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Open-ended Self-Realization: Unity of Being (That Thou Art) and Self- Release (Moksha) in the Rumi's Poems in the Light of Non-dualism

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Abstract:

As the religion is a social phenomenon, it brings about social changes for the woe or the weal of the whole mankind. Islam, Non-dualism, Christianity and Buddhism witness to this fact. So Religion as such must be viewed objectively, and man has to live with it either for his survival. Dualism, polytheism, pantheism, animism, and even all form of materialism, scientism and humanism have to viewed as so many different replies to the same non-dual self *Atman* within each man. It is clarified that from a cursory survey of the history of mankind and organic evolution that along with the regress there has been progress as well. It is the fact that no person can live without *Atman* (self-man) by which each every person continues in its own being, and by which each person comes toward higher well being. And this is the fact that each man works with their man-self as is implied by the 'that thou art' by the doctrine of the *Brahman-Atman* of the Upanishads. In this paper an attempt has been made to explain how

through the removing of ignorance (nescience), the Reality stands self-revealed, and how self-knowledge can be attained which at the end leads to self-release (*Moksha*). The doctrine of nescience is a postulate which its utility lies in effecting release which is of the very nature of the eternal Self.

Keywords: non-dualism, self-realization, unity of being, liberation.

Advaita considers the world (not-self) to be superimposition on the Self. In other words it is an appearance of the Real. Even while there are the appearances the non-dual Reality has not ceased to be what it is. In one's relative experience one has frequent instances of illusory appearance. With the help of these illustrations one can appreciate the importance of the concept of superimposition or nescience as what makes the one Reality appears as if many. The concept of superimposition provides the key to understand Advaita. When one says that man is manifestation of God, it does not mean that God manifests Itself. Man is the astrolabe of those exalted attributes,

The attribute of man is to manifest God's signs.
Whatever is seen in man is the reflection of God,
Even as the reflection of the moon in water."

Whinfield 2001, 459, M V

The realization of the unity of the self and Brahman is never sublated, as it is knowledge not determined by any injunction. Having defined superimposition in general with the help of empirical examples such as rope-snake and nacre-silver, let one proceeds to perceive the nature of the metaphysical supreme position of the not-self (anatman) on the self (atman) and vice versa. A preliminary objection may be raised as how can there be reciprocal superimposition of the Self and the not-self which are opposed to each other

like light and darkness. The answer is that they are not opposites. Rope and snake, or nacre and silver are not opposites; the former in each case serves as the substance on which the latter appear. Therefore, if there is the potency of agency in release, release may be lost once having been gained, even as potency of agency in release leads to actuality at some later time. Causes have potency even at the time when they do not effectuate their results. So long as their causes associated with potency, there is the contingency of making their effects arise on a subsequent occasion. Thus if agency were to remain in the released soul in the state of potentiality, Its release will not be final.

Man is totally concerned about the totality which is his/her true being and which is disrupted in time and space. Man is unconditionally in time and space. Man is unconditionally concerned about that which conditions her/his being beyond all the conditions in him/ her and around her/him. According to Tillich “being itself is beyond essence and existence.” (Masih, 61) and according to Advaitism, like Paul Tillich and Wittgenstein, “that thou art’ is wordless and can be described as ‘silence.’ This is akin to Shankar’s doctrine of Nirguna or differenceless Brahman, and, by becoming Brahman one overcomes all differences of everyday life.

You journeyed from the embryo state to rationality
Without footsteps or stages or change of place,
The journey of the soul involves not time and place.
And my body learnt from the soul its mode of
journeying,
Now my body has renounced the bodily mode of
journeying;
It journeys secretly and without form,
though under a form.” He added,

“One day I was thus filled with longing
 To behold in human form the splendours of ‘The
 Friend,’
 To witness the Ocean gathered up into a drop,
 The Sun compressed into a single atom;
 And when I drew near to the shore of the sea
 The day was drawing to a close.
 Whinfield 2001, 204, M III

That all that is and appears to human experience is
 Brahman, and, that Brahman is *Atman* which has been thus
 elaborated. This is *Atman*; “that art thou, svetaketu” (Masih,
 62) If Brahman is *Atman* then the most important
 characteristic of it consciousness. It is that which remains in
 the self-same manner in one’s waking, dreaming and
 dreamless sleep. It is pure consciousness, without being the
 consciousness of any object. It remains the same, without any
 change in spite of its manifestations. It is that which makes
 individual to know their objects.

The sound and speech arise from the thought;
 Thou knowest not where is the Ocean of thought;
 Yet when thou seest fair waves of speech,
 Thou knowest there is a glorious Ocean beneath them.
 When waves of thought arise from the Ocean of
 Wisdom,
 They assume the forms of sound and speech.
 These forms of speech are born and die again,
 These waves cast themselves back into the Ocean
 Form is born of That which is without form,
 And goes again, for, “Verily to Him do we return.”
 Whinfield 2001, 35, M I

“Here the object of knowledge changes according as it
 is something past or something future or something present;

but the knowing agent does not change. Since his nature is eternal presence.” (Masih, 67) Madhusudan also writes that underlying the individual self as the doer and enjoyer of acts, there is the unchanging self which remains the witness of all changes. “Although, the means of knowledge. Knowledge itself and the thing to be known may vary, the one who witness their existence and non-existence does not vary at all.” (Masih, 68) So for knowing Brahman, one should know one’s own real self. As such one has to ascertain the nature of the individual self before understanding the identity of *Jiva* and Brahman. But what is important to know is that a *Jiva* is identical with Brahman, and this is a matter of realization, this realization is nothing but freedom and this means becoming Brahman itself. In fact this kind of realization is non-dual, different from subject-objects-based reasoning (Masih, 100)

The sound and speech arise from the thought;
 Thou knowest not where is the Ocean of thought;
 Yet when thou seest fair waves of speech,
 Thou knowest there is a glorious Ocean beneath them.
 When waves of thought arise from the Ocean of
 Wisdom,
 They assume the forms of sound and speech.
 These forms of speech are born and die again,
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 Form is born of That which is without form,
 And goes again, for, “Verily to Him do we return.”

Whinfield, 35

For Shankara, all acts are tainted with desires and, where there is desire, there can be no release. In truth, freedom is the eternal nature of the Self. So it is only figuratively stated that release is to be achieved, but what in

fact stands in the way of freedom is nescience (*ajnana*). When ignorance removed through knowledge, there is release. This is in fact not a new acquisition; it is indeed the realization of what eternally is. Anything that is caused by action is bound to perish. Again, actions are always accompanied with egoism, and, egoism means that the identity of *jiva*-brahman has not yet been reached. Without this identity there can be no freedom in the essence of the non-dual self. In effect, however, both modes result in the same realization. The non-ness is as between the real 'I' which is the inner self and Brahman. What is sublated is the pseudo-I which is the ego. If this is done the non-dual Brahman alone remains.

Behold, then, God's action and man's action;
 Know, action does belong to us; this is evident.
 If no actions proceeded from men,
 How could you say, 'Why act ye thus?'
 The agency of God is the cause of our action,
 Our actions are the signs of God's agency;
 Nevertheless our actions are freely willed by us,
 Whence our recompense is either hell or 'The Friend.
 Whinfield 2001, 41, M I

Therefore, not only is action futile with reference to self-release, but also it will be the cause of evil in so far as it will create obstacles in the way of release. So one who seeks release has to renounce all action and adopt the way of knowledge; that is, knowledge of Brahman or *Atman*.

You must abandon and ignore your own knowledge,
 And, dip your hand in the dish of abnegation of
 knowledge.

Whinfield, 135

And,
 Our eyes are subject to many infirmities;

Go! annihilate your sight in God's sight.
 For our foresight His foresight is a fair exchange;
 In His sight is all that ye can desire.

Whinfield, 29

And,
 Defect and Not-being the Mirror wherein
 Absolute Perfect Being is reflected.
 He drew forth a mirror from his side
 A mirror is what Beauty busies itself with.
 Since Not-being is the mirror of Being,
 If you are wise, choose Not-being (self-abnegation).
 Being may be displayed in that Not-being,
 Wealthy men show their liberality on the poor.
 He who is an hungered is the clear mirror of bread,
 The tinder is the mirror of the flint and steel.
 Not-being and Defect, wherever they occur,
 Are the mirrors of the Beauty of all beings.
 Because Not-being is a clear filtered essence,
 Wherein all these beings are infused.

Whinfield, 72

In this text “the self is to be seen, heard, reflection on, and contemplated,’ quoted in Upanishad. (Mahadevan, 9) It means that to release according to the Vedantin is hearing, reflection and meditations. The means then is enjoined on the seeker who is as a consequence of executing the injunction, attain release. To this contention one reply that the self is not attained by any means, for whatever is attained, or brought about, is non-eternal. The self is taught in scripture as what is eternal, pure and ever released it purposes is only to turn the attention of the seeker to the True Self.

Who is ‘I am”: the non-dual self is the soul which is non-different from the absolute self according to Advaitin.

The soul which is set up by reflection at the early stage of meditation, or through the empirical experience through dreaming, the archetypes of Mana personality at this occasion of identification with Manda experience arises the worship of humanity which Augustus Comte sought to popularize. The soul which is non-different from the absolute Self cannot be identified with the mind-body complex which is inert; it is only the intelligent being. If it is non-different from the Absolute Self, then agency and enjoyer ship are set up by nescience. Scripture says that there can be no empirical usage where there is no quality, and that such usage is possible only where there is apparent duality. "Where there is duality as it were there one sees another." Thus after showing that agency and enjoyer ship are in the state of nescience, scripture denies those very agency and enjoyer ship in the state of knowledge. (Mahadevan, 11) even so in the state of release (knowledge) too, dispelling the darkness of nescience by the lamp of knowledge, the self itself becomes absolute, satisfied and happy." (Mahadevan, 11) Even in the flawless non-dual Self there is the defect which is called nescience and therefore it does not import any real defeat into the self. "Ignorance is the sole cause of all evils and that all phenomena from the mind, including ego, up to the physical body constitute the not-self, and that the not-self is wrongly identified with the Self." (Mahadevan,22)

Seek annihilation and adore change of state.
 You have already seen hundreds of resurrections
 Occur every moment from your origin till now;
 One from the inorganic state to the vegetive state,
 From the vegetive state to the animal state of trial;
 Thence again to rationality and good discernment;
 Again you will rise from this world of sense and form.
 Whinfield, 340

“Where indeed, of this one, all has become the Self, there be what and whom would one see?” (Mashi, 10) from this text one can learn that the self-consciousness is not the conditioned soul to which enjoyer ship, activity, etc., being relevant. So the consciousness can be acquired by the seer who reflects. Reflection is acquisition of the knowledge through which consciousness increases. When the mind reflects, the individual soul come out of the darkness of ignorance and enters to the highness of knowledge or consciousness which has been proved through the theory of the trans-substantial motion by Mulla Sadra. Here the individual self come to the high gradation of Being according to the principiality of existence; in this way one sees that the world and whatever inside is coming to becoming each every moment in life. But what is importance of being discussed here is that the seeker as the reflector if he/she ignores reflecting—that is refusing the knowledge gradually—her/his mind comes to be identified with the mind-body complex which is inert and in this way her/his mind goes gradually into the state of rigor mortis, this is, gradually death. That means although bodily alive, she/he is mentally dead. The one who realizes the self consciousness, one will realize everything in the empirical world—living alive in the empirical life. And the one whose mind is deprived of reflecting will never come to the becoming life. The one (I) (I am therefore, I am thinking) before coming to realize oneself, one first knows who ‘I am’; that is, self-knowledge which is independent, and is not expectant of the cognition of what is to be done.

He lacks wisdom, so as to boast of being alive,
And also half wisdom, so as to assume to be dead?
That half wise one became as one utterly dead
In order to rise up out of his degradation.

If you lack perfect wisdom, make yourself as dead
 Under the shadow of the wise, whose words give life.
 Whinfield , 293

When one comes to know itself, one will know the others; that is, I first know “I am; therefore I am thinking.” Some believe that the story of life is concised in possessing enjoyment an agency as the qualities of principiality of happiness. And in this way they refuse “for what” to not reflect. But this quest that one for what reason should enjoy in one’s life is the matter of importance. And this “for what” is the foundation of the philosophy of life. Since the purpose of life is coming to becoming, the seer as the reflector should come out of his/her sensational level of mind and comes to reflect in his/her reasonable mind; that is, coming out of the darkness of ignorance and entering to the lightness of knowledge as consciousness in the sense of trans-substantial motion. It is considered in the principiality of existence for the seers seeking his/her own essence.

He who abides far away from his home
 Is ever longing for the day he shall return.
 Whinfield, 3

It means; therefore, that there is an existence entity such as self or Brahman. It only happens when through knowledge ignorance is destroyed, and at the same time, the consciousness increases, that the soul realizes its true nature as the absolute self. Even so, in the state of dispelling the darkness of ignorance by the lightness of knowledge, the self itself comes to the high gradation of Being as non-dual self. And the agency, enjoying are just conventionally ascribed to the self in its empirical state and it does not mean that the scripture’s aim is to teach that the self is by its nature an agent; otherwise, the scripture declaration that the self is Brahman

would become meaningless. So consequently the qualities of injunctions, prohibition becomes functional only by admitting the agency and enjoying as the qualities of empirical life which has roots in ignorance. That is the soul is of the nature of pure consciousness. This is taught as 'That Thou Art'.

Till man destroys "self" he is no true friend of God.
 Once a man came and knocked at the door of his friend.
 His friend said, "who art thou. O faithful one?"
 He said, "'Tis I." He answered, "There is no admittance.
 There is no room for the 'raw' at my well-cooked feast.
 Naught but fire of separation and absence
 Can cook the raw one and free him from hypocrisy!
 Since thy 'self' has not yet left thee,
 Thou must be burned in fiery flames."
 The poor man went away, and for one whole year
 Journeyed burning with grief for his friend's absence.
 His heart burned till it was cooked; then he went again
 And drew near to the house of his friend.
 He knocked at the door in fear and trepidation
 Lest some careless word might fall from his lips.
 His friend shouted, "Who is that at the door?"
 He answered, "'Tis Thou who art at the door. O
 Beloved!"
 The friend said, "Since 'tis I, let me come in,
 There is not room for two 'I's' in one house."

