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## The Infinite Curiosity - Exploring Romantic Tendencies in *Raja Gidh*

Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to present that Bano Qudsia's novel *Raja Gidh* has certain elements which resemble the characteristic style of writings of the English Romantic Age in order to establish that Qudsia's novel is a romantic work. It has outlined some of the prominent features found in the writings of the English Romantic Age in order to trace them in the novel *Raja Gidh* through analysis of the novel's plot, behavioural patterns of the characters, themes and settings.

Since the novel is in the Urdu language, the researcher has translated certain important passages that were essential for the development of the argument into English. Starting with some definitions of the term romanticism, the discussion focuses on traces of the most prominent romantic characteristics, such as joy and melancholy, imaginative power, love for the unattainable things, romantic settings, anti-conventionalism and love of freedom in characters, themes, attitudes and plot, in the novel *Raja Gidh* in order to establish that it is predominantly a romantic novel.

**Key Words:** Qudsia, Romanticism, *Raja Gidh*, Beauty, Irrationality, Melancholy

### Introduction

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*Raja Gidh* (1981) is the first full-length novel written by novelist, short story writer, intellectual, and playwright Bano Qudsia (born 1928) who started the journey towards novel writing with her novellas *Parda* and *Shehr-e-Baymisaal*. The novel is generally considered to be one of the most widely read Urdu novels.

The literal meaning of the title *Raja Gidh* are: Vulture King. The title, however, has also been translated as *The King Buzzard* by Prof. Masood Ashraf Raja (2007). The novel apparently relates the story of the unfulfilled love of two characters Seemi Shah and Qayyum who remain under the influence of a deep melancholy and a sense of nostalgia due to their failure in love while the deeper meaning of the novel suggest the theme of *Halaal* and *Haraam*, where the bird vulture symbolically stands for the practice of *Haraam* or the forbidden. There are many elements in the novel, both objective and subjective, which make it a romantic tale. Apart from its romantic appeal, the novel also raises many psychological, moral and philosophical questions concerning the relationship of men and women in the Pakistani society.

The purpose of the present article is to establish that *Raja Gidh* is a romantic novel and the author of the novel is considerably influenced by the writers of the English Romantic Age. In order to fulfil this purpose, we need to start by taking a look at the major characteristics of the English Romantic Age. This investigation will give a deeper and more elaborate insight into *Raja Gidh* which is considered to be one of the best novels in Urdu literature. The present paper will be beneficial for the researchers of both the Urdu and the English literatures since it offers application of the characteristics the English Romantic Movement on a novel taken from the realm of Urdu literature.

## **Hypothesis**

The present research hypothesizes that Bano Qudsia's novel *Raja Gidh* is predominantly a romantic novel since it contains considerable amount of characteristics that are comparable to the characteristics of the writings of English Romantic Age.

## **Literature Review**

*Raja Gidh* is generally hailed as one of the best novels ever written in Urdu language (Khokhar 2000: p.116). Though the novel is a master piece and reflects Qudsia's creativity, yet certain critics censure Qudsia for being deeply influenced by her husband Ashfaq Ahmed. The presence of a male narrator in *Raja Gidh* made some critics to even say that the novel was in fact written by Ahmed rather than Qudsia. Khokhar in this regard believes that whenever Qudsia endeavours to resolve various issues related to Sufism under the influence of her husband's Sufi tendencies, she complicates the issues rather than resolving them. He also shows his concern about Qudsia's tendency for the frequent use of English words in her writing which gives a foreign touch to her plays and novels (pp. 115-16).

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Successful delineation of the rustic characters in urban settings is another important aspect of Qudsia's novels. Qudsia herself had a rustic background which enabled her to delineate the behaviour and psyche of her rustic characters quite intricately. Sadeed rightly assumes that Qudsia's novels portray her severe reaction against the culture of the big cities which is evident from her character portrayal of Rasheeda (in *Shehr-e-Baymisaal*) and Qayyum (in *Raja Gidh*). Both these characters belong to a rustic background and suffer from severe psychological dilemmas because of the intricacies of the urban life (1998, 574).

