tells the reader:

Do not go to the flowerbed.
Never think of going there.
In your body's orchard bloom.
Legion flowers don't you know?
Sit on thousand-petaled bloom
Of lotus and feast your eyes
On the beauty infinite.

("Says Kabír" 60)

For Kabír, the "flowerbed" is within the spiritual body. The "thousand-petaled", or thousand-petalled lotus, is traditionally associated with the wheel of energy which connects human beings to the divine. Each wheel of energy (or *chakra*) affects the others. For example:
A lily pad blossoms
and is not attached to the bottom!
When one flower opens,
ordinarily dozens open.

(Ecstatic 27)

In this poem, Kabîr's blossoming "lily pad" represents the opening movement of the chakras which he apparently felt within his physical body.

Through the following poem, Kabîr, like Rûmi, merges various symbols so that the end result is a thick layer of symbolic language all contained within one poem. Kabîr says:

At last the notes of his flute come in,
and I cannot stop from dancing around on the floor...

The blossoms open, even though it is not May,
and the bee knows of it already.

The air over the ocean is troubled,
there is a flash, heavy seas rise in my chest.

Rain pours down outside;
and inside I long for the Guest....

(Ecstatic 52)

Unheard music and blossoms are both merged together with the symbol of water, employed here in the same manner as in Rûmi's poems. These symbols are directly related to Kabîr's meditation and his state of expanded consciousness. "Outside", the "rain pours down" while within the poet's body the "heavy seas rise". It appears as if the
The poet is on the verge of attaining the state of *samádhi*, but is not yet fully absorbed into it. At other times the poet is fully engaged by his experience. He states:

- Near your breastbone there is an open flower
- Drink the honey that is all around the flower.
- Waves are coming in:
  - there is so much magnificence near the ocean!
  - Listen: Sound of big seashells! Sound of bells!
  (*Ecstatic* 35)

The sound of bells and seashells seems to indicate the poet's arrival at the state of *samádhi*, particularly because the poet commands the reader to "Listen". The "waves" and "honey" are associated with the divine love and divine nectar which the poet feels and tastes in the physical body. He says:

- Loaf on sky of love.
- Sip the nectar from
- Lotus of your heart.
- Let waves caress you.
- Let your body feel
- Glory of the sea.
- Hark! The sounds of shells
- And the bells emerge.
  (*Says Kabír*” 102)

In Kabír's poetry there is evidence of a close connection between the spiritual state of expanded consciousness, or *samádhi*, and the sensations of the physical body. The poet says, "Let your body feel / Glory of the sea". The body and spiritual experience meet. At that point, "the bells emerge" and the soul experiences its salvation within the body.

Kabír's terminology appears to originate from various sources. When addressing the Sufis, he uses their terminology; when addressing the Yogís he uses a different set of
symbols. His poetry ranges from the most simple, direct statements of spiritual truths to
the ornate and complex fusion of symbols. As Hess says, Kabir's poetry moves from "the
most plain and direct to the most oblique and riddling" (Kabir, *Grace* xxii). The poet's
language is not esoteric for the sole purpose of being secretive, but is such simply
because the experience Kabir enjoyed was beyond the limits of language. Kabir was a
simple weaver creating new language out of necessity. While he was "Indifferent to
'literature' and unskilled in the delicate art of ornate poetry" (Vaudeville 129), he
nevertheless became, as H.P. Dvivedi claims, a "dictator of language" (qtd. in
Vaudeville 129).
Bashó

The power of Bashó's haiku, and perhaps of successful haiku in general, lies in the poet's ability to use language in such a way that the juxtaposition of symbols or images stimulates a new dimension of perception in the reader. The successful haiku is, therefore, a poem which resonates with "surplus meaning" created by symbols (Bashó qtd. in Ueda, *The Master* 161). Thus, haiku has been called "the most compact, evocative verse-form crystallized by Japanese talents" (Yasuda 8), and Bashó's haiku in particular has been described as the "most Symbolic of all Japanese literature" (Ueda, *The Master* 178). In this section, Bashó's symbolic use of the moon, the cuckoo and other birds is examined along with his use of sound in the creation of "surplus meaning" in order to demonstrate his attempts at communicating his spiritual truth.

In Bashó's culture, the moon symbol carried such spiritual significance that he only needed to mention it to create the atmosphere he desired. It seems, in fact, that "moon-viewing" was a traditional, Japanese collective event with its own special title of "tsuki-mi", distinguishing it from other recognised collective events such as blossom-viewing ("hana-mi"), snow-viewing ("yuki-mi"), or firefly-viewing ("hotaru-mi") (Bashó, *Haiku* 35). This Japanese aesthetic tradition gave Bashó a wealth of symbolic language to support his creative expression. The moon was culturally accepted as being associated with spiritual life. Bashó observes:

> The moon about to appear,
> All present tonight
> With their hands on their knees.
>
> (*Silence* 27)
Bashō's use of the phrase "hands on their knees" suggests the collective and spiritual nature of "moon viewing". The activity is associated with temples and meditation. The poet says:

> Having slept at a temple,
> With what a serious look
> I view the moon!

(*Haiku 67*)

"Moon-viewing" appears to have been a cultural and spiritual event so naturally Bashō's Japanese, spiritual moon permeates his poetry in the same way as it permeated his life. In his haiku, the moon's light is all-pervading but ordinarily unnoticed. He writes:

> night... silently
> in the moonlight, a worm
> digs into a chestnut.

(qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 56)

Ogiwara Seisensui comments on this haiku, saying that one senses "the pale moonlight penetrating the heart of things" (qtd. in Ueda, *Basho* 56). The moon is a symbol of spiritual life attainable by any person. For example:

> A poor farmer's child,
> Pausing from hulling rice,
> Looks up at the moon.

(*Haiku 64*)

This haiku seems to recognise the innate spiritual nature of each human being through what, on the surface, appears to be a statement of a village scene. The simple presence of the moon gives the haiku a spiritual atmosphere.

