

**An East-West Interface :
John Keats and Indian Thought**

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Department of English
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I, Sanjeeb Kumar Sarma, hereby declare that the subject matter of the thesis is the record of the work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of any award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge of any one else and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University / Institute.

This is being submitted to the North-Eastern Hill University for the degree of Doctor of philosophy.

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*This thesis is dedicated
to my parents.*

CONTENTS

	Page No (s)
Acknowledgements	i
Chapter I : Cultural Confluence : East and West	1 - 33
Chapter II : Expanding Horizon : Dissemination of Indian Thought during the Romantic Period	34 - 92
Chapter III : Tryst with the Orient : Keats' Acquaintance with Indian Philosophy and Religion.	93 -140
Chapter IV : Indian Thought as Reflected in Keats's Poetry	141 - 153
Conclusion	154 -169
Notes	170
Select Bibliography	171 - 196
About the Scholar	197
Acknowledgement	

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CHAPTER I : Cultural Confluence : East and West

Political invasion has always played an important role in bringing India closer to the West and obviously with Alexander's invasion, Greece came in contact with Hindu and Buddhist thought (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977 : 115). Alexander's

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acceptance of two Asiatic brides, the appointment of one Indian ascetic 'kalanos' to join his entourage, and his efforts to establish 'one family on earth, are all significant factors that bind India with Greece. Significantly, Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of the Indian sovereign Candragupta has mentioned in his *Indica* that the Indian thought agrees in many respects with that of Greece. Again, the Greek Philosopher Pyrrho, who had accompanied Alexander to India might have been influenced by the Indian thought (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977 : 153). Alexander left behind him some Greek colonists and soldiers who also accepted Asiatic brides, and the Greek Prince Seleucus Nikator gave one of his daughters in marriage to king Candragupta. For quite a long time, Indian and Greece came culturally closer and consequently Upanishadic and Buddhist thoughts were, disseminated under the auspices of the Indian sovereigns and Greek kings. Ashoka, the great Indian Buddhist king, sent several missions to the West (including Greece) for the propagation of Buddhism. While the Indo-Greek king Menander was converted to Buddhism by Nagasena, Kaniska (1st century A.D.), not only came to rule over India from Central Asia but also embraced Buddhism.

With regard to the close proximity between Indian and Greek thought.

S. Radhakrishnan writes :

“ There is a great agreement between the teaching of the Upanishads on the nature of reality and the Eleatic doctrine, between the Samkhya teaching and the views of Empedocles and Anaxagoras” (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977 : 134).

At the same time, the question of Indian Influence on Greece becomes all the more prominent from the teaching of Empedocles, Pythagoras and Plato, and from the mystic tradition developed by the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries. The divinity and immortality of human soul, the contempt for body and the essential unity of the human and divine spirit constitute as much a part of the teachings of Empedocles, Pythagoras, Plato and Orphic cult as of the Indian Upanishads. Empedocles accepts the divinity of the soul. He holds that the soul must expiate by a

long process of pilgrimage to be finally delivered from the world of the senses. Asceticism involving a paraphernalia of certain purificatory rites is, according to Empedocles, the most effective means of delivering the soul (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977 : 148).

Orphicism, on the other hand, is a reformation of the Dionysian religion, and its reformation owes, in all probability, to the Upanishadic thought. Though he retains the old Bacchic faith that man might become a god, Orpheus, the founder of the cult, devises a wholly different means to attain the state of godhood. While the Dionysian religion emphasizes drunkenness and physical intoxication, Orphicism resorts to spiritual ecstasy, abstinence and rites of purification. Surprisingly, the Orphic cult and Upanishadic thought have striking points of resemblance. To both the systems, salvation lies within man, and man might become a god. The orphic idea that 'All is One' corresponds to the teaching of the *Mandukya Upanishad* (1.6) where the Absolute is conceived of as the 'Lord of all', the knower of all, the source of all". The Orphic initiate's mystic realization that - 'God am I, mortal no longer' - is in all probability, an, echo of what the *Brahadaranyaka* (1.4.10) and the *Isa Upanisad* (16) proclaims : ' I am that I am'. "The Brihadaranyaka" (iv.4.23) enjoins that the free soul becomes the law maker and a king. *The Taittiriya Upanishad* emphasizes that human being constitutes the microcosm within him.