Qudsia portrays both male and female characters with equal mastery yet Akhtar asserts that Qudsia's delineation of the female characters is matchless since she unveils the female psyche with intricacy together with a thought provoking pungency (Akhtar 2000, 513). Akhtar believes that the central theme of *Raja Gidh* is man's moral degeneration which is portrayed through woman's vain love and man's sexual desire. He asserts that Qudsia has raised the male and female sexual relationship to the dignity of an epic where leaving behind the gender difference she delineates the emotional relationship between two human beings (p.496). Akhtar also considers Qudsia to be anti-reformist during the Reformist Movement of 1940's and 50's; she tends to favour traditionalism like many other authors of her time including Qudratullah Shahab, Nasir Kazmi, Saleem Ahmed and Ashfaq Ahmed (p.473). The tendencies like love for rustic life, Sufi spirituality and portrayal of intense human emotions make Qudsia's writings comparable with the writings of the English Romantic Age. However, before we can establish this relationship it is necessary to see what characteristics did the writings of the English Romantic Age had.

### **On Romanticism**

The writing tendencies of the writers of the English Romantic Age are usually summed up in the term *romanticism*. The term relates to the writings created from the late seventeenth century to the mid of nineteenth century. The term, however, has so many different definitions that it is almost impossible to reach a general definition. While realizing this difficulty, Daily (1998, p.487) rightly states, "There was not one Romanticism, but several different Romanticisms with varied and conflicting themes." As a way out the researcher has tried to put together the most striking qualities present in almost all the major romantic writers to call it romanticism. Imagination seems to be a synonym to romanticism since both literature and art of the period tended to capture human imagination: "What ultimately unites the greatest portraits of this period is that they capture not a likeness, but our imagination" (Tscherny 1987).

Romantic authors like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Byron emphasized on assertion of the self and gave value to the individual experience and "imagination was their watch word" (Drabble 2001, p.843). Apart from these three elements, most of the writers set a revolt against the existing socio-cultural conventions and were more interested in the inner and subjective experiences rather than the objective and outer experiences. The element of revolt led the romantic mind even to Satanism (Thorslev 1963). Some

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tendencies common among most of the writers of English Romantic Movement have been pointed out by Daily (1998, pp.487-488):

1. The supplementation of empirical knowledge with knowledge gained through intuition or imagination.
2. The focus on subjective experience or "inwardness"
3. The emphasis on the limitations of intellect and reason
4. The idea of conflict as inherent in human nature
5. The acceptance, and even celebration, of the irrational; and
6. The view of nature as the inner source of transcendent meaning in the universe.

Many critics believe that novelists and poets of the age, apart from depicting natural beauty, wrote highly emotional, thrilling and exciting narratives and poems (Kelly 1990; Kiely 1972; Leavis 1962; McGann 1983). Aikin (1994) while discussing the characteristics of the English romantic novel also asserts that the romantic novels were exciting and thrilling to such a degree that their thrill even dominates the description of natural scenes.

Another set of the romantic tendencies derived by Ogle are “escape, primitivism, revolt, eroticism, pessimism, mysticism, and realism” (1943, p.3). Compton-Rickett’s further complicates the definition by saying that romanticism is an “expression of sharpened sensibilities, heightened imaginative feelings and a love of beauty” (1963).

Miles (1999) believes that apart from other attributes, the tendency of melancholic thinking was the hallmark of the romantic mind which led many romantic writers towards philosophical expressions. . This tendency of the writers made him label the novels of romantic age as “philosophical romance” (Miles 2001). Romantic poets and novelists were greatly inspired by the supernatural phenomenon (Clery 1975) and dealt with natural objects beyond their physical qualities. Abraham believes that the romantic poets wrote in a visionary mode of poetry and can necessarily be called “poet-prophets”; they believed in spontaneity and the essential element of their poetry was “poet’s personal feelings” (p.125). One last tendency of the romantics was the tendency of blending together joy and melancholy This tendency made Kermode believe that among the romantics, “joy cannot be had without anguish” (Kermode 2002).