(Whinfield, 42)

It means once the soul which is of the nature of eternal and the immutable seer is realized, one comes to know one's nature as consciousness. The non-dual self is the witness endowed with the mind and subserves the objects. So even in the state of dream there is no absolute quiescence of the sense organs of the Self. "for along with the intellect entering

the state of dream, the self transcends this world.” (Masih, 12) So the soul as the witness transcends to the higher degradation of being through the consciousness increased by seer’s reflection. And this consciousness as the soul’s essence is along with it even in the state of dream where the mind is not quiescent. That is soul is in relation with the intellect entering the state of dream, it transcends this world. The conscious self as simultaneously transcends the mind, it transcends itself also. So according to such ‘that thou art’, you are the self that is true; of the nature of pure consciousness. The self by its very nature is the direct and immediate reality. For the reality which is the self, *Bahamn-Atman*, conveys true knowledge, and is free from defective cause, and never sublated. Then one realizes that the self rises from the conceit in the body, and becomes the self which is the immutable eternal seer. (Masih, 19)

The ‘I’ notion is the root of ‘mine’-ness, of all duality which is different from soul (self). In darkness, one mistakes a rope for a snake. It is when the snake-cognition is sublated that the real nature of the rope is realized. Similarly when the ‘I’ notion is sublated on the rise of true knowledge the self is realized as the non-dual reality. As notion ‘I’ has a semblance of the self, it is mistaken for the self and is hard to distinguish there from. When through discrimination its pseudo-nature is detected then all duality along with it will be realized as illusory. The seer alone is real, the seen objects including the ‘I’ are non-real. Through reasoning one cannot determine whether the host of objects constituting the illusory world is identical with or different from the seer. Like nescience, the non-self is indeterminable. In the Bhagavad-Gita the great element and the ‘I’ notion are said to constitute the ‘field’. The seer of this field is the self. As the field has no separate reality it has no locus stands apart from the seer.

Nor is it the same as the seer; for the seer shines even in the absence of the no I-self. A well known Upanisads text declares that the sight of the seer is never lost.

The mind through the manifestation of self, achieve the higher level of consciousness as its wellbeing. It is called the union of mind with self. So the division of the self and the non-self which is the basis of empirical pramanas like perception is caused by nescience. It does not touch the pure self. It is once the pure self is known, the ignorance is destroyed and along with it all duality. And mind comes to becoming along with high perception. "Ignorance which is the cause of bondage can be removed only by the knowledge and not by action (*karma*), but by the knowledge, for action is the product of the nescience." This is shown by Sankara in his commentary on the Brahma-Sutra (Gambhirananda,4). The Absolute teaching is in fact about the ultimate Reality which is identical with the Self (*Atman*) is the supreme purport of the Upanisads which constitute the *jnankanda* (knowledge-section) of the Veda.

The upanisadic texts which are non-injunctive should be regarded as praising the agent of sacrifice. And thus way they reveal the ultimate reality which is not to be known through any other means. In replying to the Vrttikara claim that the injunction here does not refer to ritual. But meditation on Brahman; it is through the meditative act that release is; it is through the meditative act that one gains release as its result, the Vedantin may say that release is not the result of an act. Knowledge of Brahman cannot be gained through action. Knowledge is different from the various types of meditation which are mental acts.

Do thou seek to draw near to Reason; let not thy heart
Rely, like others, on thy own virtue and piety.

Come under the shadow of the Man of Reason,
 Thou canst not find it in the road of the traditionists.
 That man enjoys close proximity to Allah.

Whinfield, 67

These various meditations such as ‘the mind is infinite,’ the mind is Brahman’ are nothing but the manifestation of Brahman through which the unity of Brahman and the self are to be revealed in the upanisadic texts like “That Thou Art”. In converse with the knowledge which is depended on the object, in the case of Brahman knowledge, knowledge is not apprehended as an object. In replace what the Upanisadic texts do is only to remove the obstacle that stand in the way of self-knowledge, the chief obstacle is the wrong identification of the self with the transmigration individual through ignorance. Through the removing of ignorance, the Reality stands self-revealed. Release (*Moksha*) is but the realization that it was never really lost. To explain this, here is an illustration as one who is searching for one’s spectacles which is already there on one’s nose. And feels happy saying ‘I have regained my pair of spectacles.’ This is only a way of speaking; one never lost it and so there is no question of one’s regaining it.

Some of texts like ‘the self is to be seen, heard of, reflected on and meditated on.’ (Masih, 54) the meaning of this text is ‘seeing’ or realizing the Self, that is, study, reflection and meditation. These statement, in fact make the aspirant turn away from her/his concern with the not-self and look with a view to behold the immortal self. And the objection who may say if knowledge is not combined with action there would be nothing to accept or reject, the answer is simply replying that the self is not what is either accepted or rejected, the self is one’s own Reality. Now can one accept oneself or reject oneself?

Karma is the effect of nescience; and with the destruction of the effects the cause is not destroyed. What can destroy nescience is knowledge alone, and not works. The goal of Vedanta as taught in the Upanisads is release (*Moksha*) which is not what is to be accomplished, but is eternal. It is only figuratively stated that release is to be achieved. In truth, however, release is the eternal nature of the Self. What stands in the way of realizing is ignorance or nescience. When ignorance is removed through knowledge (*jnana*), there is release. This is not a new acquisition, it is the realization of what eternally is. Anything that is caused by action is bound to perish. Through action one of four results may be obtained: origination, attainment, purification, and modification. Release is different from these. The self which is of the nature of release is not what is originated, attained, purified or modified. The knower of Brahman is not an individual associated with a body-mind complex. Since embodiment means identification of the self with the body, in the case of the realized one there is disembodiedness. The moment the true knowledge is dawn, in that very moment one is released, even while the body lasts for time. So, the Upanisad texts cannot be regarded as eulogistic statements. They are capable of causing the realization of the highest goal which is *Moksha*. *Moksha* is the attainment of what is already attained. That if it to be attained is the result of nescience. When the nescience is removed the truth, that one is always the non-dual self, is revealed. Here, there is need for an injunction of action (*karma*). The merit of the Upanisads is that they do not prescribe any action. Not only is action futile with reference to release, but also it will be the cause of evil, insofar as it will create obstacles in the way of release. So, one who seeks release should renounce all action and adopt the way of knowledge.

And the knowledge is also not attainable through a combination of works and knowledge as some Vedantins believe in. In this case the term 'knowledge' does not mean the knowledge of ritual and its accessories, this kind of knowledge must be combined with ritual. But 'knowledge' here means knowledge of *Atman* or Brahman—that which is the topic of Upanishad. In the viveka-Cudamani Sankara observes “karma is for the purification of the mind and not for the perception of Reality. (Mahadevan, 63) The gaining of reality is through inquiry and not through crores of karmas.”

Through this instruction major text 'that thou art' one see two words related by way of apposition; that is, the two words denote the same reality. The word 'thou', in this identity statement, is identified with 'that' that primary meaning of the word 'thou' is individual self of the one as the hearer who is proximate, but limited by *parviscience* (limited knowledge, and small power). Omniscience, all-knowingness, the primary meaning of the word 'that' is God who is omnipotent, omniscient, but who is remote; that is, mediate which means unity of being.

God is that foam; God is also that pure sea,
 For His words are neither a temptation nor a vain boast.
 Plurality and Partial Evil, though seemingly
 opposed to Unity, subserve Good.
 The story is now concluded, with its ups and downs,
 Like lovers' musings, without beginning or ending.
 It has no beginning, even as eternity,
 Nor ending, for 'tis akin to world without end.
 Or like water, each drop whereof is at once
 Beginning and end, and also has no beginning or end.

Whinfield 37

Who is this “I” is the self as that which transcends the mind and is intrinsically free. (Mahadevan, 68) the truth revealed by the Vedantic texts such as ‘that thou art’ and ‘I am Brahman’ cannot be known through any other means. Being supersensuous, it transcends all other means of knowledge such as perception, and is valid, like the words that wake up a man from sleep. As the self is of the nature of eternal awareness, as it is not in need of any other *pramanas*, as it is devoid of material qualities such as sound, as it is that about whose existence there can be no doubt at all, as it is the inmost self, as it is the intrinsic end, and as it is not an object of knowledge, it is not cognized through *pramanas* like perception. The self is self-revealed, and so it cannot be seen through modes of ordinary knowledge. An Upanisadic text declares what is eminently logical, thus; “Your inner self, which is the seer of seeing you cannot see. To the earnest inquirer who after rejecting every phenomenon up to the vital breath as notself, asks ‘who am I?’ the Upanisad gives the answer ‘you are that.’ (Ibid) “when Brahman is taught by the upanisadic texts such as ‘That is Truth,’ ‘that is the Self,’ ‘that thou art’ knowledge dawns automatically, and by knowledge ignorance is removed”(Mahadevan, 68) here the primary meaning of the word ‘Thou’ is the individual self of the hearer who is proximate, but limited by *parvscience* and small power, and the primary meaning of ‘That’ is God who is omniscient, omnipotent, but who is remote; that is, mediate. The word ‘that’ means consciousness is one and non-dual. The remoteness of ‘That’ goes and the limitation of ‘Thou’ is left out thus it is realized that consciousness is one and non-dual. The remoteness of ‘That’ goes and the limitations of ‘Thou’ are left out. Thus Brahman which is ‘That’ is realized to be identical with the inner self who is the secondary meaning of the word ‘Thou’.

And being the self is not possible without identity with the eternal consciousness. A part of the meaning of 'that' which is mediacy or not being the object of direct experience, must be discarded; and the ego, which is a part of the meaning of 'Thou' should be given up. Then it will be seen that the two words signify the supreme Self who is direct and immediate. Being in bondage is contradicted by being one without a second; similarly being mediate is contradicted by selfhood. Therefore the two terms 'That' and 'Thou' have a unitary import, sublating by implication the contradictory meanings in the primary senses. (Mahadevan, 75)

The presence of this ultimate reality (non-self) is easily detected in the evolutionary scheme of matter, life and mind. Certainly man has been evolving in his thought-aspect and about his ideal nature as (I am). Even mind shows progress from the non-moral state to a state of morality, leading to some kind of worship and commitment to values. Since the evolution of man there does not appear the emergence of any higher biological creature. But certainly man has been evolving in his thought- aspect and about his ideal nature. Hence, the nondual self of the evolutionary scheme, impelling the highest evaluate so far, has become articulate in man. This is not a vain fiction, since man contains within himself the vestiges of previous history of evolution. He is the physico-chemical organism imbued with the collective memory of the whole man is going to be. Plato, especially in Phaedo (72c-76) Phaedrus (248-50) speaks of the eternity, immortality and pristine purity of the soul. (Masih, 19) It is any wonder that man with being-self within him for something still higher cannot live without some form of non-dual. By virtue of this non-dual each man continues in its own being, and by virtue of its non-dual self man goes towards higher emergence. From the ontological statements the immortality and

eternality of the non-dual self, both in the East and West that they pertain to non-dual self a prior from their belief in the pristine existence of souls in their purity and glory. Release is of the nature of the eternal Self. It is not a state which is to be newly attained. When one speaks of attaining release, the word 'attaining' is used figuratively. Moksha is the attainment of what is already attained. That it is to be attained is the result of nescience. When nescience is removed the truth, that one is always the non-dual Self, is revealed. He drew forth a mirror from his side A mirror is what Beauty busies itself with. Since Not-being is the mirror of Being, If you are wise, choose Not-being (self-abnegation). Being may be displayed in that Not-being, Wealthy men show their liberality on the poor. (Whinfield 72) One may give an illustration to explain this: a person who is wearing a pair of spectacles forgets this fact and is busy searching for it; when someone points out that what he is searching for is already there on one's nose, one feels happy saying 'I have regained my pair of spectacle.' This is only a way of speaking; he never lost it and so there is no question of one's regaining it. Moksha is but realization that it was never really lost. And so the moment ignorance is removed there is the dawn of knowledge, even while one continues to live in the body. In fact, the release one is embodied, not disembodied. One of the upanisadic texts declares "here Brahman is realized" (Mahadevan, 71) Explaining the verse Sankara says "The sages rest in Brahman only. Not in the slightest can blemishes such as bodies affect them, since they are absolutely free from egocity and do not identity themselves with the aggregate of body etc." release is the final goal as it is cessation from the chain of birth and death which is called Samsara. (Mahadevan,71) Advaita considers Brahman to be of the nature of unexcellable bliss and total removal of misery, as

Sarvajnat man says. And he adds that these two viz., unexcellable bliss and total removal of misery are of the nature of the supreme Self which is pure consciousness and self-luminous.” (Mahadevan, 71). Happiness is defined as one to which all objects are ancillary to anything else. This definition can apply only to Brahman. As the Upanisad declares “Brahman is conscious-bliss.” (Mahadevan, 71). And bliss is the alienation of this truth is release. (Mahadevan, 71) *Avidya-nivrtti* the nature of the removal of nescience (ignorance) can be regarded as that is identified with Brahman-Atman in the sense of Brahman-Atman is eternal and ever existent. If *avidya-nivrtti* (the removal of nescience) is identical with it, then it must also be of the same nature; that is, it must be eternal and ever existent, for via the direct experience of Brahma-Atman dawns, there is not the experience of avidya (nescience). But so long as this experience has not arising, there is the manifestation of avidya. It is in fact stated figuratively that *avidya-nivrtti* is achieved by the direct experience of Brahman-Atman. There is here an objection being considered. The objection is this. Brahman-Atman is always existent, if *avidya-nivrtti* is identical with *Brahman-Atman*, then even at the time of empirical usage, when *avidya* exists, there should also exist *avidyanivrtti*. This is certainly impossible because *avidya-nivrtti* means the removal of *avidya*. Sarvajnatman replies to this objection as follows; the supreme Self, which is the nature of the inner-Atman, remains in its true nature even before the rise of the mental mode from the upanisadic texts like *Tat tvam asi* ‘that thou art.’ Yet it does not become the sense of the expression ‘removal of nescience’ then, because of the mental mode which is the ground for the use of the expression ‘removal of nescience’ in the sense of *Brahman-Atman*.

Unitary means the knowledge of the oneness of the Self as it arises, or after having arisen, from the Upanisadic texts annihilates avidya and its products. No one can object to the statement that light removes darkness by its mere rise or after having arisen by a lapse of only one moment. Similarly the realization of the self annihilates avidya. In order to yield its results knowledge requires only its rise and nothing else. In empirical usage, whatever is a productive means requires something other than its rise to produce its result. But knowledge which is a revealing medium and not a productive means does not require anything else to yield its result, after having arisen. (Mahadevan, 72) There is a view which is sponsored by Pratyagsrarupa in his commentary *Nayanaprasadini in the tattvapradipika of citsukacrya*, and by Mandan in his *Brahman-Siddhi*. According to this view *nivrtti* is identical with the direct experience of *Brahman-Atamn*. Nivrtti is a direct experience which annihilates *avidya* (ignorance). The rise of the direct experience is alone responsible for the disappearance of avidya. Nothing is required for this. On the rise of light, darkness (nescience) is at once removed. Anything more is not required. One shall conclude this account with a citation from Sankara's commentary on *Brahman-Sutra-bhasya* (Gambhirananda, 4) (the statement that is made by him is that the knowledge of Brahman culmination in self-realization has the tangible result in the form of removing nescience and leading to release. To find out the way of human miseries involved in earthly existence, Shankara established ontologically that the supreme reality is Brahman, which is eternal, unchangeable and untouched by the vicissitudes of any existences. This paper after finding an ontological reason and defense of non-dual Brahman, it attempts to offer an epistemological explanation for the identity of knowledge and being. 'The important contention is that the knower of Brahman himself

becomes Brahman.” (Masih, 131) the advaitic analysis of perception is that perception is possible when the *vritis* assume the shape and form of the objects cognized. Similarly by knowing Brahman, the known himself becomes what he intuitively knows of what Brahman is. Of course, this gnosis has to be occasioned by the moral and yogic discipline. Further by knowing Brahman everything else is known; for it is the ground of every existent (Jiva and the things of the world). The very essence of the Upanishadic seers was *kasmin nu Vijnae Sarvam idam Vijnatam bhavati*, and thereby by knowing Brahman and becoming Brahman, one leaves behind the vale of miseries and enters into the bliss of Brahman.