Bashō's particular use of the moon symbol, however, becomes significantly powerful because of the poet's firm grasp of the concept of "surplus meaning". He
creates this "surplus meaning" by placing symbols and images beside each other. The resulting tension between symbols brings to his short haiku form a depth and breadth of meaning far greater than one would expect from a three-line poem. Higginson believes that the symbols in Bashô's haiku, and in most powerful haiku, are placed beside each other in such a way that "these images act like the poles in a spark gap. The sparks jump back and forth faster than the mind can follow" (117). Higginson explains the juxtaposition of images in the haiku tradition. He says:

Most haiku, either directly or by implication, present two objects, actions, or states of being. Usually there is little grammatical connection between the things presented, and sometimes the mixture of contrasts and unities is abrupt and startling. (116)

Western poets have shown an interest in this feature which Ueda refers to as "Bashô's 'leap' technique" (The Master 183), and Ueda compares this technique with literary methods developed by Ezra Pound. Bashô's concept of "yojó" or "surplus meaning" stems from this objective placement of symbols or images beside each other. The poet's aim in creating "surplus meaning" was to awaken the reader to resonance.

Similarities between Rúmi and Bashó in their use of the moon as symbol are noteworthy. Also significant is their method of striking comparison, or internal juxtaposition. Bashó allows the moon to speak for itself, quietly placed beside another symbol, without being accompanied by any explanation. For example:

Spring moon –
flower face
in mist

(Love 27)

The reader finds similarity between the face of the moon and the face of the flower, both somehow iridescent in the mist. The beauty of the moon, perhaps slightly hidden by
clouds, is the same as the beauty of the flower face. This surprising comparison between two unrelated objects takes the reader to a momentary space of bewilderment. The following haiku creates the same effect:

  felling a tree
  and gazing at the cut end –
  tonight's moon

  (qtd. in Ueda, *The Master* 41)

The round moon and the luminescent round face of the tree trunk are visually juxtaposed. The moon is also juxtaposed in this haiku:

  Where is the moon?
  The bell has sunk
  To the bottom of the sea.

  (*Haiku* 185)

Metaphorically, the bell seems to become the moon in this poem. The first impression gained from this is that the moon itself has sunk to the bottom of the sea. One consequently visualises the moon's long reflection on the water. On the evening of writing this haiku, Bashó had been pondering an ancient story about a temple bell sinking in the sea (Bashó, *Haiku* 185). He used this image of the bell, itself spiritually symbolic in its relation to the temple, and placed this image in juxtaposition to the symbolic round moon set over the sea, with its reflection apparently sinking in the water. Yuasa notices Bashó's capacity to achieve complexity of symbolic meaning "without pretending in the least to be symbolic" (Bashó, *Narrow* 33).

In Chapter Two, it was noted that in Bashó's poetry the cuckoo represents an experience of meditative solitude. The cuckoo and other birds carry much symbolic meaning in this poet's work. In the following poems the appearance of the cuckoo
represents aspirations for solitude in which a state of spiritual freedom may be experienced. The poet writes:

A cuckoo is flying  
To disappear towards  
An island far away.

(*Haiku 106*)

A sense of spiritual longing is suggested by "An island far away". This persistence to pursue a spiritual goal is also heard in the following haiku. Bashō says:

Across the field, turn  
The direction of the horse  
Towards the cuckoo!

(*Haiku 142*)

Bashō's active use of the verb "turn", and the exclamation "Towards the cuckoo!", illustrate his determination to live a spiritual life.

The skylark is another bird often mentioned in Bashō's work and carrying symbolic meaning. In the following haiku, the bird symbolises complete spiritual freedom. The poet observes:

Over the field,  
Touching nothing,  
A skylark sings.

(*Haiku 58*)

The translation of this haiku, previously discussed in Chapter Three with reference to the poet's detached attitude, suggests that the skylark symbolises the state of rising "over" or above "all things". The skylark is not just a metaphor of the detached man, but symbolises an optimistic, joyful and elevated state of mind. This is evident in this haiku:
Even a long day
is not long enough
For the skylarks to sing.

(Haiku 57)

The skylark is portrayed as tirelessly and eternally singing. In contrast, the heron is associated with "lightning", "screaming" and "darkness". For example:

A flash of lightning –
passing through the darkness
a night heron's scream

(qtd. in Ueda, The Master 394)

This poem was noted in Chapter Three for its use of sound to amplify silence. Although it is only a three line poem, it combines a great number of poetic devices. There is physical movement in the line "passing through the darkness", visual image in the "flash of lightning" and aural effect in the final scream of the heron. Most noticeably, however, there is an effective correspondence between the screaming sound and the flashing image which in itself seems to suggest the poet's spiritual perception of nature's dynamic power.

Bashó's use of sound is pertinent in discussion of his symbols. It may be said that the poet had "an instinctive feeling of [the] mysterious correspondence of things" (Brennan 17). As noted, this concept of correspondence originates from mystic gnosis. The poet's expanded state of consciousness and his heightened state of perceptivity enabled him to sense significance in the relationship between such things as a thin moon and the high-pitched sound of a cricket. The poet observes:

the winter garden –
thinning to a thread, the moon
and an insect's singing. (qtd. in Ueda, Basho 277)
In this haiku, Bashô makes no comment about either the moon or the insect, but juxtaposes the sight of the moon and the sound of the insect and therefore creates resonance. The poem not only employs visual image and aural sensation but also encourages the reader to experience joy in momentarily recognising the interrelationship between two ordinarily unrelated objects. In the following poem, the poet discovers a relationship between the sound of a crane and the leaves of a banana plant, both depicted in an illustration. He writes:

a crane screeches,
its voice ripping the leaves
of a banana plant.

(qtd. in Ueda, Basho 233)

The screeching sound of the bird is translated into the action of ripping, thus two unrelated objects become linked together. Both poems create a spiritual atmosphere simply through this recognition of an existing force of unity. The correspondences themselves seem to symbolise spiritual life.