It can be said that all the writers of the romantic age had a different tinge of romanticism; yet, features like intense emotions, subjectivity, irrationality, mental and psychological conflict, melancholy, nostalgia, eccentricity” creative imagination and a desire for freedom from social, cultural or religions norms, were present in almost all the major poets and writers of the age.

The researcher will now endeavour to trace some of these features of romanticism in Bano Qudsia’s novel *Raja Gidh*.

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## **Methodology**

The study carries out qualitative analysis of the scenes, settings, characters, and attributes of writing style prevalent in Qudsia's novel *Raja Gidh* in order to establish that the novel contains several tendencies that are comparable to the tendencies of the writings of English Romantic Age and the writer is influenced by those writings. Before carrying out the analysis the researcher has collected some characteristics of the writers of the English romantic age through various definitions of the term English Romanticism. These characteristics are then traced in *Raja Gidh* through analysis of the novel's themes, plot construction, settings, and behavioural patterns and emotional states of the characters.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Romantic tendencies of the late eightieth and early nineteenth century have been used as theoretical framework for the present research. These tendencies are determined through various definitions of the term *romanticism* given by Ogle (1943), Daily (1998), Drabble (2001), Miles (2001). These definitions have been discussed in detail in the literature review section.

## **Instrument and Delimitation**

Prominent characteristics of the English romanticism have been used as research instrument in this study. Plenty of characteristics can be gathered through various definitions of the term romanticism; however the study has been delimited to the a few characteristics: beauty, curiosity and irrationality, unconventional theme and plot, blending of joy, melancholy and pessimism, irrationality and Revolt against social norms, mysticism, subjectivity and the supernatural. The focus of study is limited to thoughts, behaviour and relationship of the four major characters Seemi Shah, Qayyum, and Prof. Sohail and Aftab.

## **Analysis: Romantic Tendencies in *Raja Gidh***

### **Beauty, Curiosity and Irrationality**

Romantic writings display "heightened imaginative feelings and a love of beauty" (Compton-Ricket 1963) which is expressed both in form of natural and human beauty. Qudsia's *Raja Gidh* is comparable to the romantic writings as it contains very vivid images of both the natural and the human beauty. Seemi's beauty and attractiveness, as described by the narrator Qayyum, together with the beauty of the Lawrence Garden depicts Qudsia's flare for the beauty of nature. Seemi doesn't have an extraordinary physical beauty but the charisma of her personality makes her aesthetically appealing and for this very reason all the major characters of the novel fall in love with her though none of them succeeds completely. Aftab falls in love with Seemi but leaves her to marry

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Zeba. Qayyum falls in love with Seemi and is able to establish physical relations with her but Seemi cannot give her heart to Qayyum as she keeps on loving Aftab till the end of her life. Professor Sohail falls in love with Seemi but cannot even express his love to her. So all the characters try to get their satisfaction and joy in their own way but none of them succeeds.

The irrationality of behaviour in the quest for unattainable objects again is a romantic attribute as pointed out by Daily (1998) who considered irrationality to be the very core of romanticism. The quest of all the lovers including Seemi, Qayyum, Prof. Sohail and even Aftab, is an irrational quest since they all know very well that the object of their desire is very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Their quest is a quest for something too difficult, something unattainable, and something that deepens their suffering and melancholy after just a few moments of joy. Their passion is the passion for the unattainable. Qayyum finds himself quite helpless in this regard and says, "*Raat ko ponay aik bajay kisi aur admi ki mehbooba key sath yun gahri batain kartey hoay sarkon per ghomna aik anokhi see baat thi.*" (It was quite a strange thing to walk on the roads at midnight, with someone else's mistress and to talk so intimately with her.) (p. 221). Qayyum could not win Seemi's love even after spending many nights with her. She remains something unattainable for him till the end of the novel.