Keeping to the stand of Ramanjua, in relation to ordinary language and its syntax, there can be no mental state corresponding to a case of pure *Cit* (consciousness). Brahman-realization is not a fact otherwise it cannot be factually demonstrated in terms of ordinary experience and language. “it is a place without speech; it is a state of silence. Any talk about Brahman will end in metaphysical heresy,” as Lord Buddha has pointed out. (Masih,132) Brahman is a matter of enlightenment, realization and intuition. This has to be mediated through ethico-yogic discipline. For Shankara all these disciplines of yoga, morality and devotion are inseparable. Morality for him may be prescribed as striving for perfection by realizing a state of egolessness and desirelessness. That means in this context, Shankara does not mention God, for he considers the importance of Brahman-realization through Vedantic discipline as distinguished from theistic worship. Here one can realize that the path of devotion as a powerful aid in Brahman-realization is accepted by Shankara. The reason is that desirelessness in the form of karma thought by Gita is possible only when duties are performed as offerings to the Lord. What is of importance here

according to the Gita is that morality is considered as an in-built element in its theism. In this way Brahman alone real for Shankara and all other deities are contingent, dependent, and phenomenal. In this way, the all deities as to be relatively real are dependent on Brahman. Shankara; therefore, following Gita regards the worship of Ishvara as an aid for searching Brahman-Jnana (knowledge). Following Gita:

“Worshippers seek various kinds of fruit, and, the Lord grants their wishes if they worship their respective deities with full devotion. Some seek Brahman-Janan, others seek the gift of nishkama karma, and still others who are renunciate and Vedanta-jnanin seek *Moksha* (freedom).” Shankara then regards that the worship of Ishvara as an aid for searching *Brahma-Jnana*. (Masih, 133)

Pass over names and look to qualities,
 So that qualities may lead thee to essence!
 The differences of sects arise from His names;
 When they pierce to His essence they find His peace!”
 Whinfield, 160

So the Lord worship will not lead to Brahman-Jnana in any case as Gita teaches. Further, Shankara “does not hold Ishvara to be ultimately really” (Ibid) Consequently, Shankara does not consider Ishvara-worship as an infallible means of attaining Brahman-Janan. From this it does not follow that theism is not considered as an important part of Shankara’s theism. In the last resort for Shankara all deities from the lowest to the highest have to be left behind and discarded on attaining Brahman. This means that there is a hierarchy of deities in the sense of the trans-substantial motion. The ascending movement is from the lowest rank to the highest, from the least perfect to the most perfect rank of existence. The doctrine of the systematic ambiguity of Being

is nothing more than the increase and decrease of the reality of Being and identity in all ontic beings. The way in which Mulla Sadra looks at the gradations of the modality of Being in the trans-substantial change from less perfect to more perfect can be used to address humanity in plurality. Within the development of this modality towards perfection, and by realizing the end in the 'perfect human being', one comes across a range of human existence at different ontological-historical stages and different kinds of humanity. Particularly in the light of this kind of change, it is possible for one to talk about less or more humanity at different ranks of existence in the same way one describes a being as smaller or larger. Mulla Sadra's ontology, in particular the doctrine of systematic ambiguity of Being, bridges the gulf between monism and pluralism. This can be elucidated in considering the principle of identity in difference. Identity is established on the ground of the reality of Being as a simple reality that contains the multiplicity of its own modification. But every form of dualism belongs to the realm of empirical reality. According to the Gita and Gaudapada in their teaching of the hierarchy of gods, Shankara believes in the relativity and grades of different deities, and consequently, in the various kinds of persons they are on the basis of the kind of deity he or she worships. So any worship follows a hierarchy of beings and what kind of being he or she is, is depend on the kind of deity a worshipper will chose.

Though the object of all men's being is wisdom,
 Yet each man has a different place of worship.
 The place of worship of the noble is nobility,
 The place of worship of the base is degradation.
 Smite the base to make them bow the head.
 Give to the noble to make them repay liberally.

Whinfield, 216

“Ishvara can lead to heavenly bliss and beatitude. However, the heavenly abode is temporary and one has to get back to the worldly existence after the store of merits has been exhausted. The worship of Ishvara prepares one for *Brahman-Janana* for ishvara enables a worshiper to conquer his/her passions and desires, and, mitigate the influence of ignorance, for the lord is the controller of Maya. But in the end it is meditation on *amatra*, which alone leads to Brahman realization.” (Ibid) “but the worship of Ishvara stands highest in the order of worship, involving dualism.(Ibid) ‘but each dualistic worship is valid since it alone chick life and light, peace and *pistis* to its *volaries*, thus each form of theism is valid, and yet cannot claim procedure over all the rest. In the end every form of dualistic form of theism is both true empirically and yet false transcendently.” (Masih,134) So for Shankara each form of dualistic worship is ultimately false and each from is infected with the spirit of its transcendence, pointing the way to Brahman-realization, were every form of theism terminates. Shankara would say “Brahman is the absolute limit beyond which one cannot go.” (Masih,137)

You cannot see Him outside His work.

Since His workshop is the abode of the Wise One,

Whoso seeks Him without is ignorant of Him.

Whinfield, 104

And,

Come, then, into His workshop, which is Not-being,

That you may see the Creator and creation at once.

Whinfield, 105

In the language of the Gita, the lower forms of worship end in the worship of the absolute Lord (Masih, 135). Going one step further, Shankara considers the worship of lord Krishna to be transcended at the final stage of Brahman

realization. In Brahman-realization alone, all difference cease, and there is no room for discard: “there a father becomes not a father, a mother, not a mother, the worlds, not the world; the gods, not the gods” (Masih, 135)

In this connection Shankara points out thus: “the aim of the shastra is to discard all distinctions fictitiously created by nescience” (Masih, 135) in this way there can be nothing higher and one can go beyond the world into the region of ‘silence’, according to Buddhism and Wittgenstein and Shankara one can reach this stage by systematically denying the lower forms of theistic worship; that is, each god has to be worshipped and yet finally denied in one’s upward march towards the ascent of differenceless Brahman. Here, according to the hierarchical arrangement of different deities explains the inherent principle of self-realization in each form of dualistic worship. Thus to reach the goal of Brahman one transcends the empirical thought. In the Brhadaryaka-Upanisad (IV, iii, 6) to the question “who is this self?” put by king Janaka, Sage Yajnavalkya speaks of the self as that which transcends the mind and is intrinsically free. (Masih, 68)

The truth revealed by the Vedantic texts such as ‘That Thou Art’ and ‘I am brahman’ cannot be known through any other means. Being supersensuous, it transcends all other means of knowledge such as perception, and is valid, like the words that wake up a man from sleep.

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Literature-Religion-Culture Nexus

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Literature, as defined in Webster's *Encyclopedia of Dictionaries: New American Edition*, is the body of writings of a language, period, subject etc ;—any printed matter as advertisements or brochures .As such Literature of any county or countries of the world contains the voice of the people articulated through particular dialect or language. Thus language foregrounds human culture and human relationship. It is impregnated with religions deep-seated in cultural milieu, ethics and native traditions of the people and reveals an exceptional unity amidst upcoming multiplicity. The present paper focuses on how literature conceiving religion and culture in it, leads to *vasudaivakutumbakama* (world as a family).

Key Words: Advaitic, metempsychosis, pantomime , crypto-atheism, augury, skepticism, agnosticism. Sacramental, quantum-vacuum .

The initial phases of English Literature brings together an embryonic religion amply displayed by miracles and mysteries related to the life of ignorant people steeped in religious superstitions and inherited faith .Pantomime or mute plays having predominance of gestures made public all occurrences in spite of imminent probability and cryptic vulnerability aspiring on the whole for a better humanity. The milieu rooted in cultural vulgarity and religious naivete further forms the backdrop to anticipate sophistication and forbearance besides being good enough to provide aesthetic beauty and pastime hilarity. What is more Ancient Roman

and Celtic literatures vividly explore amazing tales of augury prevalent among rustic folks .The gradual course of development brings forth revival of classical learning—the Renaissance .It focuses on innumerable texts pertaining to religious literature passing from one continent into another in rapid succession. The dramas of William Shakespeare meticulously explore the traditions ,prevalent customs and religious beliefs like superstitions ,portends and omens amply practiced by contemporary populace. These still structure a separate research theme under a separate column. The metaphysical lore, part of spiritual literature and puritanical outlook on life is not free from religious bias , predisposition and contemporary ambience. Skepticism and agnosticism further rules the roost to delineate the doubting Thomas. Mathew Arnold’s “Scholar Gipsy” deserves contextual mention. Then the perception of modernity and post-modernity comes to vanguard Post- Millennium epoch wherein Literature and religion co-mingle to boost up the Nobel and the noble in literature .Some Nobel laureates like Harold Pinter though primarily concerned with human predicament and existentialism prefers presenting psycho-analytical views to study the characters so are least concerned with religion. But morality that lies at the root of religion shapes art and articulation of the dramatist. Thomas Transtromer—a poet who won the Nobel in 2011 because through his cadenced and translucent images gave to Swedish Academy in Stockholm a fresh access to reality ,to human identity and a spiritual dimension that often seems to pothole the metaphysical territory. Similar but more down-to- earth so strongly fascinating is Alice Munro better known as the Chekhov Of Canada .Like a caged bird her characters display a perennial quest for freedom—fly into the heights of space to justify the fact that human body is an abode of free-intelligence—a primeval *joie de vivre*.

India on her side not only translated to assimilate the spirit of the west but also familiarized western world by Her ancient wisdom, the so called oldie-goldies for the benefit of English speaking world. One notable Westerner, who interpreted east to the west is Edwin Arnold .Arnold became popular all around the world for his epical poem of eight cantos chiefly known as the *Great Renunciation* or *The Light Of Asia* .It deals with the life and times of Prince Siddhartha who later became the Buddha. This poem is an epic of rare excellence and occupies a high place among narrative poems .M .K. Gandhi used to say ‘I read *The Light Of Asia* with even greater interest than I did the *Bhagwad Gita*’. The poem overall explicitly articulates and beautifully combines religion, culture and literature. Aurobindo—a Maharishi born in India but brought up in Western soil, an extraordinary talent for whom life was a beautiful paradox with God ’s key to unlock .He truly had the key so unlocked within no time the vast treasure of cultural synthesis .His *Savitri*“being magnum opus and *Life Divine*were prerequisite for the yoga he practiced in later life that culminated in foundation of the Ashram at Pondicherry .Whenever we talk of Aurobindo we talk of World culture. Tagore’s *Gitanjali*, as it is, an offering of songs at the altar of divinity that is God .A multi-dimensional genius, Tagore attempted almost all genre of literature including music-now known by his own name Ravindra Sangeet. What is more literature cultivated by him ,particularly devotional literature of the Vaisnavites rooted, as it is, in cultural beauty and diversity obviously outlines an adjacent propinquity to religion.

Indian culture is unique for it has embraced and invested most of its resources in meeting needs of soul rather than fulfilling refinements of flesh. East-west encounter is another main theme that came into existence after Indians adopted

English as a language for creative/critical purpose .Before taking this into account ,I would like to raise in brief some questions and their answers postulated in deep spiritual intuitive enquiry by William Blake in his *Vision Of Eternity*—What is the cause of the Universe ? How are we born on earth ? Who sustains life in us ?Where is our abode? When a human being dies does he cease to exist or he still exists ? What is transmigration of soul .etc . Being a major prophetic English poet Blake does not evade any of these and similar issues, he has postulated answers to all of them in his poems like *Songs of Experience* and *Jerusalem*. Likewise Blake’s perception of a synoptic vision, complete identity or oneness of God with individual self, seems to echo eternal truth—the Vedantic view .The holiness of man and the faith in the holiness of all life on this earth forms the core of Blake’s spiritual humanism and strengthens his vision. He realized the highest state of meditative blessedness .A sublime state of inner poise and enlightenment. A state beyond all senses, beyond all understanding also beyond all expressions .It is pure unitary consciousness wherein awareness of the world and its multiplicity is completely obliterated. A distinct echo of such an ecstatic state of realizing eternal truth is also heard in “The blessed mood/In which/The burden of the mystery/Of all this unintelligible world is lightenedH../We are laid asleep in body and become a living soul” (Wordsworth’s *Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*). It is the evolutionary state of spiritual enlightenment in which Blake grew to get abiding bliss. Like W. Blake another western peer is Henry David Thoreau. An American transcendentalist whose seminal mind had an enduring impact beyond the boundaries of America. As I have said earlier about the Nobel , herein noble Thoreau deserves mention .Foremost he was noble from head to toe. His sweet solitude is a rare concept

wherein he sees the true loneliness of the spirit. It at once reminds us the sylvan solitude of Indian sages. Mahatma Gandhi regarded Thoreau as his preceptor, the Guru, for his Satyagraha owes its origin to Thoreau's essay on "Civil Disobedience" which Gandhi coincidentally chanced in and practically experimented in South Africa later on at Champaran in Bihar. Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" is a document of ethical and spiritual values. It is a potent weapon hurled against arbitrary laws of government by the individual. Being sacred voice of conscience it reveals supremacy of moral laws candidly exposed against unjust and unfair laws of the then government. Thoreau's faith in the power of the spirit is what Gandhi practically experimented throughout his life and career. D.F. Karaka's book *Out of Dust* throws enough light on Gandhi, he says "writing on Gandhi is like going on a pilgrimage". It is because the whole corpus of literature on Gandhi including the Bibliography is colossal. To overcome evil through self suffering and self sacrifice is self abnegation. While M.K. Gandhi used *Bible* and Leo Tolstoy to strengthen his spirit in South Africa, Thoreau in the library of R.W. Emerson avidly read to draw inspiration from Indian scriptures such as *Manusmṛiti*, the *Gīta*, the *Viśnu Purāṇa*, the *Rgveda*, the Upaniśads and the *Hitopadeśa* etc. He was so overwhelmed by the *Gīta* that he declared it to be a Universal gospel for no occidental gospel sustained the reader to such a higher, purer and rarer region of thought than the *Gīta*. Besides being an empirical transcendentalist Thoreau was an ascetic by taste and temperament so practiced non-attachment, non-accumulation and non-violence. Since the Universe belongs to God, any claim to ownership or personal possession is against moral law and is in fact a sin against divinity. Thoreau's preference for a life of self-abnegation and renunciation bears a striking similarity

to Vedanta school of thought. To him worldly allurements were only a passing show ,a fleeting moment only to distract the seeker of truth from cultivating self culture and promoting inner spiritual flowering. That is why he called earthly empire of CZAR only a hammock left by ice. He saw inside individual infinite continents and seas – a vast moral world yet unexplored. Reducing his needs to a bare minimum he cultivated a fabulous garden for deeper meditations so as to communicate with the Ultimate reality .Look inward Angel he said and detach thyself from the false contacts with matter and identification with material envelopments and realize oneness with Absolute reality. Like all psychologists Thoreau believed firmly in the immortality of the soul and doctrines regarding transmigration. At many places in his writings he refers to after- life and second birth as a peculiar religious experience. Physical body being subject to death and decay ,Thoreau upheld a serene framework free from mundane manacles thus entirely contented with essence of things hence a complete- spiritual-superman enlightened with beams of heavenly light. Man as per Christians, Hebrews and other occidental religions is a born sinner while the eastern philosophies and metaphysics regard him potentially divine .Man is in the image of God. The concept of man puts east and west diametrically opposed. Nowhere in west man is portrayed as loftier ,limitless and sublime as in the east. The question of man's destiny too has allured the west. What Thoreau experienced was a discipline of reconciliation of mind, body, feeling and intuition to secure individual wholeness and balance. As a result man becomes a channel through which the universal expresses itself without obstructions. Notwithstanding social and ethnic cause imbued with sects and cults of various sorts expressed in rhetorical fashion by Indian English Poets ,Indian diasporas more particularly Raja