Ueda examines the evolution of Bashô's image in the West and how it changed from focusing upon Bashô as a "Japanese Romantic", to focusing upon him as a "Symbolist" at the time when Japanese poetry came under the influence of "Baudelaire, Verhaeren, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rossetti, and others" (Ueda, The Master 180). Certainly Bashô used symbolism and recognised "the interrelatedness of all things in the universe" (Ueda, The Master 180), and the same can be said of Rûmi and Kabîr. Before describing this poet as a "Symbolist", however, it is essential to address a conflict which exists between a certain image of Bashô, and Bashô's life itself. Yasuda quotes the poet, Otsuji, who explains, "In regard to a unity in life, art, and mental attitude, there is no other artist for whom it is so harmonized as for the haiku poet" (Yasuda 8). Saying this, Otsuji
assumes that "the haiku poet" is one whose first priority is self-knowledge. This description of a haiku poet, which Bashó certainly was, does not "harmonise" at all with descriptions of Bashó as "Japan's first modern poet" (Ueda, *The Master* 181) marking the first steps towards "life for art's sake" (Abrams, *Literary* 2).

Rúmi, Kabír and Bashó were the creators of symbols, not because of a love for poetry or language, but because of their dedication to spiritual life. Bashó, although more attached to his creativity, was still equally dedicated to a spiritual pursuit. He did not lose the understanding that a contented, meditative state of silence was the source of both his spiritual growth and his creativity. This subtle but important point helps bring together the poets in this study and distinguish them from a number of other poets who have been described as Symbolists.
Blake

It would appear that Blake's purpose was to strive toward the creation of a language which would, in some manner, express the inexpressible to those who had the "intellectual powers" (Keynes 58) capable of receiving his gnosis. The language he created is of such an original highly symbolic style that it has captured the attention of literary scholars, together with mythologists, linguists and psychologists. This language evolved as a result of an experience of expanded consciousness. This section examines Blake's illustration of the "perceptive poet's" literary struggle with symbols as encapsulated through the fictive forces of Los, Urizen and Jerusalem.

Like Rûmi, Kabîr and Bashô, Blake's efforts to communicate his gnosis involved the creation of new language. R. Maritain explains:

When the poet is confronted with the insufficiency of words, when he seeks sonorities [sic] yet unknown, when he wishes to give unique expression to a unique perception, he easily admits obscurity and non-sense and composes new words; or he even tries to create a new language. ("Sense" 11)

Certainly, this concept is relevant to Blake whose original methods of using existing language, combined with his tendency to create completely new words, has engaged scholars and led to such things as the creation of the Blakean dictionary. Scholars have moved from trying to decipher his symbolism and mythology to focusing intently on individual "polysemic" words (Hilton 11). The tendency now is to view Blake as one who wished to liberate his readers from all kinds of mental systems. Hilton, for example,
believes that Blake went much further than his contemporaries in his examination of the concept of liberation through the use of chains as symbols. Hilton believes:

Blake's treatment of chains directs itself toward an apocalyptic uncovering of language, an unchaining of thought and association: phonetic, semantic, and historical associations are stressed past their breaking point.... (77)

Hilton suggests that Blake desired his readers to attain a state of "polysemous consciousness (fourfold perhaps?)" (77). This phrase is coincidentally similar to the phrase "expanded consciousness". It is certain that Blake wished to evoke something incomprehensible, and through the creation of symbols, attempted to move the reader beyond the ordinary processes of understanding.

Blake's concept of "Sublime Poetry" was discussed in the Introduction to this thesis. Blake writes:

Allegory address'd to the Intellectual powers, while it is altogether hidden from the Corporeal Understanding, is My definition of the Most Sublime Poetry. (Keynes 58)

Frye, Damon and others have all noted the importance of this statement concerning Blake's symbolism or "Sublime Poetry", and they have extensively examined symbolism in Blake's work. In this section, however, the names of three characters within Blake's long poems are discussed. The characters, or forces, appear to represent aspects of the psyche and are therefore relevant in this discussion of the state of expanded consciousness. Blake seems to have acquired a particular knowledge of the psyche through his own spiritual experiences. His characters are therefore not mythic. Indeed, mythology seems to be an inappropriate word to describe Blakean concepts. If they are to be called symbols, then they are symbols of certain aspects of the psyche. Blake's symbols have been created out of the poet's experience of a higher state of consciousness and they express his concern for the role of the "perceptive poet" (often represented by
Los), faced with the limitations of intellect and language systems (Urizen) and striving toward the inspired creative life (Jerusalem) within ordinary existence.

There is evidence in Blake's long poems that the character Los seems to embody the predicament of the "perceptive poet" grappling within the bounds of language. Leonard Deen recognises the importance of Blake's Los in the longer prophecies and describes Los as "artist as hero" (232), "disciple as artisan" (232), "the generating force in the growth of Blake's systematic myth" (259), "the Poetic Genius" (259) and, with particular relevance, "the artist as awakener" (260). Lincoln describes Los at the culmination of the character's development as "the eternal prophet" (Zoas 236) who "retains the power to alter perception of time and space" (Zoas 181). For Hirsch, Los is at some point in time, "the agent of imaginative perception" (109) terrified by the possibility that his creation might go "accidentally awry" (78). Edward Rose describes Los as "the act of perceiving" (83) and as the creative process itself (86). It would seem that Los actually symbolises the "perceptive poet" and his struggle to create original language, beyond mere allegory or fable, which at once induces vision and communicates spiritual truth. Such a language must be invested with a force which originates neither from the emotions nor intellect but from an experience of expanded consciousness. This is the experience out of which Blake's character of Los is born.

Blake suggests that Los himself "built the stubborn structure of the Language" (qtd. in Hilton 9) and according to Adams, the nature of language is considered to be "stubborn" for a number of reasons. One reason is that it has a tendency to harden itself into a system – a myth, a religion, a doctrine – whereas originally it may have been the result of a genuinely original creative act (Philosophy 109). Therefore, "each time the language becomes hardened and becomes a spectre it needs to be rebuilt" (Philosophy
Thus one finds the daughters of Los, in *Jerusalem*, "incessantly" working and mending. The narrator states:

```
Hour after hour labouring at the whirling Wheel;
Many Wheels & as many lovely Daughters sit weeping.
Yet the intoxicating delight that they take in their work
Obliterates every other evil; none pities their tears;
Yet they regard not pity & they expect no one to pity,
For they labour for life & love, regardless of any one
But the poor Spectres that they work for, always incessantly.
They are mock'd by every one that passes by, they regard not
They labour; & when their Wheels are broken by scorn & malice
They mend them sorrowing with many tears & afflictions.
```

(Pl.59; 33-42)

The "Wheels", examined in Chapter Five as symbolic of words, are being repaired in this poem. The process is "intoxicating" in its "delight". The poets expect no "pity" because the process is a "labour for life & love" as they struggle to prevent the symbol from becoming hardened into a religious icon. Adams implies that Los is continually "engaged in a struggle with his spectre – language converted to 'allegory'" (*Philosophy* 110). The "perceptive poet" is faced with the task of keeping the language "dynamic" (*Philosophy* 110) so that it has a real affect upon the reader which is more than emotional or intellectual. It may be said that for Blake, this concept is translated as the "terrible eternal labor" (qtd. in *Philosophy* 110) of Los, and that it is also the labour of the "perceptive poet" in general.