The theme of *Raja Gidh* is the practice of *Haraam* (the forbidden) and the mental and spiritual damages caused by such practice which culminates into madness. The thought patterns and the misery of the vultures in the sub-plot seem to be a symbolic representation of Aftab's life in the main plot. Both Aftab and the vulture (of sub-plot) indulge themselves in the practice of the forbidden and both feel a strange sort of maddening mental and emotional instability. Both fulfil their desires yet both remain utterly dissatisfied and disturbed. This theme dominates both the main and the sub-plots. Behind this theme is the ceaseless and intense curiosity of Qayyum for women (i.e. Seemi and Abida). Qayyum is a highly romantic character as his unending desire to establish the forbidden relationship provides a parallel to the romantic sensibility dominated by the sense of revolt against society and religion, love for beauty, and eroticism (i.e. Aftab's physical relations with Seemi and Abida).

### **Joy, Melancholy and Pessimism**

Joy accompanied by melancholy is the defining characteristic of the English romantic period as pointed out by Miles (1999) and Kermode (2002). The tendencies like melancholy and nostalgia may lead to pessimism. A study of Qudsiya's characters in *Raja Gidh* provides sufficient matter to assert that almost all her characters display this blending of joy and anguish through their thoughts and relationship. This blend of joy and anguish, at times strong and at times mild, is traceable throughout the novel.

No one in the novel is happy without the texture of misery in his or her happiness. This melancholy is mostly caused because of the pessimistic thinking of the characters. Qayyum, the narrator of the story, is the saddest, most miserable and the most pessimistic

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of all characters. The joy and satisfaction he receives from his relationship with Seemi Shah or, in the later part of the novel, from Abida, is always of a fleeting nature because both the women he loves desert him after short phases of physical interaction.

Qayyum's pessimistic nature cannot derive any happiness from life after failing to win Seemi's heart: "*Seemi key ishq main fail ho ker mujhay pass honay ki khabar ajeeb see lagi.*" (After being flunked in Seemi's Love, the news of passing my final examination could not please me.) (p. 139). All the attributes of a patient of melancholic depression are present in Qayyum. He is a patient of ulcer, anxiety and depression; he cannot concentrate on any of his life's activities. During one of his meetings with Professor Sohail, Aftab talks like a tired, defeated, woe-stricken, worn out, aimless person: "*Main under sey is qadar praganda hun key concentrate nahin ker sakta sir. Darasal mujhay khud nahin maloom key mujhay kia chahiay. Main kiss liay perishan hu [...]Main is qabil nahin hun. Main koi mission apna nahin sakta\_ no thank you.*" (I am so disturbed from within that I cannot concentrate, sir; in fact I don't even know what I hanker for, why am I so sad [...] I can't have a mission in life) (pp. 336-37).

Seemi Shah is another melancholic soul; her melancholy and her misery provide a pivotal point around which all the rest of the melancholies of the novel seem to revolve. Aftab's sadness has its roots in Seemi, Qayyum's melancholy resides in the image of Seemi and even Professor Sohail's dissatisfaction resides in his failure to achieve Seemi's love. Seemi Shah, on the other hand, has the ultimate dejected soul who loses all the mirth of life soon after her parting with Aftab. This mixture of joy, melancholy and pessimism prevails throughout the novel and every single character suffers from it to some extent.

### **Heart Over Mind**

Romantics were highly imaginative as they trusted more on the activity of heart rather than mind (Drabble 2004). Imagination is a powerful tool in the novel and makes it a romantically charged novel. Seemi's imagination is dominated by the image of Aftab which haunts her thoughts so much that she even has his hallucinations. Her imagination is strong and continuously driven towards a single object, i.e., Aftab. Seemi knows very well that Aftab is out of her reach; but when she imagines how Aftab and Zeba would be spending their time, she becomes more melancholic. When Qayyum suggests that Seemi should write a letter to Aftab, she refuses comparing her letters (which she would not write) with withered flowers: "*Kia milay ga khat likh ker? Meray khat to shakhon per he sookh gaiay na main ney unhain guldan main sajaia na kisi ney unhain galay ka haar kia.*" (What would be the use of writing a letter? My letters are like flowers, withering away on their branches; no one would ever put them in a vase nor make a necklace out of them.) (p. 128).