Rao combines transcendently yet pragmatically Gandhian philosophy with Vedanta, Non-dualism, Monism and pure – monism in contrast to the dialectical dilemma of man. Raja Rao was a little in higher podium than his contemporaries M.R .Anand and R.K.Narayan because of his encyclopedic knowledge of science and metaphysics .J.L.Nehru often got dumbfounded whenever he saw Raja Rao spitting metaphysics .Along with combining world religions Rao’s novels present gallery of intellectuals arguing intensely world-wide philosophies .His first novel *Kanthapura* is called a Gandhi Purana wherein he presents India’s freedom struggle ,narrates it in an amazing yet accurate legendary mode of Hari-Katha that has no immediate peer . *Kanthapura* is based on the philosophy of self-less action-the Karma Yoga. His another novel *The Serpent and the Rope* is a voluminous piece of work .It’s range is encyclopedic therefore ,covers almost the whole of the globe .So has been hailed as magnum opus based on the philosophy of self-knowledge or *jnana yoga*. Another Novelette that has a humorous ,queer and teasing title *The Cat And Shakespeare* is a tale illustrating Ramanuja’s theory of *marjar sísu nyaya*. Here Cat is the universal mother and Shakespeare stands for our day today world— the mundane realities. It integrates Raja Rao’s philosophy of Bhakti Yoga wonderfully. Thus in his three successive novels he integrates amazingly Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga along with the material philosophy of Marx in anther short novel “Comrade Kirrilov”. From cultural point view Raja Rao is excellent. In post millennium epoch of multiculturalism it seems nice to read Raja Rao avidly .J .L. Nehru’s *Discovery of India* garrulously elaborates to discover the unity among diversity of India by drawing two extreme yet parallel examples of a Pathan and a Tamil. Truly Nehru’s picture of India is multicolored wherein the one and

the same appears in many. I am not adding to a list of bibliography but want to acquaint my readers with the cultural vastness of India expressed through history and archaeology by a renowned British historian A.L. Basham whose book concludes by saying that –” India’s civilization warmly welcomed and assimilated the good points from different outside cultures, integrated all so as to thrive and continue and never to be lost “. A Sufi Poet S .L .Peeran of Bangalore writing up-to-date has brought Poetry closer to religion. I think thoughtful readers will surely admire him for the niceties of Islamic culture and ways of human conduct. My own poems and an still unpublished articles— “*Gahana Karmano Gatih*“ requires ,as it has ample of scope for further discussion on literature and religion and is wholeheartedly dedicated to spiritual ideas and love for God.

Religion by and large is thought to be a set of beliefs in supernatural powers which govern the universe. It also recognizes God as an object of worship .Basically, it incorporates any system of faith or worship or practical piety. Etymologically religion means to link back to God, study of the divine in the human and to seek further in God an ultimate refuge after experiencing the futility and the emptiness of the temporal, the ephemeral and the impermanent. Some regard that in their infancy humanity was without any script so the original message of the Creator pertaining to creation was communicated orally. This message by the ancient ancestors was preserved in memory for the posterity and was called religion. Perhaps in the very beginning the purpose of religion would have been to set forth rules for purposeful, wholesome, pure and pious life and ways of living. So also the scriptures. Theology is not apart from religion .It is a science which treats of facts and phenomena of religion and relation between God and Man. Relationship between man

and God is a curious aspect of religion because God has no existence apart from man. God manifests in the form of a man. The manifestation of God is never without purpose. Theophany and epiphany also deal in plenty this aspect of manifestation. India has innumerable stories which narrate the descend, the sudden arrival and purpose of the incarnations appearing time after time. What matters most, is the milieu and the background, the contemporary venue against which the prophets appear as messengers of God. In addition to absolute and full-grown incarnations, we have a large number of Saints, Sages, Seers and Godmen who perform their respective task to represent a particular age or era, time or period in a country ordained to them. Truly up-till- now, so far, there is colossal mass of literature produced by inquiring minds regarding man and the universe. The birth of man and the birth of the universe. This topic has been dealt at length by almost all branches of learning. If one attempts to go through it all human life will fall short and the residue will still be enormous. What has attracted most of us from the very outset of creation is the nature around us, night sky full of stars and planets, comets which are closely associated with superstitions, the beauty of the dawn and the wonder of sunset highly adored by ancient sages. Not only this but also, we have ample of tales elaborately told about Big-Bang to present day God Particle popularly known as Higgs Boson. Still the controversy that the universe popped out of nothing- the Quantum-Vacuum etc., persists. So though there is scope enough for further debate, I feel elated in coming to a close by acknowledging God as the supreme pervading force with religion as moral code of conduct for the welfare of humanity. As such, I think, if we want to contribute to individual and world peace simultaneously, we should adhere to one basic principle that is to have a mind

open to everything and attached to nothing. Besides religion the pursuit of humanity forms an integral part of literature. That is why, so many tributaries originate and grow up, on humanity and humanism, so as to make an all-encompassing confluence. The literature of the globe is overfled with this genre of literature. How exalting are R.N. Tagore's and Thomson's paeans sung in praise of humanity. Despite, humanity all over the globe, is still reeking under social and economic exploitation hence has implicitly taken a major concern, a whirling consternation representing contemporary writers. The theme of acculturation and social injustice has further provided issues and areas to one and all be they of regional, national or international stage. What truly matters is that humanity has been at the core of literature from the initial stages to chronological histories of human evolvment. Culture is much used, abused even misused in multicultural context. It therefore defies all definitions. However it includes enthusiastic participation and spontaneous outburst of joy in the celebration of festivals. In India festivals shine as visible manifestation of a living mythology. As per Indian almanac or calendar, all 365 days of the year are mythologically significant so holy. Sacramental festivals such as birth and naming ceremony. Secular and non-secular sacraments like thread- ceremony, tonsure, studies, marriage, house-hold life and funeral rites. Occupational festivals as New- year celebrations. Astronomical festivals such as rituals and rites performed at solstices..Rituals at the eclipses and on full moon day, Theological festivals like Holi, Deepawali, nine-day's festivities at Navratras called Dussehra. Festivals thus involve group activities therefore are sorts of bonds to people and communities altogether. These are reaffirmations of the belief that we are an inseparable member of cosmological culture. So the role of festivals is tremendous mostly in

preserving and sustaining the unity in the massive diversity of India's cultural traditions steeped in mythology. Literature too is vast that incorporates in imaginative poetic form or in fictional mode or through enactment of plays the cultural multiplicity of national even international import. Religion thus in terms of cultures, traditions, customs practiced by various communities of the nation /nations unites humanity through an obvious thread of unity that aids to integrate the globe. It is not mere show of rituals or rites but a code, a formula, a set of rules and the regulations for daily living or diurnal routines of life. So let us proclaim aloud publicly—'where there is religion there is victory. assured'—*yato dharmah tato jayah!*

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The Place of the Marginalised in Indian Folktales

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“Folk” the word signifies common people. Folktales are for common consumption of masses, rural, urban, rich, poor, young or old. Folktales of India have grown out of everyday experiences of the common man. Our folktales carry the smell of our soil. The spirit of our folktales is democratic where the otherwise marginalised section of the society finds a place of prominence. Our marginalised emotions like fear, sorrow, jealousy and violence also find expression in folktales as they describe sufferings and pain. The spectrum of folktales covers everyday joy to profound gratification to pain and misery. Women, children, disabled and Dalits find full expression in folktales. Not only marginalised human groups but all flora and fauna are well depicted in Indian folktales. Through personification, animals and trees, winds and plants also speak through folktales. Folktales portray a worldview which establishes the interdependence of all beings. Man, nature, animal kingdom and spirits- all form a fabric of life. In the present paper, we will study the worldview of Indian folktales which gives place to all, mainstream and marginalised alike.

Key Words: Folk, world-view, marginalized, mainstream, personification, interdependence

History, traditionally speaks about regimes, kings, queens, rulers, and winners. Folktales record practices, behaviour, beliefs and traditions of common man. Study of mythology and folktales of a community helps us in understanding history and culture of a community. Myths and folktales help us in understanding how culture evolves. Folktales help us in understanding political, religious, philosophical and survival issues. The potter, the mechanic, the housewife, the labourer, artisans, children, spirits, trees, flora-fauna all find place in folktales. Anyone who wants to know the base of society must read and know about the common folks. Folktales tell us about the lives of common people. Folktales help to understand any society or community. Indian folktales give optimistic view of Indian society. Folktales give voices to animals, trees and nature all around. Indian folktales acts as a bridge between mainstream literature and common people, marginalised as well. There are tales about women, children and artisans. There are tales about spirits, sick people, handicapped people, frustrated men and women. In folktales trees and animals speak and act. In folktales trees and animals are personified. Generally women are not supposed to raise their voices at home or outside home. Folktales tell us about their sufferings. Marginalised people express themselves through folktales. These folktales give multilayered meanings. Folktales record events of social and moral importance. These events are related to weavers, farmers, fishers, hunters and herders. Thus folktales also tell us about the adventures with domestic and wild animals. Folktales tell us about marginalised feelings of human societies like greed, jealousy, trickery, cunningness and fear. Some of the folktales become voices of marginalised.

An investigation of Indian folktales would demonstrate to us that life in its totality, the psychological, spiritual and physical is communicated through the symbols of mythology.

Aside from people and super humans, creatures, fowls, the elements and streams have a position of importance both emblematically and abstractly. The mythic tradition of India especially those associated with the cult of the Goddess have an immediate bearing on the status of ladies and the creation of social foundations in India. Establishments like marriage, family-joint and atomic, stations and class have been assuming a critical job in Indian life and writings from the plain ancient occasions. Social foundations as the shapers of mentalities in Indian life and the place of myth and folklore in that have been an issue of lasting interest. In an Indian family while the dad is preeminent expert, the mother is the focal point of domestic and emotional life. The impact of profound situated, maternal attachment on Indian culture is significant. In India the commonest sublimation is the serious mother-Goddess love of womanhood in the abstract. Indian social orders appear to encourage and create in lady a resilience even under a limited encircled life. Indian ladies regardless of unfriendly impacts of the Purdah and the patriarchal frameworks have today accomplished a place of solidarity.

Once upon a time some girls were discussing about their marriage. Each one of them gave account of the gifts they are supposed to get from their relatives. One of them Bopoluchi was an orphan. She was exceptionally beautiful. She had no one from whom she could expect something. But still she boasted that her uncle will bring jewels, silken dresses and valuables for her marriage. Girls were busy in talking. A robber over heard all this. He got attracted towards Bopoluchi. He made a plan to deceive Bopoluchi. The robber dressed himself nicely and collected jewels, silken dresses and valuables. Then he said to Bopoluchi "I am your uncle and I have arranged your marriage". Bopoluchi was very much pleased and believed the robber. She packed up few

things she possessed in a bundle and set off with the robber in high spirits. As they proceeded through the woods creatures like crow, peacock and jackal tried to warn her but failed to help her. This story portrays Bopoluchi as a beautiful, brave but innocent girl. As she found herself in problem she bravely outwitted and fought against the troop of robbers (Steel, 1894). Bopoluchi was able to help herself and came out rich and victorious. This story is about an orphan girl and her adventure. Birds and animals are personified in this tale. It shows that creature around can smell the danger one should put an ear on the voices of the nature. The story indicates that things are difficult for an orphan. It is difficult for an individual to survive without family.

There is a wonderful story ‘Tell it to the Walls’ collected by A. K. Ramanujan that tells us about agony of women. Once upon a time there was a woman living in a village. She was a widow. She had four sons and daughters-in-law and grand children. But in spite of all this she was very lonely. She could not tell her woes and sufferings to anyone. She was becoming fat. One day she visited an abandoned house. There she faced one wall and started complaining about his elder son. As a result the wall fell down. Then she faced another wall and complained about her second son. Again the wall collapsed. Finally she poured all her grief. The house collapsed. But she became lighter. If she had expressed all this in her household may be her own house had collapsed (Shodhganga). This story tells us about power of expressed and unexpressed feelings. This story also tells us that it takes sacrifices to bind the family in one thread. It also tells that communication breaks walls. It is more important to build bridges between hearts than building houses.

‘How Kava Deceived Kavi and Defeated Her’ is a Bheel folktale. Kava and Kavi were first man and woman. They both

were at ease with each other. Once upon a time Deva wants to check that who is better among the two. They thought to complicate their relation. They advise Kava that it is not easy to defeat her. If he could not win the competition she would dominate. There is a race between Kava and Kavi. Kavi symbolises *shakti* in this tale. She has all the potential to defeat Kava. Kava tries to distract Kavi by jewels as gifts. She refuses the gifts. But as the story proceeds Kava manages to distract Kavi with jewellery. As Kavi wears all the jewellery like breastplate, jhanjhar(anklet), bangles, nose ring day by day she burdenes herself. Finally Kava defeats Kavi. This story tells us how male dominance started. There is a custom to pay bridal price in Bheel community. This tale tells us how women became secondary (Shodhganga). This is an important tale which tells women that richness of mind and soul is more important than gold and jewels.

There are folktales about poor artisans. Poor artisans are mocked by the society. They struggle everyday to maintain self esteem. Once upon a time there lived a little weaver. His name was Prince Victor, his head was big but his legs were thin. He was weak and small. People ridiculed him for his looks. One day he killed a mosquito with shuttle while he was weaving on the loom. He felt proud the way he smashed the mosquito. He shared this act of bravery with his neighbours as well. The neighbours mocked him. The weaver's wife was a beautiful young lady. She was tired of his foolishness. She told him to keep his mouth shut. But he became very proud of skill with which he smashed the mosquito. He seized her by the hair and beat her. 'I will go into the world' he said to himself. 'The man who can shoot a mosquito dead with a shuttle ought not to hide his light under a bushel.' He left home. His wife gave him some food to carry along. She had given him poisoned food. She added

flavoured spices to the food to hide the smell of poison. She wanted to get rid of her husband. In spite of all his foolishness somehow one day he managed to get name and fame (Steel 1894).