Blake's character or force of Urizen is also born out of the poet's state of expanded consciousness. As noted, Blake was capable of witnessing the destructive capacity of intellect devoid of spiritual experience. His Urizen developed not only out of
the poet's awareness of psychic division within the human being, but out of the poet's heightened capacity to perceive the unproductive tyranny of the rational, restricting intellect in Western life which codifies religion in general. In The Book of Urizen, the figure is associated with the unforgiving "eternal laws of God" or the "Net of Urizen" (Easson, Urizen 63) which is the dead knowledge of doctrinal religion, hardened into stone and no longer reflecting original, inspired scriptures created by figures such as Los. Thus the laws of Urizen have created a race which, while following religion, has forgotten the essence of spiritual life. The poet despairs:

   Six days they shrunk up from existence,
   And on the seventh day they rested.
   And they bless'd the seventh day, in sick hope,
   And forgot their eternal life.

   (pl. 25; 39-42)

Blake's reference to the "seventh day" or the Christian Sabbath of rest and "sick hope", satirises religious rigidity. Kay and Roger Easson believe that in this book Urizen "represents a state of consciousness which creates a reality, a world, through finite perception" and they believe it is exactly that state of consciousness which "opposes spiritual travel" (Urizen 67). Urizen's opposing, contradictory and necessary force is represented by the Eternals, the forces of unstructured and therefore incommunicable inspiration.

Easson and Easson suggest that the forces of Urizen result in the printed book which, in contrast to Blake's own personally illustrated books, lacks beauty, flexibility and originality. They point out that Blake, through his illustrations, depicts Urizen as associated with the "brazen book" (Urizen 83), or the "book of iron" representing the
"printed book Blake deplored" (*Urizen* 83). Urizen is therefore the force which creates uninspired and standardised work:

> wherein the idiosyncrasy of penmanship and composition is edited into good grammar, acceptable punctuation, and standard usage, locked into justified margins, and organized into logical sequence. (*Urizen* 83)

Blake's self-published books, on the contrary, were idiosyncratic throughout in regards to their unorthodox punctuation, layout and sequence. Easson and Easson further make the point that:

> Blake, as a spiritual teacher desirous of redeeming the book and its teachings, knew that no teacher and no book can perform spiritual regeneration. A teacher and a book can only serve as witnesses for the truth.... (*Urizen* 88-89)

This recognition of *The Book of Urizen* as "a book written to liberate us from books..." (Easson, *Urizen* 88), also points toward the ultimate paradox of the "perceptive poets". These poets grapple with the tools of language in order to raise their readership to a state of consciousness which is, in fact, altogether beyond the bounds of language.

The state to which Blake aspires to lead his readers is that of Jerusalem which is individually and collectively a state of liberation. Both a feminine force and a city, or state, Jerusalem is called "Liberty among the Children of Albion" (Brennan 91). Brennan best describes the state of Jerusalem as "the untrammelled life of the imagination... the Golden Age, to restore which was, as Blake said, the aim of his art" (91). Through his expectation of the reader's participation in the creation of poetic meaning, Blake attempts to raise the reader's state of consciousness to a level which glimpses Jerusalem, or liberty itself. Within this level of consciousness one attains:
... a different sort of understanding, not that of conventional, second-hand knowledge, or of the accepted textbooks [but] an understanding which has gone beyond itself, knows it limitations, and knows that it is but a pale reflection of the reality which transcends it.

(George Wingfield Digby qtd. in O'Neill, Critics 83)

James Ferguson states that "Jerusalem is 'the liberty both of body & mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination'" (186). "The Divine Arts of Imagination" only come from experiencing that state of Jerusalem which one may equate with the state of expanded consciousness. Brennan evaluates Blakean "Imagination" as "the imagination properly understood as a perceptive faculty, in communication with the transcendent element in – and perhaps – beyond us" (104). This state is also associated with the act of forgiveness and is therefore a spiritual state. The character Jerusalem exclaims:

What is Sin but a little Error & fault that is soon forgiven.

(Jerusalem pl. 20; 23-24)

She is a state of both forgiveness and creativity. It was Blake's life-long mission to lead his readers towards an understanding of the existence of a greater dimension of creative life and towards acknowledging the essential link between spirituality and creativity. Jerusalem was his vision: an evolved, highly perceptive, collective state of expanded consciousness wherein creativity is inspired through spiritual life.

Hirsch concludes that "Blake's final voice is what it had always been – the voice of the ancient bard who throughout human history has pronounced God's word" (162). Thus Blake was at his most furious when his artistic credibility was challenged. The incapacity to express inexpressible spiritual experience is a major theme in Blake's life and work. His knowledge of this predicament led him to the creation of highly complex symbols reflecting the role of the "perceptive poet" whose first priority is spiritual life.
Such a poet attempts the difficult task of evoking the reality of expanded consciousness through the use of symbols but within the confines of both language and reason.
Conclusion

This chapter has examined symbolism in the work of Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake and compared the poets' efforts at imparting ma'rifat or gnosis to their readers. While the poets adopted certain literary techniques from their cultural backgrounds, it can be argued that the technique of symbolism has its roots in the genuine mystic experience of expanded consciousness, not in literary theory. Rúmi built upon Sufi symbolism in the same way that each Sufi Master tends to have done, but he relied upon his own personal experience of expanded consciousness in order to make this contribution to Sufi literature. Similarly, Kabír adopted terminology and ideas from the Náth tradition, but again, this tradition was primarily mystic in its focus. Kabír's symbolism is original because of his own experience of samádhi. Bashó is responsible for having developed the highly symbolic form of haiku literature as a result of his own experience of meditation and his thoughtless perceptive state. While he employed symbols from within his culture and tradition, his intensity of "surplus meaning" resulted from his own heightened perceptive state. Finally, Blake's abundant use of symbols reflects his knowledge concerning the limitation of the Western intellect and the impossibility of communicating gnosis. Despite the feeling of futility surrounding these poets, they persisted in the creation of symbols.