The sole objective of the Orphic religion - the release of the divine from body, the seat of appetites and passions - is also pronounced in the *Isa - Upanishad*. The "Isa" enjoins that one should 'enjoy by renunciation'. Even though J. Burnet thinks it ' impossible to assume any Indian influence in Greece'(J. Burnet, 1930 :82), and prefers to point out, some striking resemblances between Orphicism

and Indian thought, the growing probability of Indian influence on Greece cannot be altogether denied. W.K.C. Guthrie's observation that Orphicism was a religion of an entirely different kind', shows that there was evidently an outside influence on it (W.K.C. Guthrie, 1935: 206). Again, the Orphic initiate's mystical striving after a blessed union with God was entirely unknown to the Homeric religion, and hence the Indian influence on orphicism seems highly probable.

Orphic religion can be treated in close proximity to the Eleusinian cult which uses Orphic hymns. The Eleusinian mysteries involve certain secret rites of purification taught to the people of Eleusis by Demeter, the goddess of corn and vegetation in Greek mythology. The Eleusinians built her a temple for worship. Though the Eleusinian cult does not resort to the asceticism imposed by Orphicism, its theoretical basis is like that of the latter. It believes, like Orphicism, that the divine dwells in man. Intimation is considered important in as much as one enters through it into an awareness of the real self. Intimation makes one 'twice born'. It does not impose any learning, but exposes one to a certain inner experience, an illumination. The initiation continues for nine days every year in the month of '*Boedromion*' -late summer or early autumn (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977 : 139).

First of all, people are admitted to the lesser Eleusinia for one year as a preparation for the greater mysteries. After the completion of one year, they get themselves admitted to the higher initiation in the month of Boedromion. The initiates are then called *mystae*. While on the second day they are purified, the third day is spent in fasting and sacrifice. On the fourth, a procession (*Kalathus Kathodos*) takes place with a basketful of pomegranates and poppy seeds. On the fifth, the *mystae* carry torches to the temple of Demeter, where they pass the whole night. On the sixth

day, the most solemn of all, the statue of Iacchus, son of Demeter, (who holds a torch), is carried long the sacred way with shouts and songs. It is important to note that on the sixth night the mystae are initiated into the most secret mystery (*epopteia*) unfortunately, the final mysteries are so secretly revealed that we are ignorant of the detailed ceremonial. However, on the seventh day the initiates go back home and the eighth is observed as a day of leisure. On the ninth day, a libation is poured to the East and West with mystic formulae. In this connection, it is important to note that their oblation to the East is done, perhaps out of obligation, “to excite and strengthen in the initiated faith in life and a system of rewards and punishment after death”(E. F. Bozman, ed. 1967 : 2577) Again, at the conclusion of the rites, the last words heard by the initiates are ‘Go in peaces’, which reminds one of the Vedic Upanishadic message : “Hail peace, Peace, Peace” (Om santih santih santih). A good deal of the Eleusinian ritual is open to the Athenians and later to the Roman citizens. Alexander and Julius Caesar got themselves initiated to these rites (S. Radhakrishnan, : 139).

While Pythagoras is said to have been a professed follower of Orphicism, Plato is considered the most eminent representative of the heretics, and the prophet in literature of the Orphic worship (Sir Richard Livingstone, : 197-8). Pythagoras observes that body is the tomb of the soul, and that pure contemplation of human nature is the end of man. Similarly, the dominant thought in Plato (*Phaedo*, 65-67) is that body is a fetter to which the soul is enchained. To them, the pursuit of wisdom lies in separation of the spirit from the body. To Pythagoras, once the soul is perfected through purification from the taints of the body, man becomes God. To become like a god is to become holy, just and wise (*Theaetetus*, 176). The Platonic insistence on the essential unity of the human and the divine spirit is uncommon in

the Greek religion in which the gulf remains abysmal and unbridged. It is therefore, highly probable that the mystical trend in Greek thought has an oriental basis behind it. Suffield rightly observes :

“The mind of Plato was heavily charged with Orphic mysticism mainly derived from Asiatic sources. India, always the home of mystical devotion probably contributed the major share” (Suffield, 1925 : 74).

Through Plato and Pythagoras, Orphic religion passed on to the Neo-Platonist Proclus and then reached Alexandria, the city established by Alexander himself. Alexandria was the meeting point of divergent religions - Paganism, Hinduism, Judaism and Manichaeism. During the period following Alexander's invasion, India and the West had extensive trade relations. The *Milindapanha*, a famous Buddhist work, holds that the Indians frequently used to visit Alexandria, the confluence of East and West. Clement of Alexandria knew well about Hinduism, Buddhism, Orphicism and Eleusinian mystery, Clement observes that Pythagoras learnt from Indian Brahmins (S. Radhakrishnan : 198).