This story tells us about poor weavers. Weavers do their work sitting on one place for hours. But what they get is not sufficient to fulfil their needs. All these things frustrate them. This frustration leads to unhappy family life. In lower strata of society domestic violence is common. Lack of education in unskilled labourers creates many problems in society. Peasie and Beansie is a tale of two sisters. Peasie decides to meet her old father who lives in nearby village. Peasie takes care of plum tree, fire, water stream and Pipal tree while she passes through the woods. All these rewarded her with gifts. All non human characters like plum tree, pipal tree, fire and river are personified. They call Peasie for help while her journey through the woods. She frees fire from ashes. She clears thorns scattered around the plum tree. She soothes pipal tree by binding its broken branch. She clears sand and dead leaves from the water stream. Peasie is a sensible and caring girl. Her father receives her affectionately. Father gives her blessings and gifts. But her sister Beansie does not care about anything. She denies help to water stream, plum tree, pipal tree and fire. She suffers a lot while her journey through the woods. Beansie just visits her father out of greed and in return she is treated badly by her brother and sister-in-law. She comes back to her home wounded and hungry (Steel 1894). It tells us that nature blesses us when we take care of our surrounding flora and fauna. Mother Nature repays us the way we treat her. This story appreciates the humanistic approach and environmental friendly behaviours in human beings.

In Indian folktales children are portrayed vividly. Orphan children are central characters of some of the stories. How miserable their life is portrayed in the story Little Anklebone. In this story the little boy wanders barefoot and takes care of flock of sheep of his aunt. The story tells us how mean and heartless a person may behave with an orphan poor child. His aunt suggests him to offer himself to the wolf instead of a sheep. The poor fellow asks a favour from the beast to hang his anklebone on a tree near the pond (Steel,1894). In Indian folktales we see children struggle to survive after their mother is dead. What their father does for them only that he gets married again. Children are puzzled by their step mother. In Indian folktales we rarely see a step father. Because in Indian scenario we find remarriage of widow rare. But we find many stories of ill treatment of children by step mothers. It is quite amazing in a country like India where motherly instinct of woman is highly appreciated we see step mothers treat children badly. There are stories of couples longing for children. They have children by the blessings of *faqirs*, *jogis* and saints. These folktales approves that children are not bi products of marriage but they are bliss.

There is story about the birth of Lord Rama and his brothers. The story tells us that Raja Dushrath brings blessed kheer for his three queens. After having that blessed kheer the queens have children. Similarly in Prince Half-A-Son the king is longing for children instead he has seven queens. Interestingly he is blessed by a *faqir*. He brings mangoes for his seven queens. After having mangoes six queens bore sons. The seventh queen gives birth to a son who has half of the body, one eye, one hand and one foot only. This is because her mango has been half nibbled by a mouse. She could have half of it only. The story tells us how he is able to surpass his

normal brothers. His deformity becomes his strength. His mother worries about his future. She loses affection of her husband. She loves her son but at the same time she is depressed. The brothers of half-a-prince want to kill him. They push half-a-prince in a well. In the well a serpent, a demon and a parrot live together. Half-a-prince listens about their secrets. He takes its advantage. As the story advances he grows strong and become successful. He wins power and money. He cures and marries a beautiful princess (Steel, 1894). In this folktale we see a demon, a serpent and a parrot playing important role.

This folktale indicates that happiness of mother relies upon her children. Here we see envy/concern, hatred/love, depression/hope. This story clearly states that we must believe in our children. Prince-half-a son (*adhiya*) is very much confident about himself. He is determined. Her mother does not want him to go with his brothers. But he insists to do so. He gains everything what a prince must have. This folktale tells us that it is strength of mind that gives success and happiness. Any physical or bodily deformity could not stop a person to achieve success. In another version of this story there is a mangoose born to the seventh queen. He is a winner in the same fashion just because he adores his mother very much. The story establishes that one who respects his/her mother will be a winner always. We have folktales of sick people who are expelled out of village because of the infectious diseases or physical deformities. They get cured by the blessing of saints or selfless care of the spouse.

The simple joys and deep concerns of marginalised are registered through folktales of India. The problem of defining the margins and the centre of human society arises due to the strife of 'the self' and 'the identity'. In western countries concept of self and identity have different paradigms. In

Indian context surrendering the self is highest ideal to achieve. Kavi is not defeated by Kava. She simply smiles when Kava wins the race. She knows that she can win anytime. Kavi does not struggle for supremacy. This is her strength but taken as her weakness by the society. Bopoluchi is an ordinary girl. She fights with all her strength when caught in danger. There are no supernatural agents to save her. She herself becomes saviour. Society may ridicule poor artisans and labourers but cannot ignore them. They form the base of society. Their voices and sighs will not vanish. Children, women, artisans, trees, flora-fauna have registered their voices through folktales. The worldview of folktales is all inclusive. The problem of marginalised people is to get attention of the world. The folktales of India solve this problem up to some extent. Folktales are tales of tears and smiles. Canvas of folktales portrays bigger, secular and democratic picture of Indian society and culture.

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CHAPTER IV PRAKRITI'S VOICES IN FOLKTALES ... – Shodhganga shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/jspui/bitstream/10603/193926/7/chapter%204.pdf)

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Book Review

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S.K. Agrawal, et.al *Cultural and Intellectual Traditions in India*. Jaipur : Kirandeep Publishers, ISBN 978-81-935167-2-0. Price Rs. 2195/-

The occurrence of Globalization with the concurrence of media and politics has drastically transformed the public sphere in the past two decades. This transformation has given rise to state capitalism, culture industries and economic corporations turning the public sphere into a sphere of culture consumption leading to the cultural and intellectual decline world over. The book under review edited by Prof. S.K. Agrawal, et.al is an attempt to bring to the light the decline of the cultural and intellectual traditions in India by showcasing the rich cultural and intellectual ethos, the Bharat has cherished for centuries.

The book consists of thirty six articles - thirty in English and six in Hindi. It emphasizes that there is something of perennial significance in Indian culture that has sustained it through the ages; the Indian cultural ethos created a public sphere of harmony and integrity. The Indian classics formed the core of this ethos. The editors have sincerely culled papers, articles, interviews of renowned scholars including his Holiness the Dalai Lama, the blessings from Samvit Somgiri (Known as Vivekananda of Marwar region in Rajasthan) and a Foreword by the President of Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Udaipur. The editors have possibly chosen articles from

varied fields related to the eternal life values which have found space in Indian Classics such as the Vedas, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, Smritis, Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, *Bhagwad Gita* etc. with a bearing on ecology, education, governance, aesthetics, ethics, etc.

The Foreword by Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma beautifully illustrates that Bharat is an ancient nation, endowed with rich cultural heritage and morals of exemplary ethos. The beautiful Preface states that the ethos of Indian culture has sustained it through the ages. The concluding lines of the Preface, suggestive in nature specifies the purpose of the Volume. The Excerpts of the Interview of his Holiness the Dalia Lama rightly sets the tone of the book. Prof. Shrawan K: Sharma's article deals with the six important human aspects - Eternal values being one side and the other side comprising education, media, governance, change and society. In his article Prof. A.K. Awasthi explicates the quintessence of Sanatan Dharma that is found in the Vedas, Smritis, Srimad Bhagwad Gita etc. Conceptualising *Mahabharata* and *Manusmriti*, J.P. Singhal is of the view that Raj- Dharma constituted the base of ethics of governance in ancient India. Dr. Vimal Prasad Agrawal's article discusses the terms *rajdharma* and *dandniti* in relation to Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and *Shukraniti*. In his paper Prof. P.K. Dashora emphatically suggests that religion plays a vital role in strengthening the eternal life values. In his another article (in Hindi) he specifies as to how education can promote eternal life values. Prof. Kapil Kapoor's article stresses the need to look back to our ancient culture to put ourselves on the right track. Prof. B.R. Chhipa's paper theorises the ethics of Indian intellectual traditions. In his article Prof. Mahadev opines that ethics constitute the basics of aesthetics. Prof. S.K. Agrawal's article explodes the myth that East is East and West is West by

finding out as to how Robert Browning has constantly borrowed from the tenets of Vedic philosophy. Dr. Seema Sharma's essay traces the impact of oriental wisdom on the occidental scholarship with reference to T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*. Dr. Neerja A. Gupta's paper throws light on the nature of ethics and traces the journey of ethics from ancient to present times. The IPS A.K. Gupta and Prof. S.K Agrawal's co-authored paper explores Hanuman's Karmayoga and Bhaktiyoga on the basis of *Hanuman Chalisa*. In her paper Prof. Sangeeta Sharma underscores the significance of courses and social welfare activities taken at BITS Pilani and their impact on the environment and culture of the place. Dr. Dharmesh Mehta's essay explicates the concepts of Sin and Righteousness as specified in *Srimad Bhagvad Gita*. Dr. Kamlesh Kumar Bhatt's paper traces the contours of certain highlights related to environment in the Vedic, Jain and Buddhist traditions. Dr. Manish Rawal's paper discusses the basic tenets of Bhakti as enunciated by Surdas in his poems. Dr. Girish Kumar's article deals with Kabir as a canonical saint, poet and thinker. In his article Dr. Vasant K. Joshi encapsulates the ethics of journalism in ancient India through the ancient Indian sage Maharishi Narada. Dr. Babita Jain's essay discusses as to how eternal life values create the life force necessary for the living world. Dr. Kshamata Choudhary's paper discusses the importance of human relations as depicted in Anita Rau Badami's novel *The Hero's Walk*. Dr. Pragti Sobti's essay reflects on the role of lesser known female characters in the Ramayana in promulgating the eternal life values. Dr. Divya Joshi and Santosh K. Shekhawat's co-authored essay delve on the ethics as have been delineated in the folk literature of Rajasthan. Dr. Vinita Shukla's essay highlights the significance of education in inculcating values. Dr. Atul Goswami's essay discusses the

teachings of Bhagvad Gita and Lord Bhudha's Eight Fold Path and as to how they can help the journalists fulfill the expectations of the society. Sunayana Pandey's article explores as to how the Mahabharata gives insights to resolve the moral dilemmas of modern man. Dr. Jyotsna Prabhakar's paper examines the relevance of truth and non-violence in the context of globalization. Dr. Tanu Shukla's article is about professional values and educational ethics. Hanuman Singh Rathore's essay (in Hindi) stresses that the "Welfare of all" lies as core value of the intellectual and cultural traditions of India. Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma's paper (in Hindi) stresses that the Shudras have been the basis of our economic prosperity right from ancient India till today. Prof. Dev Kothari's essay (in Hindi) differentiates between life values and eternal values and then explicates the eternal values as found in Rajasthani literature. Dr. Nandita Singhvi's article (in Hindi) throws light on the importance of education system based on ethical values as propounded in the Vedas. The concluding essay by Dr. Gaurishankar Prajapat opines that the core of values in Indian society has been religion and literature, and Rajasthani literature cannot be an exception.

To sum up, the Volume, undoubtedly, as the editors observe in the Preface is like revisiting one's home for an Indian reader and for a foreigner a means to peep into Indian Cultural and Intellectual ethos through its Classics. The editors' endeavors are praiseworthy for the book is about exploring the self; Separation from the self (Self comprising our cultural and intellectual traditions) has made us fall a prey to pernicious anemia. The edited Volume emphasizes the necessity to revert to our great Cultural and Intellectual Traditions and suggests not to dismiss them as something mythical.

Fear of Aging in the Poetry of Kamala Das

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Abstract

The poetry of Kamala Das (1934-2009) is characterised by extreme woman consciousness and femininity. Her poetry voices the existential pressure generated during the modern Indian woman's journey from tradition to modernity. She speaks out her love-longing, frustration, and celebrates the power of good physique in man-woman relationship and her disillusionment, with a disarming frankness. Beside these features, there is a fear of aging which one can realise as a prominent phenomenon in her poetry. Her poetry reflects her restlessness as a sensitive woman moving in the male dominant society, where the only power she possesses in her relationship with man is her feminine body and youth, which she fears to lose through the process of aging. This fear is rooted in her notion that good physique is the only power she owns and losing it will deprive her of momentary pleasures of love-making which is the only happiness she has. The present paper is a modest attempt to foreground how she versifies this fear and how she overcomes it.

Key words: Love longing, Fear of Aging, Disillusionment, Man-Woman relationship.

According to Kamala Das, an ideal union of this relationship does not only involve the body but also the emotions and the soul. However, her attempts at achieving such a union invariably ends in failure. These successive failures, apart from making her depressed, lonely and alienated also raises the fear of the passage of time. She becomes acutely aware of losing her physical charm with age. She has been well informed by her experiences that physical appearance and beauty are the powerful tools of a woman and play a major role in man-woman relationship. Although she also considers the inner self as paramount: “The body is a gift from God just another of his gifts, and the wearer of the particular body is not responsible for its cut or elegance. It is the visible container of an invisible but more real entity” (Das, *Obscenity in Literature* 33). However, all her relationships only confirm the fact that physique is the only factor in a relationship.

That was the only kind of love
 This hacking at each other’s parts
 Like convicts backing, breaking clods
 At noon’.

“The Convicts,” *Descendants* 17

The poet is aware that too much importance is given to the body, as the body is perishable, but along with it, she is also aware of the strong hold a woman can have over men through her body. Her husband’s negligence of her deeper needs made her seek solace elsewhere. In her poem, quoted below she had accused him for this:

Yet, I was thinking, lying beside him
 That I loved and was much loved.
 It is a physical thing, he said suddenly.

End it, I cried, end it and let us be free.

(“Substitute,” *Descendants* 7)

It was ironic that her husband made her aware of the importance of the body in a relationship. Even though her quest started with the desire for emotional gratification it ended in the bitter realization that the soul was never touched. Thus, she understood that a relationship could be kept going, purely on the physical level. She could feel that men were like puppets in her hand. Sharada Iyer observes in this context: “While her poems describe a longing for a man to fill her dreams with love, she is also proud of her being the seducer, the collector specially of those men who pose as lady killers” (193-94). In her famous poem, “Composition”, she writes:

I am not yours for asking.
 grovel at my feet,
 remove your monkey suits and dance
 sing Erato Erato Erato.
 yet I shall be indifferent,
 not because of morality
 but because I do not feel the need
 but why worry?
 What I am able to give
 Is only what your wife is qualified
 To give
 We all are alike, We women

(*Descendants* 31)

Iyer rightly points out:

For her ideal love is the fulfilment of the level of the body and mind. It is the experience beyond sex through sex. The tragic failure to get love in terms of sexual-spiritual fulfilment from the husband leads to search

for it elsewhere. Each relationship only intensifies her disappointment faced with the sense of absolute frustration and loneliness (203)

The mention of the word ‘wife’ in her poems shows that even the sacred bond of marriage does not rise above physical attraction, she admits this was not something that only happened to her but it was generally the case of women in Indian society. In these circumstances, it is not surprising for her to be afraid of losing her physical charm. Had she lived a fulfilling life and achieved true love, the feeling of growing older each day would have been less painful. Living in a situation where the body was given much importance, her fear seems well justified. This fear of losing her only source of happiness becomes too much for her to bear. Even though she strongly felt that there was no need to give so much importance to the body, yet she could not overcome the fear of losing her youth and sexual attraction. Although her relationships failed to quench her thirst for true love, yet they gave her temporary moments of happiness. They confirmed the fact that she was capable of providing some people with what they desired. However, her experiences made her realize that sex was the dominating factor in their relationships, but she could never give it the name of love:

This skin communicated
things that I dare not yet in
his presence call our love.