Motivated by spiritual experience, the poets of this thesis managed to overcome silence, the inadequacy of language and the limitations of the intellect, to forge highly symbolic language. They pushed the limits of language and intellect and therefore
became creators of original forms of symbolism. Their language is rich, layered and highly charged, while often simultaneously appearing quite simple. Regardless of the literary traditions they have inherited or ignored, their poetry demonstrates originality which derives from the poets' perseverance to communicate inexpressible experiences which lie beyond human mental comprehension. The creation of symbolic language was, in fact, not their main intention and the term "Symbolist" cannot therefore accurately describe these poets whose main task was to try to elevate the readers' perceptive capacity, or make readers aware of the possibility of such an event.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the sixth feature of the "perceptive poet" is a tendency to utilise symbols in the effort to communicate spiritual gnosis. Furthermore, the "sublime" process of symbolism appears to be a continuation of the "perceptive poet's" spiritual life. It should also be noted that the use of symbolism is only one of the six main characteristics of these poets. The "perceptive poet" is not particularly concerned about conforming to expected standards or styles of literature, yet at the same time, produces highly symbolic work. This being the case, there is good reason to remove these poets from their individual literary traditions, and examine them within a more sympathetic and constructive framework. That literary framework should be one which, in the first instance, acknowledges the poets' similar spiritual priorities and accepts the relevance of the state of expanded consciousness.
1 In the Christian mystic tradition it is reflected in the concept of *agape* (Parrinder 95).

2 The basic aspect of the Bhakti movement is the intensity of devotion. One might argue that the highly emotional character of Bhakti poets can be distinguished from Kabir's more detached nature.

3 Scott refers to the "*sabd*" or divine word and its relation to the "*anahat*" or heart. Similarities between this concept and cratylist evident in Mallarmé's philosophy may perhaps be noted.

4 According to Higginson, "Haiku in the West begins at the beginning of the twentieth century, with attempts to write haiku in French during a visit to Japan by Julien Vocane, Paul-Louis Couchoud and others" (49).

5 See reference to plate 11.
CONCLUSION

If the intellect is exercised without sanctity, then the light is shown on nothing; it reveals nothingness. (Emerson qtd. in Geldard 53)

...every artist who follows the law of his imagination, is bound to create symbols. (Brennan 49)

...if the imagination fails,

it is because the poet has failed with respect to his soul. (Wordsworth qtd. in Hartman 16)
Summary

This thesis set out to examine four poets described as "mystic" and "symbolic". Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake were selected from four different cultures and religious traditions in order to make a comparative study both of mysticism and of literary symbolism. In the Introductory chapter it was stated that there is enough in common between these particular mystic, symbolic poets to justify the creation of "a new, more well-defined area of interdisciplinary research between the fields of literature and religious studies." A number of key terms previously employed in studies of poetry and mysticism were examined, and it was argued that none of those terms adequately describe the poets of this study.

The thesis has attempted to apply the term "perceptive poets" to Rúmi, Kabír, Bashó and Blake. Throughout six chapters of comparative analysis, six essential common features have been identified in an effort to form a broad definition of the "perceptive poet". It can be stated that the "perceptive poet" is one who displays all of the six common features examined throughout this thesis. In summary, these are: an intense focus on inner spiritual life, as opposed to religious life; an avoidance of extreme emotional or physical behaviour and possible display of the spirit of fúkyó; a genuine experience of expanded consciousness marked by a particular interest in the "Perceptive Faculty"; a Gnostic understanding of the "Imaginative Faculty" or the relationship between expanded consciousness and creative inspiration; a recognition of the limits of language and intellect and, finally, employment of the literary device of symbolism.
Substantial similarity exists between the four selected poets. Despite enormous differences in terms of historical moment, religious background, culture, country and education, these poets are linked in at least six essential ways. Having formed a broad definition of the "perceptive poet", this thesis has attempted to create a more specific area of research within the general, interdisciplinary fields of comparative poetry and mysticism. It has also attempted to give greater academic credibility to this field and sought to return the word "mystic" into the field of religious studies, while creating a new term, "perceptive poets", more relevant to literary studies.

It is necessary to point out that for the "perceptive poets", the greatest literary work is that which is inspired by expanded consciousness. They are not overly concerned about prevailing literary traditions or expectations of readers because they are completely aware of their inability to communicate spiritual gnosis. For the sake of simply demonstrating the existence of a "divine spark in the soul" (King 109), they dedicate their life to the creation of new kinds of language which may lead certain readers inward to the discovery of this spiritual truth. Through suggestion and evocation, symbolism becomes a tool for transmitting momentary glimpses of heightened perceptivity to the reader. To examine their work according to usual methods of literary criticism is insufficient. The concluding point of this thesis, therefore, is that the work of the "perceptive poets" should be studied within a literary framework which takes into consideration all of the six basic common characteristics outlined above.
Possibilities for Further Research

This thesis is a small, foundational study which may be built upon in order to narrow the expansive, interdisciplinary field of "mystic poetry". The importance of this study lies in the fact that "neo-mysticism" has been claimed as a possible uniting factor in the study of religion because the genuine mystic experience would appear to be the essence of religion itself, and the essence of all sacred texts. For poets and artists, the importance of this study lies in the relationship between the expanded state of consciousness and inspiration because if the creative capacity of individuals can be nourished through increased attention to spiritual life, then this should be taken into consideration in the administration of creative arts education. Areas of research which might be expanded to assist in cultivating this field are briefly discussed in this Conclusion. Such areas might include: general extension of this study of singular poets in relation to the six common features identified in this thesis; more specific studies of female mystic poets in relation to the same six features; and more detailed studies of mystic poets in religions other than the four in this thesis and in relation to the six points of association.