The Romans for whom their own gods had no charm looked for spiritual solace in the esoteric ideal of the Eastern cults. The Roman mind preferred Monotheism to Polytheism. Consequently Mithraism became the first officially recognized monotheistic cult of the Roman world. It is somewhat important to note that Mithraism owes its origin to the Indian soil where Mithra is worshipped as Mitra - the lord of light. With their dwelling together for quite a considerable period of time, the Indians and Iranians have lots of religious resemblances. The Vedic Mitra and Iranian Mithra are strikingly similar and in both the traditions, “Mitra-Mithra’ is

invoked as a god of light. Again when the Hindus and Persians lived together under the Persian regime, Zoroastrianism, too, established Mitra as a god to watch over the entire moving world. Mithra was established as an active deity engaged in continuous combat with darkness, and as such, earned wide acclamation in ancient Greek, Babylon, Damascus, and Susa. At Babylon, the official clergy (Magi) looked upon Mithra as the mediator between Ormuz (light) and Ahriman (darkness). Again, Mithra was conceived as the god of light mediating between the high powers of heaven and the human race. The Roman rulers patronized Mithraism, and in 307 A.D., a temple was erected at Carnuntum on the Danube in honour of Mithra, the protector of their empire. The mysteries of Mithra took the dangerous shape of a ritual. There was so much of popularity of Mithraism in the West that it was feared that 'the world would have been Mithraist' one day in the absence of Christianity (S. Radhakrishnan : 121).

Apart from Mithraism, there was another significant syncretic religious development in Babylon called Manichaeism which was established by Mani in the 3rd century A.D. Mani emphasizes the antagonism between light and darkness, between God and Evil, between body and soul. The basic doctrine of Mani is dualism - between the world of God and that of Evil. To Mani, the material world is the creation not of God, but of the Demiurge (Satan). The souls are however, creations of God, but Satan seduces and drags them out of heaven by showing to them a woman of enticing beauty. The souls, after following Satan and the woman, are finally enmeshed in the material bodies they now wear ; basically divine in nature, the souls, still long for God, their true abode. God in return sends a savior to rouse the trapped souls from darkness. Though the introduction of a saviour tends the Christians to think of Manichaeism as a Christian heresy, "its dominant doctrine of the separation

of good and evil, light and darkness seems to have owed much more to the Zoroastrian tradition”(Ninian Smart, 1989 : 222). Because, Mani’s idea of separating darkness from light owes its origin to the Zoroastrian conflict between Ormuz (light) and Ahriman (darkness).

Even Manichaeism is profusely influenced by Indian thought in as much as its conflict between light and darkness has much to do with sex. The Demiurge wants to produce, through sex, as many bodies as possible to house and trap the light (soul). Emphasizing the influence of the Tantric thought on Mani, Ninian Smart observes :

“Light lives in the seed, and Mani seems to have woven some, Tantric ideas into his religions, about the importance of the retention of sperm. Those who were adepts were expected to refrain altogether from sex, the married laity should observe strict monogamy. The Manichaean Church was built along somewhat Buddhist lines.....” (Ninian Smart, 1989 : 223)

Manichaeism, like Buddhist Tantricism, emphasizes to hold back the ‘seed’ (semen) in order that the world of the Demiurge would cease to expand. Manichaeism can therefore be treated in close proximity to Buddhism in its austerity, ascetic ideals of celibacy, compassion and gentleness.

However, it owes its origin, to a considerable extent, to Gnosticism, which is a deliberate attempt to fuse Greek (Platonic) and Hindu element. Gnosticism is a syncretic religion in which the Demiurge is conceived as the creator of the world of evil. To a Gnostic, salvation consists in the deliverance of spirit from its union with the world of sensuality and is effected by asceticism, and contemplation leading to

‘gnosis’ (wisdom). ‘Gnosis’ points to an esoteric, secret wisdom and beatific vision. A Gnostic strives for the spiritual and eternal life by dying into the natural (S. Radhakrishnan, : 198). Now, it may be observed that Manichaeism and Gnosticism have close points of similarity with the teachings of the Upanishads and Buddhism. C. W. King holds that ‘the seeds of the Gnosis were originally of Indian growth carried so far westward by the influence of that Buddhist movement’ (C. W. King, 1887 : 207).