Seemi's melancholy springs out of the failure in love and ends up in the deep feeling of jealousy. In a fit of melancholy and jealousy, her imagination works even more strongly. She is capable of creating imaginary scenes about the relationship of Aftab and his wife Zeba. While talking to Qayyum, she says, "*Sardion main.... Lambi ratoon main aik hi*

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*takiay per sir dharey woh adhi adhi raat tuk batian kerain gay— aur aftar usay meray mutalik aisey sub kuch batiaay ga.. jaisa— main haqiqat nahin thi aik wahim thi.... Aik infatuation”* (They would talk to each other till mid night, with their heads resting on a pillow, in the long nights of winter—and Aftab will tell her about me—as if I was not a reality but a delusion—an infatuation.) (p. 125).

Seemi’s imagination after parting from Aftab was much complex because when Aftab asks Seemi to become an air hostess, she creates an intensely emotional imaginary scene about what will happen if she becomes an air hostess. She imagines that as an air hostess one day she would serve Aftab and his family in a flight and would take Aftab’s son to the toilet where the child would ask her about why she is kissing him or why she is weeping and she would not be able to tell him the reason (Qudsiya 1997, pp.159-160). These incidents show a great imaginative capability of both Seemi Shah and the author.

### **Irrationality, Emotions and Revolt against Social Norms**

The writers of the English Romantic Age did not like to follow the traditional or the conventional thoughts and structures in writing poetry or novels and were driven by individualism. Traditions were sometimes ignored or broken to the degree of rebellion; Thorslev asserts in this regard, "whatever the romantic movement is, it is certainly a period of rebellious individualism" (1963, 221). This trait of the romantic writers is very noticeable in *Raja Gidh*. The novel opens with the scene of a classroom where girls and boys, sitting together, hear intellectual outbursts of a young professor who introduces himself to the class in a novel way. Metaphors like “*bhatti say nikla makai ka dana*” (freshly backed popcorn) for the October day, “*Choolistani hernian*” (choolistianian deer) for the girls, “*Amreeki filmon ka charta suraj*” (a rising star of the American movies) and “six million dollar man” for Aftab Butt (Qudsiya 1997, pp. 5-6), used in the very beginning are also strikingly unconventional because of their novelty and farfetchedness.

Though the division of the plot into chapters and subchapters is quite conventional yet the sub-plot of the novel that resembles a beast fable seems unique and quite unconventional where birds have called a conference to discuss various issues including the madness of the vulture community<sup>1</sup>.

Seemi is an educated urban girl of moderate intellectual capability who turns into a philosopher after losing her love. Qayyum, who has a rustic background, gets inspired by her personality, right at the beginning of the novel: “*Mian nay is sey pheley itni mukamal sheri larki nahin dekhi thi.*” (I had never seen such a complete urban girl.) (p. 21). Seemi is herself a modern girl yet she hates the modern ways of her parents. She feels suffocated when she observes the mechanical behaviour of her parents and prefers to stay away from her parents’ home. Seemi believes that she cannot live with her parents because, “*hum teenon I’kathay rehney kay process main aik saturated point per aa gay*

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<sup>1</sup> See Masood Ashraf Raja’s article *The King Buzzard: Bano Qudsiya’s Postnational Allegory and the Nation-State* for an in-depth study of *Raja Gidh*’s sub-plot and significance of the birds’ allegory.



*thay.*” (the three of us had attained a point of saturation in the process of living together.) (p. 212). She hates the artificial affection and care her parents have for her and always strives to keep away from them.

Seemi’s love for Aftab is the strongest and the most profound romantic factor in the novel. Her love is blind, passionate, intense and perpetual, nothing can change it, and nothing can replace it. She cannot listen to any logic or reason against her love for Aftab. She is not satisfied at having enjoyed Aftab’s love for a limited time; she wants a complete, unending relationship with Aftab. While talking to Qayyum she says: “*Mohabat panay wala kabhi is baat per to mutamin nahin ho jata key usay aik din key liay mukamal taur per aik shakas ki mohabat hasil hui thi. Mohabat to Quyyum her din key sath aada chati hey. Jub tak roz is tasveer main rung na bharo tasawar feed kerney lagti hey.*” (A lover cannot be satisfied with just one day’s love of the beloved; love needs to be revived every day; love’s like a painting that starts fading out if you don’t add more colours to it every day.) (p. 127).