Further research into the "perceptive poets" might include studies of other spiritually motivated and artistic figures in various fields of art, with reference to the six areas of commonality identified in this thesis. A primary poetic figure within the Western line of poets grappling with notions of "correspondences" and "symbolism", is
Rilke. In Chapter Four Rilke's "An Experience" was noted as displaying a particular concern for perceptivity. Of this poet, J. B. Leishman has said:

> What he called his 'work' came to mean for him more and more the experiencing and expression of 'reality', of intensity of 'being' and about his conception of reality and being, as about his dedicated search for them, there was something which, however much it may differ from true religion, can only be called religious. (Rilke, Poems 12)

Niebylski, discussing Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, makes the comment that "It is from this stillness that words emerge, and towards this perfect quietude that they aim" (118). Hartman also explains Kant's "transcendental consciousness" in relation to Rilke by saying that his "immediate consciousness" led him to perceive "eventfulness without event" (86). It has also been mentioned that Jephcott examines Rilke's "expanded consciousness" in his work. On many levels, it would appear that Rilke has a great deal in common with the "perceptive poets". Further research in this area, however, would be necessary to confirm whether Rilke's creative life or his spiritual life took priority and whether he recognised, as Bashó did, the significance of this difference.

Emerson is another poet clearly motivated by inner spiritual life. He speaks of a certain state of "attention" where "solitude, stillness, reflection, judgment and understanding all come together" (Geldard 94). According to Geldard, this poet was concerned with the subject of heightened consciousness. Geldard says:

> The attending consciousness is elevated to a very high level of perception where it beholds the nature of things, the unity within the multiplicity of the manifest universe (30).

Emerson seems to imply that higher perception gives one an increased awareness of a spiritual process of evolution. He says:
For, through that better perception, he stands one step nearer to things, and sees the 
flowing or metamorphosis; perceives that thought is multiform; that within the form of
every creature is a force impelling it to ascend into a higher form.... (*Essays* 214)
The poet also recognises a spiritual force associated with creativity. He believes:

The power depends on the depth of the artist's insight of that object he contemplates.

(*Essays* 195)

While Emerson has been associated with Transcendentalism, he could also be examined
within the framework of the "perceptive poets" as formed within this thesis. He could,
therefore, be more productively compared with Blake who is ordinarily associated with
the English Romantics, and also perhaps Rilke, who is usually examined within the
tradition of the Symbolists.

A number of other artistic figures, not necessarily poets, might be examined
within this framework. Gibran, for example, is described by Rilke's colleague, Rodin, as
"the William Blake of the Twentieth Century" (*Daoudi* 11). His intense spiritual
motivation is obvious. It would not be enough to describe his poetry as simply having
mystical elements. Yeats is another who might be researched in relation to the six points
of common ground. Brennan makes reference to him in his discussion of mystics (23)
and he is frequently compared to Blake, most likely because of his own interest in
consolidating Blake's work. The artist Kandinsky has also been mentioned within this
thesis as one whose artistic motivations were essentially spiritual. Like Rúmi, this artist
abandoned an apparently brilliant academic career to become a painter and mystic
(*Kandinsky* 12).

Maeterlinck must also be mentioned as one who appears to have grasped the
relationship between inner spiritual life and creativity. His work *The Great Secret*
examines the essence of religion, concluding that ancient Indian spiritual knowledge has
permeated most other belief systems. As a playwright he has been grouped with the Symbolists (Symons 84) and, as noted, he has also been described as a "mystic". Symons, in fact describes him as "a more profound mystic than Emerson" (89), while Maeterlinck himself praises the poet Novalis (Secret 75). Within the American Beat Poets, who are said to have emerged through the original influence of Emerson, and who generally demonstrate an interest in Eastern philosophy, one might also, perhaps, find a poet exhibiting the six key features of the "perceptive poet".

Poets and artists praised by the "perceptive poets" within this study, and who might be examined beside the six points of association, include: Raphael (Keynes 124; Davis 128), Leonardo da Vinci (Keynes 176) Michelangelo (Keynes 176), Cowper (Keynes 91) and Shakespeare (Davis 37). Brennan, in his discussion of symbolism, and in the context of the "Imaginative Faculty" makes reference to Shakespeare as one who had the "inexhaustible capacity for re-interpretation" (64). Kabír also notes the names "Dhruva", "Prahalad", "Sukhdeva" and "Raidas" (Ravidas) as having "tasted" the "nectar" of the spirit ("Says Kabír" 36). Bashó expresses his appreciation for the poets Nóiín, Saigyó, Sógi, Li Po and Tu Fu, many of whom were monks as well as poets (Shirane 8).

Other spiritually motivated figures who also exhibit many of the six points of common ground include a large number of Sufi poets: Saadi of Shiraz, Ibn Ata, Faríd ud-Dín (Attar), Bulleh Shah, Amir Khusrau and Ibn El-Arabi. Within the Sant tradition, the poets Námdev, Ramananda, Surdas, Tulsí Dás and Tukaram were motivated by inner spiritual life, while the work of Rabindranath Tagore also reflects Kabír's concerns. It is noteworthy that Tagore's translation of Kabír's poetry into English is one of the main reasons for Kabír having gained a Western readership, while Hedayetulluh places Tulsí
Dás on equal terms with Kabír (134). Within the Japanese and Chinese traditions, Han Shan is recognised as a mystic poet.

A study of four carefully selected, female "mystic poets" in relation to the six areas of association would make a complimentary study. In the introduction to Rúmi's *Masnavi i' Ma'navi*, Whinfield makes reference to the female Sufi saint of the second century of the Hijira, "Rábi'a of Basra" (xv) and links her with the lineage of Muhammad. Stories have also associated Kabír with the female mystic-poet Mirabai, who is also included in the Sant tradition, while Blake is said to have made fond reference to "St Theresa" (Keynes 176), an early Christian artist. In the early twentieth century quite a significant number of Japanese female poets of haiku became active and Higginson examines a number of these (36).