The Upanishadic and Buddhist thought entered the Western Middle Ages through the inevitable connection of Manichaeism and Gnosticism with Neo-Platonism and Christianity. Plotinus comes closer to Vedanta and Manichaeism by conceiving God, the ‘Absolute Good’ as the central source of ‘light’ which illumines everything. Everything that emanates from the first principle is divine. Plotinus concedes that human soul which contains the principles of unity, intellect, matter, and spiritual bliss can break the fetters of the material world through practice of virtue and ascetic purification. Neo-Platonism believes in the Indian way of entering into spiritual consciousness by meditation. To Plotinus, the soul touches and gazes on the ‘Supreme light’ in a condition of complete passivity and rest, of intense concentration and total forgetfulness. When it is set free from its light of eternity, the soul is delivered (“*Enneads*”, vi. 9.7). Again he, who attains the supreme bliss, becomes himself divine. Here, behind Plotinus’ theory of vision, one finds the direct influence of Oriental philosophy of the Indian type. The later Neo-Platonists such as Porphyry, Proclus and Dionysius the Areopagite carry the mystical tradition of Plotinus forward. In the Dionysius emphasizes the Upanishadic and Neo-Platonic way of mystical

contemplation of the soul. He speaks of the super lucent darkness of silence, and of the necessity of leaving the senses behind (S. Radhakrishnan: 207-218).

Basilides (2nd Century A.D.) fuses the Hindu and Buddhist thought into a Christian framework and explains, in the spirit of Buddhism, that suffering is the fundamental point of human existence. Deeply influenced by Basilides and Buddhism, Clement of Alexandria conceives that pain and suffering are inherent in human affairs as rust in iron (*Stromata* : iv. 12.90). At the same time, Clement tends to establish God as the 'First cause', who can be realized not by knowledge but by ecstatic- search in the darkness by way of faith (*Stromata* iii.7). Origen, who conceives the Neo-Platonic 'Good' as the supreme being adopts the Gnostic view that heavenly spirits (souls) fall from their immaterial bliss into the bondage of matter. To him, salvation lies in the deliverance of the soul from the bondage of matter and in its gradual upward turn to its heavenly abode. In close proximity to the Upanishadic and Manichaeian thought, Origen holds that the souls once separated from the body, not only follow the spirit, but also becomes the 'spirit' (*De Oratione*, 10) in as much as the sole aim of man is to achieve likeness to God (S. Radhakrishnan : 2229-31).

In this connection, it is significant to note that Manichaeism, Neo-Platonism and Oriental thought were absorbed into Christianity by St. Augustine, who was successively a Pagan, a Manichaeian, and a Neo-Platonist-Christian. While Augustine adopts the Neo-Platonic view of God, matter, evil and freedom of the soul, his idea of lifting the soul from darkness by God's illuminating light in the "Confessions" (vii. 9-21) is considerably Manichaeian. The Manichaeian dualism is also discerned in his conception of the *City of God* and the *City of Man*. It is also

highly probably that Manichaeism thought passed on to the Middle Ages through Augustine (S. Radhakrishnan : 239).

Indian thought has become an unending source of inspiration for the West right from the invasion of Alexander the great. With the fall of Alexandria in 642 A.D. the Arab civilization grew prominent. It is somewhat interesting to observe that another current of Indian thought followed down to the West through the Arabs. From time immemorial, there had been commercial intercourse between India and Arabs. Arab travelers and traders used to enter India frequently through the coastal harbours at Debal, Thana, Combay, Jaimur and Malbar for the purpose of carrying her finished goods to Europe. In return, they, too, brought to India the rarities of Europe. This trade relationship was reciprocal in nature in so far as the Indian merchants, mostly hailing from Sindh, Punjab and Gujrat, also frequented the western countries. They used to visit the west through Arabs where they were named 'Banias' in Arabic. Even, after the rise of Islam, Indians- Jats and Merhs - were said to have joined Arabic forces.