Seemi’s love for Aftab matures and deepens further after Aftab’s marriage with Zeba; she starts feeling barrenness and meaninglessness in her life. Qayyum, however, knows that Seemi is after a phantom that would never become a reality. Failure in love converts an ordinary girl into a philosopher. Seemi admits herself: *Quyyum—main tumhain aik baat bataon- jab koi admi nakam ho jata hey to phir woh apnay aap ko analyze kertay kertay philosopher bun jata hey.*” “Let me tell you one thing Qayyum, when someone fails, he indulges so much into self-analysis that he becomes a philosopher” (p. 57).

On the day of his marriage, Aftab, while talking to Qayyum, comes up with his view of Seemi’s problem: “*Semi khabi nahin samhaj sakti—woh both ziada zinda hey—mohabat kerti hey ji jan sey—zindagi hisab ka sawal nahin hey lakin woh usay kisi formulay sey hal karna chahti hey.*” (Seemi can never understand— she is too alive— she loves with her whole being— (she doesn’t know that) life is not a mathematical question which can be solved with some mathematical formula.) (p. 75). Aftab knows Seemi’s psyche very well: “*Seemi bari zidi hay\_ bohat ziada\_ woh mohabat ko kisi jamid lamhay main band kerna chati hay.*” (Seemi is too obstinate—she wants to engage love into some static moment of time.) (p. 79). Seemi’s love for Aftab is irrational and has no boundaries. She would love him till the dooms day even when she knows that he is unfaithful to her. She knows that Aftab is not faithful to her yet she would love her till the dooms day. She tells Qayyum, “*Mujhay Aftab sey mohabat hey aur qiyamat tak rahaey gi lakin woh bewafa hay.*” (I love Aftab and will keep on loving him till the dooms day, but he is unfaithful.) (p. 172). Seemi’s strong spiritual love for Aftab and the intensity of her emotions make her a befitting romantic character.

Seemi cannot handle the problem of being alone successfully. The sense of solitude is probably too deep rooted in her; she can’t go back to her parents’ place because she thinks that they will not recognize her, she spends time with Qayyum but Aftab’s memories haunt her so much that she utterly forgets Qayyum’s presence and ignores him rather ruthlessly. Life for her has no meaning; she has no aim, no ambition in life. Aftab

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is her only aim, her only ambition, her only hope; but, at times, even that aim, that ambition, that hope starts getting obscure. She is emotionally disturbed and her emotional conflicts are evident from this remark: “*Main.... chahati hun key Aftab badal jaiy—khosh rahay aur mujhay bhool jaiy aur main chahti hun who mujhay khabi na bhola—jaisey main chahti hun us ka khat khabhi na aiay aur phir bhi her roz main us key khat ka intizar kerti hun.*” (I wish that Aftab may change – forget me, and live a happy life; and I also wish that he may never forget me– just as I wish that his letter may never come and yet I wait for his letter every day.) (p. 233). Seemi also seems puzzled about her emotions and while talking to Qayyum says, “*Main to khabi hasad sey aashna na thee [...] Ab mujhay aftab ka khayal kyun nahin aata- main sara din Zeba key mutaliq kyun sochti rehti hun.*” (I was never familiar with the feeling of jealousy [...] why don’t I think about Aftab now? – why do I think about Zeba all the time?) (p. 169). These emotional conflicts and psychological complexity are apparently caused due to her irrational thinking and her uncontrollable desire for an object which is unattainable.