Examination of "mystic poets" from religious backgrounds other than Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or Christianity, and in relation to the six areas of association, would be productive. Certain works have claimed an association between Blakean symbols and symbols of the Jewish mystical Kabbalah. In particular, reference to the *Sefiroth* is frequently encountered. Laura DeWitt James, for example, makes an informative study of Blakean language, and language of the Kabbalistic tradition. She explains the Jewish mystical origins of words such as "Sefiroth", "Zohar", and "Cherubim", and points towards Kabbalistic concepts within Blake's work. Concepts such as God's creation through stages or "emanations", the four divisions of the *Sefiroth*, Chaos as a "state', or condition of consciousness" (44), and Kabbalistic notions of God's presence within man, shed additional light upon Blake's work. It would be appropriate to make comparison between these occurrences and similar occurrences in the work of a selected Jewish mystic poet. It would also be enlightening to make comparison between
these Jewish mystic poetic symbols and parallel symbols occurring in the work of poets from Eastern mystic traditions. Such comparisons, for example, might include a discussion of the Kabbalistic Sefiroth, and concepts of the "Tree of Life" in poetry, beside reference to the Eastern idea of the "chakras" and the "subtle body" as discussed in Chapter Six with reference to Kabír.
Discussion of a "New Principle"

Both Hartman and Niebylski have examined poets within Judeo-Christian cultures to investigate the ways in which these poets have been affected by the "nothingness at the heart of language" (Niebylski 4). In these studies, Rilke appears to represent a certain possibility of transformation for the poet of the modern era. Hartman's *Unmediated Vision*, a comparative study of Wordsworth, Hopkins, Rilke and Valéry set within a Christian context, explores the loss of religious certainties in relation to the arbitrariness of symbols. According to Hartman, Rilke moves beyond a point of despair to "overcome arbitrariness" (163), in contrast to Mallarmé who made arbitrariness "specific and total" (Hartman 163). Hartman believes the concept of Divine Creation disappeared with Milton, and rightly concludes that "The life of Christ is no longer the apparent background and principle to every legitimate association of ideas" (148). He argues that "the modern poet labors under the sign of sacred profanity" (148), and "does not acknowledge or does not know a mediator for his orphic journey" (148). Importantly, he then asks "Can a new principle be found?" (148), yet the only ground he identifies for this includes "Nature, the body, and human consciousness" (155).

Niebylski, in her study of Rilke, says "The threat of silence was for [Rilke] perennially present, but he was able to transform this threat into a positive force" (23). Niebylski believes that:
...twentieth-century Western poetry has had to struggle... with a whole army of notions that revolve around silence and negativity: semantic limits, the potentiality of white space, the fascination of nothingness (now made Western). (83)

She is particularly concerned with the "disastrous abysses, the problematic but fascinating black holes of our modern literary consciousness" (83), arguing that this is a reflection of what Steiner calls "the loss of a cultural and metaphysical centre within the Western experience" (qtd. in Niebylski 5). It is important to note that Steiner's comments refer specifically to the "Western experience". Cohn's "Mallarmé Century" should also be viewed as a Western phenomenon which Roland Barthes describes as a movement towards "a final stage in the history of literature" (qtd. in Niebylski 4). The Western myth of meaninglessness and "nothingness" on which any "supposed security is conceived to be precariously suspended" (Abrams, *Literary* 118), has resulted in "extreme solutions" being offered by poets such as Mallarmé.

This study has found that the "perceptive poets", while antagonistic towards religious dogma, are simultaneously motivated by inner spiritual experience. They appear to have achieved what psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi refers to as control of consciousness which is beyond the boundaries of religious doctrine. Csikszentmihalyi says:

In many respects, what the West has accomplished in terms of harnessing material energy is matched by what India and the Far East have achieved in terms of direct control of consciousness... short of aiming for perfection, we can look towards Eastern religions for guidance in how to achieve control of consciousness. (103)

This reflects Hartman's conclusion that the body, nature and human consciousness are the spheres in which to identify a "new principle". Csikszentmihalyi makes the
following connection between the subject of consciousness, creativity and religion. He explains:

Not only art but drama, music, and dance had their origins in what we now would call "religious" settings; that is, activities aimed at connecting people with supernatural powers and entities... This connection is not surprising, because what we call religion is actually the oldest and most ambitious attempt to create order in consciousness. (76)

In other words, neither religion itself, nor creativity, in this case, was the end goal. The goal of both religion and art was to create order in consciousness. It is in fact an ordering of consciousness which Rilke desires when he declares the need for "an inward ordering of the creative process" (Letters 36), and "profound concentration for forming's sake" (Letters 36). He seems to summarise the Western poetic crisis when he says in desperation, "it is so terribly necessary for me to find the tools of my art, the hammer, my hammer..." (Letters 36). It may be that these tools lie, not only in language, but in the development of the "Perceptive Faculty" itself.

This thesis takes human consciousness as a starting point. If Rilke managed to "overcome arbitrariness" through an understanding of the importance of ordering consciousness, it could be that the principle required for moving Western literature in a positive direction, is exactly "an inward ordering of the creative process" and "profound concentration," not "for forming's sake" but for its own sake. It is possible that the Western artist needs to discover the real artistic "tool" which is his or her own "Perceptive Faculty". This is similar to the inward-looking tendency to which Kandinsky refers. He says:

When religion, science and morality are shaken (the last by the strong hand of Nietzsche) and when outer supports threaten to fall, man withdraws his gaze from
externals and turns it inwards. Literature, music and art are the most sensitive spheres in which this spiritual revolution makes itself felt. (33)

Csikszentmihalyi suggests that the West look towards Eastern religions for "guidance in how to achieve control of consciousness". This is partly what has been attempted in this thesis. Csikszentmihalyi remarks:

The wisdom of the mystics, of the Sufi, of the great Yogis, or of the Zen masters might have been excellent in their own time – and might still be the best, if we lived in those times and in those cultures. But when transplanted to contemporary California those systems lose quite a bit of their original power. (21)

This thesis claims that the state of expanded consciousness is a source of creativity. The question to ask at this point is whether this knowledge can be translated into a form which is useful for creative arts education within contemporary cultures.
Discussion of Thesis in Relation to Creative Arts Education

The Western student of creative arts is led to believe that an artist in any field must follow a particular artistic myth carefully described more than half a century ago. This myth states that:

The artist who is above all things an artist cultivates a little choice corner of himself with elaborate care; he brings miraculous flowers to growth there, but the rest of the garden is but mown grass or tangled bushes. That is why many excellent writers, very many painters, and most musicians are so tedious on any subject but their own.