The cultural interaction between India and Arabs grew intense with the Arab invasion of Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim in 712 A.D. The Buddhists, Jats and Merhs, who were hostile to the Brahmin rule of king Dahir of Sindh supported the Arab invaders, and consequently the fall of Sindh was inevitable. The growing conflict between the Brahmins and Buddhist of that time had made the later alienated from the Indian stream, as a result of which the Buddhists leaned towards Islam. Here, it is important to note that Barmakis (a family of Indian Buddhists) became prime ministers of the Abbasid Caliphs (Saffah, Mansur and Harun - al Rasid) after their conversion to Islam. Again, they got themselves associated with Baghdad Court

for about fifty years (755-802 A.D.) It is highly probable that Tantric thought had flown to the Arabs during this period. The idea can be corroborated by the fact that these Buddhist Prime ministers regularly invited Indian scholars, scientists, physicians and astrologers to the Court of Baghdad. Thus, during the ages following the invasion of Sindh, Indian thought was transmitted to Arabs. After the invasion, the Muslim Chiefs at Sindh gradually associated the natives with administration, and toleration was granted to the culture of the Hindus and Buddhists. The Arabs, who settled down in India, also developed, through inter-marriage, a close contact with Indian culture, and learnt much of its philosophy, religion and other branches of knowledge during the reign of the Abbasid Caliphs (Dr. Inge, 1899 : 98, A. L. Srivastava, 1990:20).

Similarly, with Turkish invasion by Sultan Mahmud, who invaded India for 17 times during the 10th century A.D. India, the Arabs and Turks came culturally closer. It is true that Mahmud was basically a lover of booty. But, he was at the same time, a poet, a scholar, and a cultured patron of art, who carried away the reputed Indian artists, painters and craftsmen to Ghazni. Taking the advantage of his protracted invasion of India, many Muslim preachers, scholars, merchants and students infiltrated in to India. Al-Beruni, a famous medieval historian, who accompanied Mahmud to India acquired a considerable knowledge about Indian religious classics. His “knowledge of the sciences, antiquities, and customs of India”, writes R. A. Nicholson, “was such as no Moslem had ever equalled”(R. A. Nicholom, p.361). In his *History of India* (Ta’ rikhu : I-Hind), Al-Beruni observes that the Arabic civilization, traders, scholars and invaders carried Indian thought to Europe (Dr. Sachau, 1888 : xxi)

Many works, both religious and secular, were translated from Sanskrit into Arabic and from Arabic into Latin. The Sanskrit works such as *Brahma-Siddhanta* of Brahmagupta and *Khanda-kehan-dyaka* were translated into Arabic with the help of the Hindu scholars. The 'Game of Chess' and many other Indian fables were brought by Arabs into Western Europe. It is highly probable that during the primeministership of the Barmakis at Baghdad court, the Buddhist Tantric texts had been translated into Arabic and other languages. In this connection Denis de Rougement's observation deserves mention :

"The Tantra Panca is a collection of Buddhist and Tantric tales which was translated from Sanskrit in the sixth century by a doctor of chosroes I, king of Persia. From that country, it progressed swiftly in the direction of Europe, thanks to a series of translations in Syriac, Arabic, Latin, Spanish, etc" (*Passion and Society* : 121).

Here, it may be noted that by the 8th century A.D., the Arab empire had extended from Afghanistan and India to Egypt, Spain and to the Western and Southern parts of France, where the Troubadour culture sprang up. The possibility of the transmission of Tantric thought and Manichaeism to the land of the Troubadours through the Arabs and Spain is therefore not bleak. The argument can be further corroborated by the fact that geographically closer to each other. Spain and France had many striking similarities of contact through war, trade, diplomacy, inter marriage, migration, cultural encounter and the activities of translators. While the Arab armies marched towards the French town of Poitiers (the place of early Troubadours) in 732 A.D., organized crusades had been launched by the French chivalrous knights into Spain as early as 1018 A.D. Consequently, Spain had to recede

its frontiers, including Castile and Andalusia - the seat of Hispanic Moorish art. Again, what is important to note here is that the Troubadour Guillaume IX of France not only married Philippa of Aragon in 1044 A.D., but also gave his two sisters in marriage with Pedro of Aragon and Alfonso VI of Castile. Thus, it is evident that Spain and France had close political, cultural and domestic contacts with each other during the high Middle Ages. In view of the above mentioned facts, it won't be out of place to say that Manichaeism and Buddhist. Tantricism had been transmitted to France through Spain (A. J. Denomy, 1953 : 150, S. Radhakrishnan : 242).