### **Romantic Settings, Mysticism and the Supernatural Elements**

Ogle (1943) considers subjectivity and mysticism to be essential elements of romanticism. Self-exploration and subjectivity are two sources that lead towards mysticism and spirituality. Qudsia’s characters show intense tendency towards self-exploration, spirituality and mysticism. She provides apt settings to her characters where mystic imagination is easy to be grasped and nourished. She deliberately selected Lahore as a setting for her novel which appears to be the most appropriate setting for a romantic theme. Lahore is a historic and legendary city of Pakistan. Its very name has a romance in it. Its parks, its bazaars, its gardens, its foods, its historic buildings and its people; all have a power to invoke the human imagination and the passion for beauty. Shah asserts that “Lahore is a love affair; it has nothing to do with reason.” (2005, p. 225). Sidhwa (2005, p. 227) considers Lahore a synonym of romance: “Perhaps this is the word that best captures the city of Lahore: romance.... Romance floats in the very air of Lahore.... The very climate of Lahore is passionate.” At the very beginning of the novel Bano introduces Seemi as “a creature of the Gulbarg society”. She describes Seemi’s appearance and attitude in relation to her social background. The mention of Lahore, by name, occurs the first time on page 120, when Qudsia associates the romantic melancholy of the city with its gloomy evenings: “*Mujhay sham us pul per mili jo chawani ko sheher sey milati hey. Us pul key uqab main stadium tha aur samany do rowia sarak thi. Lahore sheher tha*” (I met the Evening on the bridge that joins the cantonment with the city. In the background was the stadium, a double road in the front; and there was the city of Lahore.) (p. 120). Thus, no other place could have been as appropriate a setting for a romantic novel as Lahore.

Lawrence Garden with its tall camphor trees, cuckoos and crows, the gloomy evenings, the shrine of a Sufi called Baba Turtmir and the presence of certain supernatural beings, becomes the most appealing romantic setting in the novel. It is the escape-point for self-pitying Qayyum; and a meeting point of Seemi and Qayyum as well. Qudsia describes

Qayyum's first meeting with Seemi in the Lawrence Garden in such an imaginative way that it seems to be an image of some Gothic dream:

*"Kaheen door bagh main aik koil bilak rahi thi. Main aahista aahista Baba Turat Murad kay mazar ko janay wali sarak per ja raha tha.. phir main nay Seemi ko dekha. Kafi fasaly sey- who kafoor kay darakhat taley zanoon per sir dharey chup chap bethi thi. Kafoor ka darakhat- seemi—aur sham mujhey meray khawboon ka hisa lagay."*(A cuckoo was cooing in some distant corner of the garden. I was slowly heading towards the road that led to Baba Turtmir's shrine when I saw Seemi at a distance—she was sitting silently under a camphor tree with her head on her knees—the camphor tree—Seemi—and the evening appeared to be images of my dreams.) (Qudsia 1997, p. 121).

The serenity of the park, its birds, camphor trees, and the camphor leaves spread on the grass; all represent the writer's love for nature and its objects and remind us of Wordsworth's poetry. There is also a strong supernatural presence in the Lawrence Garden which is quite comparable to the supernatural atmosphere of Coleridge's poems *Kubla Khan* and *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The place where Seemi and Qayyum meet is haunted by ghosts and genies. One of them, "nine meters tall and bald headed" (Qudsia 1997, pp. 134-153), carrying a torch in his hand appears and disappears from and into the trees very often. But no direct relation is established between them; they can neither frighten Seemi and Qayyum nor do they interfere into their affairs.

Seemi's spiritual and mystical strength is also revealed at several points in the novel. She can tell about little incidents of Aftab's life without being physically present at the occasion; she astonishes Qayyum by telling him about how he met Aftab at the airport and how Aftab received a cut on his face in the morning while shaving. Qayyum, upon hearing this, calls her a clairvoyant.

## Conclusion

Elements and characteristics like preference of emotions over intellect, love for nature and the unattainable beauty, imaginative expression, melancholy, individualism, unconventional treatment of plot, and delineation of the supernatural, are spread throughout *Raja Gidh* and can be observed quite vividly. All these qualities significantly resemble the characteristics of the writings of the English Romantic Age and establish *Raja Gidh* as predominantly a romantic novel.

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Note: *All the translations included in this paper are the researcher's own.*

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