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Interrogating the Margins through Wordsworth's Romanticism and Patanjali's Yogasutra

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Interrogating the Margins- the margins that have defined perhaps divided cartographically not only the nations as a geographical entity but also as a fractured ideological entity. The codification of this kind of mental space has led to certain dominant 'western' discourses that have conveniently marginalized the oriental 'Other'. This paper is an attempt to deconstruct this mystification of the west by discovering it as a fractured entity. It is an attempt not just to interrogate the margins but crossing over the margins in a quest to invent new realities, new world, new imagination where there could be hopes of no margins at all. I will analyze and substantiate this inversion by exploring the relationship between Romanticism and Indian philosophy, especially Yoga, through romantic poets and Patanjali's Yogasutra.

Synthetically speaking, some key research queries that are thus proposed together to be probed in this paper are:

1. Romanticism's departure from the binaries of reasoning/sensation, mind/matter that mark most of Western philosophy, and thus its comparability with tripartite Indian thought;
2. Specifically, Romanticism's comparability with Yoga philosophy, on grounds of:
 - a) spiritual intent and content of the two
 - b) the crucial role given to mind application (imagination/concentration) in the two
 - c) the centrality accorded to the 'body' in the two

Western thought since time immemorial has predominantly stood on dichotomous poles, be it the Plato/Aristotle realist/nominalist debate, the Descartes/Locke rationalist/empiricist debate, or the subsequent idealist/materialist debate.

But the romantic thought does away with this binary dyad. The duality of reasoning and sensation gets replaced by a third epistemology 'imagination' which is both non-empirical and non-rational, and the classic duality of mind and matter gets supplemented with the foregrounding of a third ontology, of the 'body'.

This ontological tripartition of mentality-materiality-physicality, rather than the classic Western mentality-materiality dyad, brings Romantic thought close to classical Indian thought, for which, from the intra-individual psychological to the supra-individual cosmological levels, one finds a similar tripartition.

It leads to the inclusion of 'physicality' in the classic mental/material dichotomy and connects Romantic thought to Yoga where the foregrounding of the body as a privileged ontological category derives special significance, with Yoga's stress on the body as the site of philosophical activities. While the emphasis on the body within Yoga is evident, how the body becomes the privileged site in a romantic poet is also evidenced in this paper.

Spirituality

Inclusion of Isvara as an ontological category marks yoga as a philosophical system distinct from samkhya, but what is to be noted is that for Patanjali, Isvara is not really a deity but rather a special cognitive category. He characterises Isvara through three features. In sutra I.24, he calls it a special type of purusa or self which is not affected by the latent deposits of karma. In sutra I.25, he identifies it with the seed of omniscience. Finally, as a third feature, he describes the category as the teacher of even the ancient ones that which is not limited by the time. It can be observed from these three features that for yoga ontology, the status of divinity is accorded to a cognitive category, a self that deals with knowing and teaching, rather than an omnipotent deity. This relationship between isvara and knowledge is made clearer in the next sutra, which says isvara's verbal form is pranava i.e aum. Sutra I.27 and I.28 suggests that one should repeatedly utter this syllable and contemplate on its possible meaning the category of isvara thus becomes not just a cognitive entity but also a linguistic item.

According to Wordsworth, nature is a manifestation of God, a doctrinal pantheism. Beneath all the universe, he came to believe that there is an existence of living principle;

In all things, in all natures, in the stars,
This active principle abides, from link to link,
It circulates the soul of all the worlds. (Evans, 1966:141).

He is thrilled with the sense of some inscrutable presence in nature to which the soul of man is linked by some mysterious bond of connection:

I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean or the living air
And the blue sky and in the mind of man
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things (ibid.46).

Body

A body in both the philosophies is a real perceptible entity, the existence of which is made known to human beings by the immediate testimony of their senses, without reasoning, i.e. without reflection.

Eastern and romantic thought takes one through the layer of being outwards from the core, the soul, towards the periphery, the body; and inwards from the periphery towards the core. The purpose of this exploration is to discover, experience and taste the nectar of the soul. The process begins with external awareness; what we experience through the sense organs or organs of action or Karmendriyas (the arms, legs, mouth, and the organs of generation and excretion) and proceeds through the senses of perception or jnanendriyas (the ears, eyes, nose, tongue). That awareness begins to penetrate the mind, the intelligence, the ego, the consciousness and the individual self or (asmita) until it reaches the soul. (atma).