“In Love,” *Old Playhouse* 15

Her poem reveals that all her efforts to achieve anything beyond sexual union proved to be futile. Thus, she used her feminine body as a means for momentary happiness and that is why she is painfully conscious of growing old. She noticed that physical lust was not so important and was overshadowed

by the realities that she faced. Still, there are many poems which confirm her belief that the body is only a temporary house of the soul. Despite this fact, the love for the body cannot be ignored. One has to live in this world facing the contradiction of the body being perishable yet being loved the most.

The affirmation of the physical also deepens the fear of decay it has to undergo through the process of aging. The fact that one day the body will die is known to everyone, but when the time comes the fear of losing it becomes terrifying and unbearable for her.

This body that I wear without joy owned
by means of substance, shall perhaps
wither, battling with my darling's impersonal.

("Gino" *Old Playhouse* 14)

These lines portray the pain, which the body undergoes when the partner has shallow lust which ends into a fruitless experience that accelerates the decay of the body which is perhaps the reason why she dreams of things that signifies death when she is with her lover.

I dream of obscene hands
striding up my limbs and morgues
Where the night- lights glow on faces
shuttered by the soul's exits.

"Gino" *Old Playhouse* 14

She was well aware of the fact that lust is shallow and purely depends upon physical beauty. She was afraid that when she will grow old and lose her physical charm men will not get attracted to her anymore and she will be deprived of these momentary pleasures.

Certain it is that a time will come
 when one of us will cry,
 candle burns no more at both
 ends burn dimly now,
 and feet that have so long,
 but rambled will then break in to a run,
 recognising for the first time the pale streets horror,
 and runs with the wind to seek for warm hollows.

“Ferns,” *The Descendants* 13

The idea conveyed here is that both man and woman face the fear of aging, where the beauty would fade with aging but the fear is more in woman due to emotional insecurities. She thinks that if a woman’s body becomes less desirable, the man may seek another youthful attractive woman leaving his earlier partner to suffer the pangs of separation and loneliness.

To demonstrate the power of a good physique over a man, she has described every aspect of the relationship frankly with minute details. She advocates that at the initial stage there should be total surrender. One should be ready to give up everything in order to get something in return: “Gift him all, Gift him all that make you a woman”. (“The Looking Glass,” *The Descendants* 25). She knows that a woman is able to make a man dance to her tune if she plays her cards right. If she puts into play all her womanly attributes and charms the man will surely give a satisfying physical response: “It was my desire that made him male and beautiful...” (“A Relationship” *Summer in Calcutta* 18). She believes that a man can hurt her emotionally but can’t reject her physically because body is the only means that binds them together. It is a relationship of mutual dependence on body. She experienced that although there is no emotional bond

between the husband and her, yet her youth and physical charm enticed him.

You were pleased with my body response,
 its weather its usual shallow
 I lost my will and reason...
 always lit with artificial lights
 your window always shut

“The Old Playhouse” *Old Playhouse* 14

These lines signify woman’s relationship with such a person who can only be limited to the domain of the physical; this experience with her husband made her realise the power and importance of her body. Woman’s biggest asset is her youth and beauty and when it started withering away with the passage of time, it creates the desperation in her to hold on to what is left. The passing of time increases her fear of losing what is left and diminishing physical charm leads to anguish and depression. However, deep down there is the unwillingness, the hurt, the disgust and hatred for such meaningless and shallow relationship.

My soul today is on its blinded
 most frightened flight.....
 From stranger to guest, from guest to lover,
 my beloved when you take when you at least win,
 ignore beneath dead ages ,the fatigue in my smile.

“The Bats” *Summer in Calcutta* 46

There is an overall feeling of exhaustion and fear arising out of the instability of relationships. But there is no escape and she has accepted the situation and took up a brave front. No matter how hard she tries to believe otherwise, she has to face the harsh reality. She knows that the body is perishable yet it is considered such an integral part of human relationship. Therefore, the fear of aging and losing youth

and physical attraction becomes all the more painful. At times, she tries to convince herself that all is not lost, that she still has enough charm to attract men: “No, I am still young and I need that man,/ for construction and destruction.” (“The Invitation” *The Descendants* 14). The stress on word ‘No’ displays her denial of reality which soon she realizes in these lines:”To be frank, I have failed/ I feel my age and my uselessness” (“Composition” *The Descendants* 34).

This pain is there due to the realization of failures she met even though she possesses the power of beauty against men. She laments on the loss of her lovers due to aging. She also has burden of guilt, unfulfilled promises made to her grandmother to uphold the moral values taught by her which she has lost in the process of growing. She faces failures because she has forgotten her moral teachings. The memories of her childhood and death of her grandmother had a dual effect on her. The memories were like the lamp that burnt in her ancestral house symbolised the loneliness of old age which is her extreme fear. When her relationship breaks every time she has only one solace and that is her childhood memories but that also doesn’t last for long. Ultimately she returns to the cold, lonely and painful reality of her life. In her autobiography, Kamala Das confessed that she remains in her painful unhappy marriage due to fear.”I would have found it impossible to find another man,/who would volunteer to marry me, for I was not conspicuously pretty” (*My Story* 102). She has suffered from this complex since her childhood as in her school, fair complexion was considered superior and dark complexion was a cause of worry. Every time she failed in her relationship, this complex surfaced in her. Her youth was enough to cover up this inferiority of complexion but losing her youth made her feel very desolate. Once she was mistaken for an ‘*Ayah*’ because

of her complexion. Such incidents increased the feeling of inferiority, thus the fear of approaching old age finds its roots from this complex. The situation of her grandmother when she approached aging, where she was left alone with no one to take care and spend a little time with her. She was afraid of the same situation with herself.

The light go out and night, begins,
 a change of colour, what
 Else? so might my senses fail and die
 Night arrives.... My fear is the fear of change,
 re-assuring me, as you do often, does not help....
 The spring dehydrating like a grape....”

The End of Spring” *Summer in Calcutta* 20

As the old age approaches, body decays, the power of attracting other and controlling their lives also diminishes, people start avoiding the person and even repelled by the ugliness of old age. Giving the example of an aging king, she portrayed her inner fear of aging.

The king has lost his power
 The king’s phone rings
 Once, and it is a wrong number....
 ...his voice is thicker, it turns
 so harsh that even

The poetess now turns her face away

“The High Tide” *Old Playhouse* 43

Her fear of aging can be derived from the following lines where the unpleasant picture of old age makes her so desperate that she wishes to die young without meeting the fate of her grandmother who died in her old age.

Although, she had a fear of aging, the anticipation of death also started growing in her. She realised that by leading

a dissipated life she had brought forth old age earlier than usual, the loneliness, resulting in failures strengthened the fear aging and death. The poetess found it difficult to face the fact that aging is showing on her, she found herself in an inevitable position, where her past is unhappy, full of failures in relationship and future is haunted by the fear of aging and loneliness. The best she had is her present which is full of frustrations.

Walk away from me into the lonely night
 With my finger print on you my darling
 go while like blood
 running out, and death beginning,
 this day of ours is helplessly ending.

“Palam” *The Descendants* 10

It is noteworthy here that she examines the effect this fear has on her body and she develops an urge to end this mortal body which is the main cause of her sufferings.

Bereft of soul my body shall be bare
 bereft of body my soul shall be bare.
 I tell you see, I have enough courage to die.

“The Suicide” *The Descendants* 1

She desired and welcomed death as freedom from negligence that come with aging, she finds death beautiful as it brings to an end the ugliness and barrenness of old age. At the moment when she is standing face to face with the death she realises that body is given undue importance in this world. Her encounter with death when she suffered with a severe haemorrhage cleared out the mist which she had given to her body all her life.

Another way that she tries to fight with the fear of aging was by putting up a brave front. She acted as a woman who

was not bothered with the problem of aging. Instead, she tries to live in the present moment. There is also an attempt to act young to cover up the pain and flaunt a happy look, knowing that this requires a compromise and would also end in pain:

But
Seriously, I must wake up
come alive
I tell my self
And all of you
Who can scan the mirror for that
white
gleam in the hair
fall in love
fall in love with an unsuitable
person
fling yourself on him
like a moth on a flame
let there be despair in every move
Excavate
Deep, deep pain.

“Composition” *The Descendants* 34

In this poem she had tried to convince herself and also all those who are at the threshold of old age, not to feel totally resigned to their fate. But behind this brave front is a feeling of desperation. She knows that such acts will only bring forth more pain, but she finds this more acceptable than leading a vegetable existence. This perhaps, owes its origin to her love for life.

Although at times she may feel so disgusted with her but her love for life would again assert itself and she would be ready to live a vibrant life even if it caused more pain. A

significant factor that lessened her fear of aging and provide her consolation was her belief in rebirth:

Each night when darkness turns
 Me blind, I think of death
 Understanding it to
 Be like night-fall, just a
 Temporary phase, which
 Brings no loss...I

“Death Brings No Loss” *Summer in Calcutta* 61

Here, this belief in rebirth helps her in overcoming this fear of aging and death. It gives her a new hope that if she failed to achieve her goals in this life, there will be another life to achieve them. If she has entered the evening of her life through aging, a new dawn awaits her in the form of her new birth.

Thus it is evident from the quotes above that all her life she sought spiritual fulfilment, the union of the souls in a man-woman relationship. Through her physical experiences she acknowledged that the body was given main importance. She accepts this fact. However, only bodily pleasures failed to provide her fulfilment. This discontentment gave rise to the insecurities of her feminine charm due to aging. She struggled with her inner insecurities. She took up a brave stand to all her fears and perceived death in a very positive way to end up all her frustrations and problems. Death which is considered as the end of all happiness is now perceived as a new opening for happiness. Death is seen as the escape from old age. Referring to her great-grandmother, who lived a glorious life died without anyone feeling sorry for her in huge old Nalapat house, she writes:

The Old are destined to be
 Dumped like unwanted luggage, bits

Of unfashionable junk, and left to
Perish. How often I have remembered
My sweet frail great grandmother
And prayed to God that I would not
Meet with her fate.

My Story 136

Moreover when there is utter hopelessness and despair
only death seems to be the answer.

Morning tree, on your brown bony branch,
One day
I shall see a sudden flower, and know
At once
That my death is just a flower, a red, red
Morning flower, and then from behind the
cold
Window-pane, I shall smile my last morning
Smile.

“My Morning Tree” *Summer in Calcutta* 45

Thus to free herself from the fear of aging, there grows
in her a strong urge to die. She sees her greying hair, feels
her senses weakening and her skin loose and accepts this
inevitable change with calmness and fortitude. In the end
she emerges as a strong woman, who despite initial doubts
and fears, is able to come to terms with reality and accepts
whatever life offers her.

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“I want the fairytale”: A Marxist Interpretation of Narcissistic Representation in Chick-Media

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Abstract

Chick-media a typically, twenty-first century genre, is dominated by material obsession and commodity fetishism. Every woman growing today is exposed to this pop-cultural world of celebrated attachment towards branded goods and destination wedding. The mass-mediated social landscape identifies women based on the worth of their dress and focuses primarily on the amount they spend in beauty parlours and cosmetic surgeries. There is a market that promises Disney-princess life and “Happily ever after” future. The image of achieved female self is portrayed to be achieved in acquiring a Louis Vuitton and Gucci in this materialistic world. In this chase for Harry Winston do media let women think about marxism anymore? Is it really late capitalism? Or in this contemporary realm of self-obsession and narcissism, does marxism hold water any more? This paper would try to explore the boundaries set to marxism by Chick-media by providing a sweep over discourses concentrating more on *Devil wears Prada*, *P.S I love You* and *Princess Diaries*; television series like *Sex and the City* and other chick flicks and romantic comedies.

Key Words: Commodity Fetishism, Material Obsession, Chick-media.

Karl Marx envisioned the perfect society that emphasised on the interpellation of power in the hands of the strata of society that is involved in the process of real creation and production. Thus Marxism is a philosophy which attributed political dominance to the masses; an ideology which catered to 'the sense of the real', a statement usually relegated to the domain of western marxism perpetuated by a group of Marxist, lead by George Lukacs. However two centuries since the rise of Marxism leads us to certain uncomfortable questions; has the near to perfect society that Marx et al dreamt of, emerged?; have those ideals being sustained? In case if it is divergent from the aspiration that Marx had, to what angle? These questions are mandatory in understanding the *Zeitgeist* and *Weltgeist* of the society. The utopian society of capital communism that Marx envisioned assured equal distribution of wealth, was against materialism and promised emotional stability by the means of surety that a worker will not be cast out. The theorising of Marxist ideology is in the cross-roads between the principles he put forth and the application of the same in the society we live in. There is a serious societal interrogation as to how far have the concepts of Marx been transgressed and how much of it has been reinserted or reinforced. In the year 1910, when Coco Chanel begin her first clothes outlet, she worked on the principal of creating a unique suit which concentrated on her philosophies of simplicity and sophistication. Today, after 100 years, her brand is considered the costliest in the whole world. The Marxian statement of "Workers need to see themselves in the object they have created" was the only mantra Coco Chanel followed to achieve this stardom. This success is attributed to customised, tailor made and designer outfits she

made, in the times of mass produced commodities. The period of Fordism that concentrated on bulk productions differentiated her produces for her exclusivity. It is mandatory to remember that, while creation of brands concentrated on quality instead of quantity, that is what Marx also proposed for his utopian community. The only yet major difference was the overturning of the concepts of Marx by attribution of label to the commodity. In the television series, *Sex and the City*, Carrie Bradshaw the protagonist states, “Year after year, twenty-something women come to New York in search of the two L’s: Labels & Love”. It is important to question if this statement is true? In case if it is, then why are the women of the twenty-first century obsessed with brands and labels?