(Symons 36)

Symons addresses "the student of success", claiming that one in search of success should have "no more part in society than a monk in domestic life" (Symons 44). Concepts of the self-ordained, priestly-poet, or "self-proclaimed priest" (Niebylski 15) inhabiting the garden of his ego, still persist in modern Western culture. In the absence of genuine spiritual experience, mystic consciousness, or religious insight, however, perhaps the "student of success" can only ever have self-ordained importance. This is synonymous with the creation of poetry primarily concerned with itself, its limits and its imperfection, and this is a real issue faced by Western poets since the collapse of traditional philosophical-religious systems.

Emerson was of the opinion that "the modern world suffers from the loss of sacred intent in the aim of the Liberal Arts" (qtd. in Geldard 32). Despite this comment having been made more than one-hundred and fifty years ago, it may still be regarded as relevant. Alan Bloom's discussion of "How higher education has failed democracy and
impoverished the souls of today's students" (qtd. in Kelly 66) is also relevant. Tony Kelly examines Bloom's ideas and states his own concerns. Kelly believes modern education:

is not seen as promoting the unfolding of a consciousness exploring its place in the universe, nor the ability to enter imaginatively into the largest possible social and political conversation, but the skill to slot into the big factory of Australia Inc. (66)

Comments such as these are certainly made in the zeal of religious enthusiasm or, in some cases, fanaticism, however, it is true that education has moved away from its ancient purpose. Emerson refers to one Josef Pieper who explains that the ancient Greek "skole," or school, was a place for leisure and higher learning where the "task was spiritual insofar as the knowledge studied was founded on sacred documents and sacred principles" (Geldard 32).

A number of scholars in the fields of literature, religion and psychology suggest that the achievements of the mystics and visionaries are simply examples of an extension of ordinary human potential. Brennan says:

There seems, indeed, to be no difference between various kinds of imagination except that of intensity and energy: at the upper end of the scale all the mental activities are absorbed in the one perceptive act. (33)

He also says that visionary power is "an extraordinary intensification of common mental power" (29). Here, emphasis should fall upon the word "common". Emerson also suggests that "legitimate hints of revelation could be commonly experienced" (qtd. in Geldard 100), while Parrinder says "Mystical experience, it is claimed, is not merely an example and inspiration from the few to the many, but is something which most people can share" (4). He goes on to point out that "The mystic, as Findlay says, simply carries to the point of genius that which is the ordinary and indispensable side of religious
experience" (191). Even in the field of psychology, Csikszentmihalyi makes a relevant observation. He says:

> After all, mystical explanations are not necessary to account for the performance of a great violinist, or a great athlete, even though most of us could not even begin to approach their powers. The Yogi, similarly, is a virtuoso of the control of consciousness. (25)

These statements indicate the modern relevance of this subject of "expanded consciousness". Mayo, in his interdisciplinary work in psychology and creativity, also states that:

> Only great writers and artists can create, renew, or reinterpret our symbols. We live in an era when great art and new symbols are a major need. (120)

The "perceptive poets" of this study are experts in the control of consciousness, and all of these scholars above indicate that this control of consciousness is something which any person may learn.

Perhaps one should consider whether a focus upon perfection of artistic technique, self-analysis and self-reflection, "constructive" (or "Deconstructive") criticism, marketing and professionalism within creative arts education are sufficient for the cultivation of a consistently inspired, motivated, energetic, and confident creative culture. Niebylski states part of the problem succinctly when she says, "The truly self-reflexive poem is perennially in danger of cancelling itself" (7). If poetry has become its own most important subject and "its most persistent source of inspiration" (Niebylski 5), it would appear that this obsession with the self (the unconscious or the ego) has taken creativity into a void.

R. Maritain makes the observation that the artist is gifted with a certain kind of inclination for withdrawal. He says, "This concentration or withdrawal is the first gift
which is made to the poet, and it is also a natural disposition which must be *cultivated* [italics inserted] ("Magic" 15). It is precisely this cultivation of the artist's concentration, and inner silence which must be given attention. If one hopes for a more inspired culture, then the query should be whether there is a way to intensify perception and control over the "Imaginative Faculty". Csikszentmihalyi attempts to find a technique for ordering consciousness appropriate to modern Western culture. He claims that "the mystical heights of the Yu are not attained by some superhuman quantum jump, but simply by the gradual focusing of attention..." (151). Rilke also says, "What is needed is, in the end, simply this: solitude, great inner solitude" ([*Letters* 422]).

This research has attempted to confirm, in an academic way, the existence of a relationship between a spiritual state of expanded consciousness and creative inspiration itself. The results of this thesis indicate that a certain amount of time and academic consideration might be given for the development of research into the relationship between the spiritual self and creativity in any artistic field. Looking towards Eastern methods of "ordering consciousness", such as genuine meditation, or examining traditional Eastern methods of learning art forms, together with their ancient spiritual concepts, might be productive. Academic studies of the "perceptive poets" may be expanded in order to verify the relationship between spirituality and the arts, and therefore glean methods and approaches one might usefully employ. A study of the "perceptive poets", those poets whose creative life is fuelled by their spiritual life, could provide an avenue for reintroducing the subject of spirituality into creative arts education.
Don't try to imitate the achievements of great men of the past, 
but try to seek what they sought for!

(Bashó, *Haiku* Intro. i)

One Power alone makes a Poet –

Imagination The Divine Vision

(Blake, "Annotations to Wordsworth's Poems", Preface)
1 King makes reference to Eckhart's *Seelenfunklein*.

2 Sacred texts, or the poetry of "perceptive poets", and the mystic experience which evoked their formation, seem to be more significant than the religious movements which haphazardly arise from them.
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1 No page numbers available. Estimates given in thesis. No editor's name provided.

2 No page numbers available. Estimates given in thesis. No editor's name provided.

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