Kant echoes romantic philosophy in his Transcendental Idealism when he argues, essentially, that incoming data must be organized into a form that human minds can process.

The fundamental idea of Kant's critical philosophy is human autonomy. According to his aesthetic theory, "we judge objects to be beautiful not because they gratify our desires, since aesthetic judgments are disinterested, but rather because apprehending their form (Kant,1999),stimulates what he calls the harmonious "free play" of our understanding and imagination, in which we take a distinctively aesthetic pleasure .So beauty is not a property of objects, but a relation between their form and the way our cognitive faculties work.

In the history of development of art, Hegel states that In romantic art, the content is conceived in such a way that it is able to find adequate expression in sensuous, visible form and yet also ultimately transcends the realm of the sensuous and visible.

William Wordsworth, poem Daffodils's text from 1807 Poems, explicitly states the above idea.

In Yogic philosophy, there are various layers or sheaths . These layers or sheaths are the anatomical, skeletal or structural sheath (annamaya Kosa)physiological or organic sheath(pranamaya Kosa); the mental or emotional sheath (manomaya Kosa);the intellectual or discriminative sheath (vijnanamaya Kosa) and the pure blissfull sheath (anandamaya Kosa).These Kosas represent five elements of nature,or prakriti:earth,water,fire,air and ether. Mahat,cosmic consciousness in its individual form as citta is the sixth Kosa while the inner soul is the seventh kosa(Shastri, 1892).

The blissful spiritual sheath is called the casual body(Karana Sarira) while the physiological, intellectual and mental sheaths form the subtle body(suksma sarira) and the anatomical sheath the gross body(karya sarira). The yoga aspirant tries to understand the functions of all these sheaths of the soul and begins his quest to experience to the divine core of being;the atman.

Asanas,in yoga, are not merely external and physical. The eight components of astanga yoga are interwoven. Patanjali defines concentration as the focussing of attention either within or outside the body. If, performing an asanas, one directs the organs of actions and sense of perception towards the mind, and the mind towards the core, the external sadhana is transformed into internal sadhana. If the limbs, the senses of perception, the mind and discriminative intelligence are than yoked and fused with the energy and soul, this becomes the innermost sadhana. If one performs each asana zealously, fusing with integrated attention the parts of the body, the wandering mind and the discriminative intelligence with the soul, one is doing a spiritual practice.

Mind and Imagination

Further ,a line of similarity is found between the two modes of thought in their insistence on a sequential and incremental process of mind-work.

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge conceive of poetic experience as an active response of the mind to personal perception and experience (more active, though, in Coleridge's account than in Wordsworth's). The observer does not merely record what he sees: he transfigures it when moved. In this way, perceiving with emotion, he may disclose the immanent beauty of things which escapes ordinary perception. Unlike the mimetic view, where the human mind is a passive recipient of external impressions and does not in any way modify them.

For Kant, our knowledge of the external physical world is largely, if not entirely, shaped by the organisational categories inherent in the mind which is at least as much an active and creative faculty .Schelling agreed with Kant that the external world is seen as an adjunct to what is most real: the mind.

Romanticism has two categories of imagination-‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ imagination .The primary imagination is the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I

AM. The secondary is as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operations. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.) Fancy, on the contrary, has not other counters to play with but fixities and definite. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will which we express by the word choice. But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association. In *Yogasutra* also, it is stated that verbal knowledge devoid of substance is fancy or imagination. The playing with fanciful thoughts and words and living in one's own world of thoughts and impressions which have no substantial basis is *vikalpa*, a vague and uncertain knowledge which does not correspond to reality. If *vikalpa* is brought to the level of factual knowledge by analysis, trial, error, and discrimination, it can awaken a thirst for correct or true knowledge and delusion can be transformed into vision and discovery. Unless such a transformation takes place, knowledge based on imagination remains without substance.

Primary Imagination can be related to Kant's Understanding, while Secondary or Poetic Imagination is nearer to Kant's Reason. Coleridge establishes an analogy between the imaginative capability of the poet and the creativity of the "infinite I Am." (Coleridge, 2004). In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth speculates that a nursing infant who "drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye" finds in her love "a virtue which irradiates and exalts / Objects through widest intercourse of sense." Turning then from her to the natural world, the child discovers an "active universe" transformed by love into a living inward experience of beauty and pity. His imagination "doth, like an agent of the one great Mind / Create, creator and receiver both, / Working but in alliance with the works / Which it beholds."