The first wave feminist movement that limited itself to education and voting rights, underwent a massive transformation during the second wave feminism when women felt that operating in such smaller extents will not provide the required result; hence women took to the streets. Every notion that they found patriarchal was inverted and challenged during this time. The major factor of oppression according to most women during that period was caused by certain pieces of garments that they were expected to wear. The bra-burning movement that rejected restricting clothing fashion; that rebelled against the constrained of girdles, laces, bodices and brassiere that women were wearing in order to accentuate their figure for the other gender was one such important landmark in history. This tendency can be felt in utmost every theoretical and feminist work and even the television shows that were created during this period or that represented that age. The television series, *The Alienist* set in earlier part of twentieth century, captures the same conversation between Sara Howard, the female lead and her maid, as follows:

Sara: I don't know if they abhor our shape or crave another.

Maid: They believe us to be delicate creatures.

Sara: Then to hell with them. (*The Alienist*, Season 1, Episode 1)

The cosmetics, garments, stilettos and any such fashion accessories that were considered oppressive in nature were rejected and condemned during this period. Particularly long tresses, perfect figures and other attributes that created a duality between sexuality were dismissed by erasing the feminine features and incorporating manliness and attributes of men's physique. In a sense these feminist ideologies appropriated the thought put forward by Friedrich Engels who in his monumental book, *The Origin of the Family*, stressed on the fact that women were relegated to the home and "made to bear the yoke of womanhood" only during the second phase of Homo Sapien development when society transformed from a hunting to a farming one. So, essentially, women were also domesticated; in the same way that the animals were tamed. This is true because there are evidences to prove that during the hunting period, women were also incorporated into the group taking down prey. The traditional concepts of femininity lead to sexual objectification of women in the social scenario. However, after second wave feminism, when difference feminism evolved, the thoughts of women changed and this paved the way for lipstick feminism and stiletto feminism both of which supported traditional concepts of beauty and rejected anti-sex feminism. Difference feminism objectives questioned why women have to uglify themselves in order to fight against oppression as even uglification against patriarchy was considered a form of male domination. Stiletto feminism and lipstick feminism derived as a

movement against disfigurement that women underwent in earlier feministic phases. The women of difference feminism considered embellishing oneself as empowerment and firmly believed that if their sexual power provided benefit, there is no mistake in using their power for betterment. Chick-lit is a derivative of difference feminism, which has grown into a gargantuan genre both in terms of literature and media. The chick, usually a derogatory term to represent women, is used by women themselves as a status symbol, these chick women, belong to the age group of 20 - 40.

The Chick genre concentrates on young women and their psychological, marital, relational, financial and other problems. These works are generally set in an urbane environment and capture the everyday life and whims and fancies of these womenfolk. While majority of the works in chick genre focus on creation of an individual identity of the protagonist, it is replete with brand consciousness and commodity fetishism. The locus of the genre shifts the Rene Descartesian philosophy of “I think, therefore I am” to I shop, therefore I am. Chick-lit can be called a mediated version of postfeminism, despite it capturing the zeitgeist of the society. There is a visible transference of relationships into materialism. The statement of Rebecca Bloomwood in the series *Confessions of a Shopaholic* when she says, “A man will never love you or treat you as well as a store. If a man doesn’t fit, you can’t exchange him seven days later for a gorgeous cashmere sweater” illustrates the obsession towards labels over love. The high stand that women gave once for family, children and relationships changes into ambitiousness for power, money and denominations. The protagonist of *Sex and the City*, Carrie Bradshaw states that, “The most exciting, challenging and significant relationship of all is one

you have with yourself”. But when and how did women, the epitome of sacrifice, transform themselves into self-indulgence and wrapped themselves into the cocoon, it is both humorous and fear inducing when Carrie states, “I have spent \$40,000 on shoes and I have no place to live. I am will literally be the old woman who lived in her shoes”. In order to understand the mind state of these Chick women, it is important to probe into the history of how media created this brand myth and how it turned the women into the narcissists they have become. The World Wars which lead women to experience the new found freedom, made them experience financial independence for the first time. The vacuum that men created when waging war, in factories, offices and other organisations where filled by women. The women stepped out of their houses for the first time and started working that extended to the level of handling heavy machinery and flying airplanes. They had to both take care of children and earn the livelihood and interestingly the need to carry vegetables, food for children and themselves and vanity kit along with child in one hand while proceeding to workplace was the reason to design the first handbag. When world war ended the women who were used to economic independence and keeping themselves busy were expected to remain at home and take care of their husbands. This created a huge barrenness in their heart, which is termed as *Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan. The women were asked to let go of something that they had yearned for so long, the revival that happened during the absence of men has to be substituted and the market tried to do the same by objectification and creating commodity desire. The war that women waged this time was an ugly one as after experiencing freedom to let it go was tough. It was during this time that Marx pointed out, it was women and children that capitalist

exploited the most and he was against the notion of happiness measured in terms of women being employed. The traditional role of “Kirche, Kücher and Kinder” did not satisfy the women anymore and hence the market created the facade of the Happy Family, the ideology where men went to work and women took care of the household and children went out to school. This representation is one of the most overused in advertisements, movies and television series. The programs like *American House wives* exemplify the same. The stereotyping spread irrespective of geographical location and even the early twenty-first century movie like *Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham* portrays the same where the character played by Kajol is considered the ideal housewife as she is religious, loving, caring, patriotic mother and wife. The literature of late twentieth century captured the newly created emptiness in women’s heart in fictional work like *The Yellow Wallpaper*, *A Doll’s House* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. The rejection of Helmer’s plea that, “I will work day and night for you” by Nora when she states, “I must stand on my own two feet if I’m to get to know myself and the world outside. That’s why I can’t stay here with you any longer” exemplifies the want of women during this period. The wife of the army veteran in Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, when she begs, fights and argues with her husband has to be understood in same light.

“Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.

“What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

“I never know what you are thinking. Think.”

(*The Waste Land*, T. S. Eliot)

The marketing media during this time-frame used and abused its power to sell the consumer and luxury goods that they were producing, with the tag of status symbol than as a useful commodity. Dolce, Gabbana, Luis Vuitton, Ferrari,

Prada, Michael Kors and many others were established during this time. Though the chick-media concentrates on women, it is also men and their brand consciousness which is being displayed. The market of men, though may not consist of shoes, jacket, handbag and make-up like women, consists of a far more larger arena comprising of personal products and accessories to Sports Cars, Coolers, Electronic Goods and watches, also the men who gifts women with expensive items is considered to be the perfect gentleman. The chick-flicks and chick-lit operates on the firm ground of marketing brands in the twenty-first century, that every woman character has a passion for branded goods and her ideal man is one who can understand her passion. The chick-media takes it a notch up when it starts with branding the person by the clothes they are wearing. In the movie *Devil Wears Prada*, a movie set in the fashion industry when the protagonist Andy comes to be interviewed by Miranda who carries the Devil, when being interviewed is commented by the interviewee as one that has no fashion sense. “Fashion is the instant language” states Miuccia Prada, “I firmly believe that with the right footwear one can rule the world” states Bette Midler. These quotations do not merely represent the spirit of the time but it also proves how much brand consciousness was created at the times when mass-production was at its peak. It is an ironical yet questionable attitude. The educational rights and economic freedom expanded the fashion industry and in turn fashion industry represented women as powerful with the ability to buy anything they want. The representation of women as cash-cows is one of the primary themes of chick-media which does not simply end with beauty products and accessories but extends to the next big market of cosmetic surgery. It is inevitable for us to avoid any contact with words like nose job, enlargement, liposuction, augmentation among others.

In *Bad Teacher*, the protagonist takes up a teaching job, only to get her breasts augmented as it happens to be one of the most important goals for her. In recent times, one is ready to substitute one's body to achieve the ideal notion of beauty. The particular conversation between two friends in the movie *Sex and the City* goes as follows:

Carrie Bradshaw: Well I made a decision
I hope you'll be happy about.

Samantha: Oh honey, you finally got botox.

Today, the concept of Retail therapy can be visualised in every household. The scientists have proven that stress level considerably decreases and our body secretes endorphins, the hormone that elevates mood and keeps us in euphoric state when one does shopping. Many of the generation are compulsive shoppers. It is also true that shopping has changed from an endeavour to pass-time. It is either in dream of acquiring or it is in acquiring something that human spends most of his/her life. The phrases window shopping, online shopping have crept into our vocabulary and every day life, with such an ease; chick media captures the same. Every rom-com and chick-flick operates on the concept of make over. The transformation scene from the Ugly duckling that a protagonist is presently to the beautiful swan is an unavoidable theme in chick-media. But the amount of money and time that a normal human being spends for this transformation that does not restrict to personal makeover, but has transformed to make overs of homes, cars and offices. YouTube is replete with make over videos, that promise instant changes and redressals in life. Any hard times, be it divorce, break-up, being out of work, or any physical, psychological or relationship problems are promised to be weeded out with make overs, as it provides a New Beginning.

The movies like *Princess Diaries*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, *Sex and the City*, *Pretty Woman*, *Mean Girls* and *Legally Blonde* are a few examples that portray a make over scene and interestingly these are the most watched videos in YouTube and Daily motion. The contemporary cinema represents women as powerful and with an ability to achieve anything. It also portrays them as needing fashion sense as one of the best secrets for success. The word acquire is prominent as women earn a lot more than men in today's generation and most of young woman are not interested in a relationship. This shift in ideology is cashed by consumer markets and advertisement world. Carrie Bradshaw states, "I'm not afraid of heights, have you seen my shoes?". The power is always parallel with accessories in recent times.

This ideology of obsession with brands does not restrict to capitalist countries like the US, but it is prominent phenomenon in socialist countries like China also. In today's world China is considered to be leading user of iPhones, the Chinese are regarded as the most brand conscious in the whole world. There are also numerous Chinese Chick-Flicks, fictional novels and TV series that prove the same. In the movie, *Finding Mr. Right*, the protagonist questions "Who does not love money?". The Chinese chick-lit is as abundant with brands, labels and denominations as its counterpart. Even India a country that has amalgamated the best of both socialism and capitalism characterises the consumer fetishism. There is a visible McDonaldisation in terms of culture in India. Bollywood is the best example for the same. Desi chick-lit portrays women with material obsession as they are no more novices in fashion world. Our exorbitant marriages and our passion for gold and diamond jewellery prove the fetishistic attitude that predominates Indian society today. The big fat Indian wedding is obscene in its extravagance and indulgence.

Haven't we been subjected to the recent phenomenon of a marriage where the invitation card itself was to the tune of a couple of lakhs Inr? Isn't it true that in a Communist state too, today the best businesses are the marriage related ones which advertise opulence? Similarly, the Mia advertisements are typical examples as Mia, a jewellery collection of Tanishq launched exclusively for working women uses the catch phrase, “As beautiful, as your work”. The amount of money an individual spends in buying a commodity is seen as an investment in recent times. There has always been a very Indian way of mythifying Gold as Investment, but it has considerably changed and every costly product the consumer buy from a 100 dollar sweater or shoe to a condo apartment is compared in same scale. In *Confession of a Shopaholic*, Rebecca Bloomwood says, “So I buy it. The most perfect little cardigan in the world. People will call me the Girl in the Gray Cardigan. I'll be able to live in it. Really, it's an investment.”

This proves that this self - obsession is not a national phenomenon rather a *weltgeist* as people all over the world irrespective of every diversity lives in the world filled with commodity and live with the opinion that, “The more, The better”. It is at this juncture that one has to question how the ideals of Marx hold relevance today. Karl Marx introduced the term commodity fetishism in first chapter of *Das Kapital* and envisaged a society in which material objects would take centre stage over human society and relationships. He advocated the subject (human) over the object (material) and warned that a reversal would be inherent over a period of time. The contemporary society that we live in today, the reality of the pop cultural identity of ‘late capitalism’ that engages us, the process of ‘reification’ as put forward by Georgy Lukacs, and that we see around us everywhere; leads

to a contemplation that socialist ideals are sacrificed on the altar of commodification. The narcissistic nature seems to be the only truism in today's realm. As Samantha says, "I love you, but I love me more" and women are proud to portray the same. Though it is market that is responsible for this change, it is not because women are easy targets, but because they have in them the ability to buy. The women today are expecting nothing less than the fairy tale. It is questionable attitude as at least half of the movies produced and utmost every advertisement focuses on achieving self, by achieving a Good. A quick look at numerous fair and lovely advertisements is enough to represent the same. If this is a healthy way of representing a person? Or is it even a healthy lifestyle? It is not; but it is the sad state of affairs as contemporary times dictate and values a person only by their possessions.

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Prakarāṇa Vakratā (Episodic Obliquity) in T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land

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Abstract

Kuntaka propounded his theory of *vakrokti* in his treatise *vakroktījīvitam*. He defines *vakrokti* as '*vakrokti raiva vaidagdhyaḥ gāṅgibhaniti uccayate*', that is to say, an utterance characterized by wit or ingenuity. It is the charming feature of *kāvya* that makes a work of art more lively and comprehensive. Eliot comes very close to Kuntaka when he foregrounds the strikingness and indirect expressions in an artistic creation. He opines that in order to create good poetry, there should be complex, allusive and indirect expressions. Eliot is conscious of this concept and gives an opinion on poetry is that "variety and complexity, playing upon refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results" is indicative of Kuntaka's *vakroktī* in general and what he adds further, "the poet becomes more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force to dislocate, if necessary, language into his meaning"(Eliot 131). Eliot's creative works are impregnated with such kinds of expressions. The present paper is a modest attempt to see how T.S.Eliot's *The Waste Land* is impregnated with *prakaraṇa vakratā* (episodic obliquity), one of the kinds of *vakroktī*, the other being, phonetic (*varṇa-vinyāsa-vakratā*), lexical (*pada-pūrvārdha-vakratā*), grammatical (*pada-parārdha-vakratā*), sentential (*vākya vakratā*) and compositional obliquities (*prabandha-vakratā*). In the process of discerning *prakaraṇa*

vakratās in Eliot's 'The Waste Land', I have used the translated works of *vakroktī*, as given by scholars as R.S. Tiwary, Kapil Kapoor and S.K. Sharma.

Key words: *Vakroktī*, *prakaraṇa vakratā*, extra ordinary delight.

Kuntaka's *prakaraṇa-vakratā* deals with the oblique use of *prakaraṇa* (episode). According to him, when the object of art is capable of maintaining suspense all along and is the product of unique, boundless skill of the artist underlying it, we have what we called *prakaraṇa-vakratā*. He reckons his idea very assiduously:

*apyāmulāḍaṇśankyaśamuḥāne maṇorathe
kāpunmīlati niḥśimā śā prakaraṇa-vakratā (V.J.IV.2)*

(When the intended object at the end will remain inscrutable from the beginning (i.e. suspense remains constant till the denouement), the unique and boundless poetic skill underlying it all should be regarded as the poetic beauty of an episode).

Kuntaka further put the demarcation of *prakaraṇa-vakratā* into sub-varieties. These are: *bhāvapūrnasthitivakratā* (obliquity of emotional states), *utapādyalāvanyavakratā* (obliquity of modified source story), *upkārya-upkāra bhāva vakratā* (obliquity of episodic relationship), *viśisthaprakaraṇa vakratā* (obliquity of particular event and episode), *apradhānaprasaṅgavakratā* (obliquity of secondary episode), and *sandhiviniveśavakratā* (obliquity of juncture).