The first *sūtra* of Patañjali *Yogaśūtra* (*yogaścittavṛttinirodha*) gives the gist of all yogic praxis: "yoga is the blocking of the discursive functions of the mind."

He says that the mind is mercurial by nature, elusive and hard to grasp. Moreover, it is the one organ which reflects both the external and internal worlds. Though it has the faculty of seeing things within and without, its more natural tendency is to involve itself with objects of the visible, rather than the inner world.

In collaboration with the senses, mind perceives things for the individual to see, observe, feel and experience. Through their influence, impulsiveness and other tendencies or moods creep into the mind, making it a storehouse of imprints (*samskaras*) and desires (*vasanas*), which create excitement and emotional impressions. If these are favourable, they create good imprints; if unfavourable they cause repugnance. These imprints generate the fluctuations, modifications and modulations of consciousness. If the mind is not disciplined and purified, it becomes involved with the objects experience, creating sorrow and unhappiness. The mind that has experience must also have a faculty of combination or synthesis, the imagination for Kant, that apprehends the data of sense, reproduces it for the understanding, and recognizes their features according to the conceptual framework provided by the categories. The mind must also have a faculty of understanding that provides empirical concepts and the categories for judgment.

The Yoga system shows a romantic sequential similarity in its categories of *dhāraṇā* (conceptualization), *dhyāna* (contemplation), and *samādhi* (concentration) (Bodas, 1892:56).

Dharana mean concentration, the art of reducing the interruptions of the mind and ultimately eliminating them completely, so that the knower and the known become one. A steady, continuous flow of attention directed towards the same point or region is meditation or Dhyana. In dhyana, psychological and chronological time come to a standstill as the mind observes its own behavior. The intensity of attention in the field of consciousness neither alters nor wavers, remaining smooth, stable and constant. When attention, reflection and contemplation in action and observation are steadily sustained, dharana evolves into dhyana.

When the object of shines forth without the intervention of one's own consciousness, dhyana flows into samadhi. When the yogi's object of contemplation becomes himself, devoid of himself, he experiences samadhi. Uninterrupted flow of attention dissolves the split between the objects seen and the seer who sees it. Consciousness appears to have ceased, and to have reached a state of silence. It is devoid of 'I' and merges into the core of the being in a profound state of serenity.

These three together - dharana, dhyana, Samadhi - constitute integration of concentration, meditation, and absorption respectively. It is technically called as samyama where these three are a single thread ,evolving from uninterrupted attention to samadhi.

As *dharana* is external to *dhyana*, *dhyāna* to *samadhi*, *samādhi* to *samyama* and *samyama* to *nirbrja samadhi*, so the mind is external to intelligence, intelligence to consciousness and consciousness to the seer. More intimately, dharana develops and sharpens intelligence, dhyana purifies consciousness and samadhi leads consciousness towards the soul. These three are directly involved in the subtle sheaths of mind, intelligence and consciousness and are very close to the spiritual heart. They directly affect the spiritual path and are therefore called the inner quest or sabija samadhi because the sadhaka now has one pointed consciousness .

Dharana brings stability in mind, *dhyana* develops maturity in intelligence *samadhi* acts to diffuse the consciousness. *Dhārana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* intermingle to become samyama, or integration. The intermingling of mind, intelligence and consciousness is samyama of the three. The vision of the seer is equivalent to *nirbija samadhi*.

So, This comparative approach has brought forth the similarities between the two massive bodies of philosophical approaches-romanticism and Yoga. They agree on points of Spirituality, ontological tripartition of mentality-materiality-physicality, incremental mind work -imagination, cause and effect theory, visionary prospects, transmigration of soul, immortality of soul, enlightenment etc .However, what seemed to be a continuum of just only convergences or divergences is actually a continuum of life. Wordsworth and Patanjali are not dry psychologist or philosophers. They lead us not only into the labyrinthine ramifications of the mind and consciousness but also into our inner selves, where we actually need and seek salvation and peace. This peace is eternally present in the core of our being, waiting for us, guiding us, sometimes hidden, sometimes chiding, sometimes welcoming. Throughout the research process, the works of William Wordsworth and Patanjali spoke across the ages, quite relevant at a time when mankind, with its technical and social progress, and its paucity of human and spiritual values is at a crossroads. There is a denial of the human imagination and creativity. The poetry of William Wordsworth and the Yogasutras of Patanjali has come out to be a significant expression of deconstructing artificial segregation between the western and eastern disciplines of philosophy to acknowledge the centrality of the search for truth and knowledge.

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