T.S. Eliot makes a creative use of episodes and contexts from various sources as mythology, history, philosophy, literature and so on in *The Waste Land*. Eliot composed this poem at the point of time when most of the powerful countries were suffering from the disease of polarization. In

order to address the questions of inner turmoil, lust, desire, hope, compassion, dejection, psychic conflict, fear and devotion etc, Eliot has introduced several episodes from diverse sources while can be studied as *bhāvapûrnasthiti vakratā*, *utapādyalāvnyavakratā*, *apradhānaprasaṅgavakratā*, *viśisthaprakarṇavakratā*, *prakaraṇāntara vakratā*, *sandhi-viniveśa vakratā*.

Bhāvapûrnasthitivakratā (obliquity of emotional states) is one of the sub-varieties of *prakaraṇa-vakratā*. In poetry, it brings additional charm as it caused by the impersonal emotions expressed by a character. In this regard, Eliot enumerates that, the emotion expressed in poetry is not personal to the poet, that the emotion belongs to the poem and not to the poet. He holds that “poetry is not turning lose of emotions but escape from emotions” (Eliot 52). Here he means to escape from personal emotions, which indirectly means the use of impersonal emotions. In the first section of the poem, ‘The Burial of the Dead’ Eliot emotionally outbursts when he repents spiritual loss:

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,

Tiresias, who is a central camera man and mouthpiece of Eliot, after observing the human activities, he becomes emotionally charged and narrates the human condition. He represents the modern materialistic man as an iconoclast. The iconoclasts have broken the images of Christ, Virgin, Saints, etc., standing in Churches. The dead trees of materialism provide no shelter; the cricket as symbolize the creation of nature, is considered something impersonal can bring no relief. Eliot employs emotional statements as episode for

aesthetic transport in the final section of the poem, ‘What the Thunder Said’, Tiresias, after a long disturbance reckons an optimistic note:

The limp leaves, waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
Then spoke the thunder.

In the emotional responses, he hopes for new dawn, new courage, new hope, courage, new faith. Thus Eliot, in a poetic composition, uses strong passion in order to illustrate life.

Eliot makes use of *utapādyalāvnyavakratā* (obliquity of modified source story) in *The Waste Land* in a comprehensive way. He bestows a new shape of a work of art by modifying a predominant imagination. Besides the invention of something new, he significantly rearranges the source story and introduces universal element in the source story. Eliot makes the source story poetically striking by modifying it with his predominant imagination. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land* has different sources like Sir James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* (1890) and Jessie Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) upon which Eliot’s imagination works. *The Golden Bough* is a study of primitive life and lies behind the modern literary interest in myth and ritual. In his notes to *The waste Land*, Eliot refers to it as a work “which has influenced our generation profoundly” (Jain 137). Frazer’s work belongs to the evolutionary school of English anthropologists who used the comparative historical method to demonstrate that religion was a product of the mind and not something that had been supernaturally revealed. Here Eliot develops the scope of rational and scientific understanding by making the connection between primitive rites and customs and the

'higher' forms of religion, especially Christianity. Like Frazer, Jessie Weston, too, attempts to explain the evolution of religious belief in her study of Grail legend. The Grail was the cup used by the Christ at the last supper with his disciples before his crucifixion. Though Miss Jessie Weston modifies her story, she concludes that the task of grail hero is no mere literary invention, but a heritage of prehistoric times, going back to *Rig Veda*. It has been suggested that Eliot's use of Frazer's and Weston's works are not extraneous but are quiet helpful in deciphering the disorderly presentation of the modern world. Thus Eliot use these order to demonstrate the continuity between the primitive and civilized life.

Eliot's power of ideas delineates in his art of characterization, derived from different sources. Eliot's poem has various stories of Tiresias, Madame Sosostriis, Belladonna, Phoenician Sailor and other minor characters. In this poem, Eliot emphasizes Tiresias's bisexuality, derived from the Latin text of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. A number of interpretations of Tiresias myth has been derived from in the Greek and Latin literature. Madame Sosostriis is taken from the novel by Aldous Huxley, *Crome Yellow* in which one of the male characters, for a charity fair, dresses up as a gypsy woman to tell fortunes and advertises himself as 'Sosostriis, the sorceress of Ecbatana. Similarly, Phoenician Sailor has been interpreted as a type of the god, whose image was thrown into the sea each year to symbolize the death of summer, and later reclaimed to enact his resurrection and so to enact the return of new life in the spring. Though these all characters have played different role in the original sources as Madam Sosostriis role in *Crome Yellow* seems very insignificant but Eliot makes this character common to uncommon by the creative use of language. In addition to, rest of the characters are modified artistically. The wider range of references in

this poem rejects the boundaries of European tradition. Eliot took various quotations, allusions from various sources and used them artistically according to the need of the poem.

Another sub-variety of *prakaraṇa-vakratā* is *apradhāna-prasaṅgavakratā* (obliquity of secondary episode). The talented poet uses it by inducting a charming small reference or event within an episode for the sake of achieving primary aim. These episodes assist each other in providing the intended end. The particular episode does not have importance in isolation until it proliferate the value of secondary episode. These episodes and incidents are coherently connected with each other and appear as a whole. Julia Kristeva, is talking like Kuntaka, in her *The Bounded Text*, incorporates a solid vision that the authors do not produce their texts from their original minds, but compile them from pre-existing material (texts, ideas, cultures, myths, philosophies etc.) Kristeva writes, a text is ‘a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of given text’, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another, (Allen 35)

Eliot arranges interesting and meaningful secondary references in the poem. The poetic expressions as, broken images, sun beats, dead tree, dry stone are the indications of agony and pain of modern generation which contribute to the main plot of the poem. The opening of *The Waste Land* illustrates how Eliot use secondary episodes to narrate the life:

April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering

Earth is forgetful snow, feeling
A little life with dried tubers.

This is the modified version of the beginning of Chaucer's 'Prologue' to the *Canturbury Tales*.

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which verth engendred is the flour...
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages.

There is the absolute contract: the eager acceptance of experience. The reference to Chaucer at once releases a charge of feelings, which by contrast are entirely appropriate to what Eliot has to say. This contradiction explains how the modern generation completely indulges in the pangs of materialistic world. In this way, Eliot uses beautifully a secondary episode in depicting the callous life of the modern generation.

Viśisthaprakāṇavakratā (obliquity of particular event and episode) is also discernible in the poem. There poetic compositions in the poem which are repeated again and again and produce the striking beauty. Here a question arises, which is answered by Kuntaka: Shall the repetition of expression, consisting same meaning not spoil the aesthetic beauty of any literary composition? Kuntaka defended here and enumerates, ordinarily, this kind of repetition is a flaw but the poet of the high talent, renews the object each time. Here he, emphasizes the talent of the poet. In the poem '*The Waste Land*' Eliot employs consecutively phrases and sentences in very artistic manner as, 'Those are the pearls that were in his eyes', (47) 'HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME', (48) 'jug jug' (51). These lines are repeated at varying intervals in consecutive sections, having different poetic connotations. Which enhance

the beauty of this poem. In the poem the phrase ‘Jug Jug’ is ironically used. In Elizabethan age it represents pious song of nightingale but Eliot reckons their readers that it is the profaned song of Philomela in modern age. So the song is violated by crude interpretations. Similarly, HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME is a reminder for the modern man. It alarms modern generation that come out from this materialistic world otherwise it would be cause of devastating. Hence these events represent the various connotations, help in developing suggestive use of language in this poem.

Sandhiviniveśa vakratā (obliquity of juncture), the last sub-variety of *prakaraṇa-vakratā*, is also discernible here. Eliot coherently connects the different episodes in order to give the delightful ending. The different junctures in the plot from beginning to the end are interfused with one another, which appeal to the heart of the reader. *The Waste Land* is the amalgamation of different sections is organically related to each other. However, incidents of these sections derived from different sources lead to the intended end. Eliot himself holds, “poetic originality is largely an original way of assembling the most disparate and unlikely material to make a new whole” (Jain, 132). The poetic sequence of the poem are, The Burial of the Dead, Game of Chess, The Fire sermon, Death by Water, What the Thunder Said, have been inspired from other writers as Coleridge, Thomas Middleton and sermons of St. Augustine and Lord Buddha. These Sequences are treated in this poem as an organic whole. The critics called it ‘*montage technique*’ where all the disconnected pictures and images are used in single context. So the obliquity of organic unity can be seen explicitly in the entire structure of this poem.

To conclude, the various levels of *vakratās*, employed by Eliot create a powerful impact by making presentation of the modern world by taking clue from the sources, Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. T.S. Eliot makes a creative use of episodes and contexts from various sources as mythology, history, philosophy, literature and so on. Eliot composed this poem at the point of time when most of the powerful countries were suffering from the disease of polarization. In order to address the questions of inner turmoil, lust, desire, hope, compassion, dejection, psychic conflict, fear and devotion, he maintains suspense all along by giving emotional suffusion, by weaving secondary episodes and finally by using junctures from beginning to end in order to make the whole work an oblique composition.

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Book Review

The Language of Literature and Its Meaning: A Comparative Study of Indian and Western Aesthetics by Ashima Shrawan. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019, ISSN ((10): 1-5275-2817-0/ and ISSN (13): 978-1-5275-2817-8, pp184. Rs. Price US \$ 119.

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The book under review explores how the language of literature and its meaning have been dealt with in both Indian and Western aesthetic thinking, with special reference to Kuntaka's theory of *vakrokti* and Anandavardhana's theory of *dhvani*, selected from Indian aesthetic thinking and the Russian formalism and the Deconstruction from the Western aesthetic thinking. Its focus is on the intersection between the theory of *vakrokti* and the Russian Formalism, both based on the oblique use of language in a text and the intersection between the theory of *dhvani* and the theory of deconstruction, based on the meaning of a text. The author, exploring a significant area of intersection between the Indian and Western thinking, sheds light on outstanding aesthetic problems by bringing out affinities and contradictions between Indian and Western thoughts. From the point of view the marked language of literature, the following texts have been studied analytically: *The Vakrokti-jīvitam* by Kuntaka, a 10th century Sanskrit aesthician and *Language in Literature, Fundamentals of Language*, *The Sound Shape of Language* and *On Poetic Language* by

Jakobson, Jan Mukarovsky and Linda R. Waugh. Similarly from the point of view of the meaning, the texts which have been selected are: *Dhvanyâloka* by Anandavardhana, a 9th century Sanskrit aesthetician and *Of Grammatology, Writing and Difference, Difference* by Jacques Derrida, a modern Western aesthetician.

The book has six chapters excluding “Introduction” and “Summing Up”: “The Language of Literature and Its Meaning”, “Kuntaka’s Theory of *Vakrokti*: The Language of Literature”, “Russian Formalism: The Language of Literature”, “Kuntaka’s Theory of *Vakrokti* and Russian Formalism: Affinities and Parallelisms”, “Anandavardhana’s Theory of *Dhvani*: Meaning of the Language of Literature”, “Deconstruction: Meaning of the Language of Literature”, and “Anandavardhana’s Theory of *Dhvani* and Deconstruction: Affinities and Parallelisms”

As far as Kuntaka and the Formalists are concerned, Dr Ashima concludes that they agree on the fundamental principle of poetics lying in the distinction between language of literature and everyday language. This distinction could be seen in the opposition between *svabhâvokti* (statement) and *vakrokti* (obliquity), between the language of familiarization and that of defamiliarization. *Svabhavokti* (scientific treatise), imparts knowledge and information, it removes ignorance but does not enhance perception, which is the work of language of literature. Similarly, Russian formalists believe that language of literature glorifies and enhances perception, whereas scientific language enhances recognition. Despite all the contradictions and similarities, both the theories focus on the significance of creative use of language of literature. They accept this view as a cardinal point and treat the language of literature at various levels

creatively charged by *vakrokti* and defamiliarization . They hold that when the writer finds that the limited medium at his disposal is not able to communicate that vast world of his experiences, which would not let him/her rest until he has given expression to it, he/she is obliged to use language in his/her own unique way, exploiting creatively all its potentials. He/she tries to make a raid on the inarticulate and variously attempts to dislocate language into his meaning. The language of literature is more structured and novel than the language of common usage.

The author has also shown logically affinities and parallelisms between Ânandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* and deconstruction at various points. Both of them accept that a certain indirect meaning is the most distinguishing characteristic of the language of literature. They treat a literary work as a self-contained or systematic entity, or as a part of a larger 'textual' structure. They tend to be impersonal and a-historical in their approach. But in spite of these affinities, there is no one to one correspondence between Ânandavardhana's *dhvani* and deconstruction. The theory of *dhvani* is far more comprehensive and convincing than the assertions of deconstruction. The theory of *dhvani* looks upon the literary piece as an organic whole, permeated by the enlivening presence of an aesthetic emotion. Ânandavardhana analyses literary works to establish that great works of art achieve some organic cohesion because of the ultimate suggestion of some emotion. The art of *dhvani* serves as a key to unravel the dreamy evocativeness achieved by literature. By taking due cognizance of the reader's reaction to a piece of literature and by basing his theoretical edifice on the firm foundation of poetic genius, Ânandavardhana has been able to give a more plausible account of linguistic creativity and the nature and role of suggestion in literature.

Thus, he could think of dealing with meaning from the 'productive' as well as the 'receptive' side: from the point of view of the writer and the reader who must note the context, including the personality of the author and finally on his own sensibility for the interpretation of meaning. He postulates a text with a definite literal meaning. His *dhvani*, being impregnated with the purpose of *ânanda* (bliss) which is just like the existence of *Brahmatattva*, confirms that it is not just built around the text, author, reader and context. Rather it is built around compositional practices to explain how the verbal compositions are put together to mean what they variously mean to different readers. As far as deconstruction is concerned, it mainly focuses on the 'free-play of meanings and puts forth that the centre does not hold, thereby calling itself a discourse. Through deconstruction, we come to the notions of the text that is empty with no meaning of subjective constructions. This emptiness comes out of the different terms which define the infinite meanings: 'trace', 'supplement', *différance*, 'erasure', 'tropes', absence, presence, transcendental signified etc. Deconstruction appears rather superficial when placed beside Ânandavardhana's theory of *dhvani*. It suffers from theoretical limitations. It does not define meaning in order to find it. It only demonstrates the difficulties that define meaning in a univocal way: as what an author intends, what conventions determine, what a reader experiences. Meaning, according to deconstruction appears to be the creation of the man who is bare and naked and does not want to recognize his own and existential consciousness with no faith in evolution. In a word, despite all the affinities and parallelisms, both the theory of *dhvani* and deconstruction assert the understanding of meaning of the language of literature.

Thus, the book is quite innovative to make a comparison of the two lines of theories so as to judge various points of affinities and contradictions. The book shall definitely help the students and teachers find out certain universals of literary creation, evaluation and appreciation. It shall definitely enrich the huge critical corpus that already exists.