At the same time, the principal Abbasid poets such as Abu 'l' - Atahiya, Mutanabbi, Abul-Ala, who were associated with the court of Baghdad had been fascinated towards Manichaeism and Buddhist thought. The poet Abu 'l' Atahiya (748-828 A.D.) who alluded to Buddha in his poems, had "secretly cherished Manichaean views". He was considerably influenced by Buddhism in so far as his "poetry breathes a spirit of profound melancholy and hopeless pessimism" (Roger Boase : 64-99). In close proximity to the Buddhist and Manichaean thought, the poet Abu'l-Ala regarded procreation a sin, and even abstained from marriage, lest the world of Satan might expand. Like a true Manichaean, he hated the present life, and weary of its tormenting burdens, sought how to return to nonexistence,. Besides, Ibn Hazam (994-1064 A.D.) whose concept of pure human love exemplified in "Tawqual Hamama" (the Dove's Neck-Ring) had exerted tremendous influence on the Troubadours, was excommunicated by the religious authorities of Islam for professing heretical doctrines. Hazam was perhaps a Manichaean heretic well-acquainted with different non-Islamic religious systems such as Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Indian thought. His controversial, heretical work, "Book of

Religions and Sects” “(kitabul-Milal)” not only refers to the Manichaeans, but also “terminates with an account of the tenets of the Arabs before the commencement of Islamism, and of the religion of the people of India” (R. A. Nicholson:297).

Most of the Muslim historians including Al-Benuni and Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, the author of *Eihrist*, take notice of Manichaeism on the Arab soil. It was the duty of the Muhammadan Manicheans to take part in the liberation of the ‘light’ from the darkness and as such, they were grouped under two heads- the ‘Hearers’ (ordinary) and the ‘Elect’ (al-siddigun), Disciplined and regulated by nature, the ‘Elect’ not only abstained from flesh, wine and marriage, but also considered sexual union to be essentially satanic. The ‘Hearers’ were however allowed to marry as well as to engage in worldly avocations. The ‘Elect’, who might neither marry nor acquire property resembles the Buddhist mendicant. Buddhism and Manichaeism, too, influenced the Islamic mysticism called ‘Sufism’, the mystical doctrine of which were systematized during the Abbasid Caliphs. The word ‘Sufi’ means -one who is “pure at heart’ or “one of the Elect”. As an ‘Elect’, a ‘Sufi’ comes closer to a Manichaean. However, a Sufi is generally called an ascetic quietist, who devotes himself to a mystic life. Deeply perturbed with the conception of sin, he seeks salvation in flight from the world, and thus comes in close proximity to the Manichaean thought.

R. A. Nicholson (R. A. Nicholson: 297) tends to observe that Sufism is a ‘complex thing’ which derives its inspiration at once from Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, Manichaeism, Vedanta and Buddhism. It was primarily orthodox in nature, and as such, an orthodox Sufi, forbidden by law to love the incomprehensible and inaccessible God, strives to rid himself of the exigencies of the life of pain by asceticism, self-mortification and internal purification. He holds that, the ideal of

human action is freedom from the 'taints of darkness' and that "the freedom of light from darkness means the self-conscious of light as light'. The sole purpose of Sufism is then to renounce, like Manichaeism and Gnosticism, the world of matter. A Sufi tries to escape from the seventy thousand veils of darkness which separates the soul from God in order to recover the original unity with the one. In this connection, it is important to note that the ancient Sufis borrowed from Manichaeism the term Siddiq (spiritual adept) and also retained the Manichaean concept of dualism between 'light' and 'darkness'.

In the ninth century, Sufism assumed Pantheistic significance - possibly under the influence of Vedanta. Pantheism postulates that union with God can be attained through love and knowledge, and that man's highest happiness and beatitude consists in union and identification with God. This doctrine of deification developed by Abou Yazid Bistami (d. 875) and Al-Hallaj in unorthodox Sufism - "O Thou (God) I" - corresponds to Vedantic pantheism (Aham Brahmosmi), Orphicism and Pythagorean thought. The dying of the self to live in God is termed fana (passing away) in Sufism. "The Sufi conception of the passing away (fana) of the individual self in universal Being is", according to R. A. Nicholson, "certainly, I think, of Indian Origin" (R. A. Nicholson: 341).

The difference between the earlier and the later Sufism is that the pantheistic Sufis, unlike the orthodox ones, renounced all not for the sake of a future reward, but for the sake of present absorption in God. The ecstatic contemplation of the divine beauty in the latter is entirely opposed to the passionless intellectual serenity of the 'Arahat' in Buddhism, and rather comes closer to Neo-Platonism and Vedanta. With the Pantheistic Sufi, then, the asceticism of the earlier Sufism was

relegated to secondary plane in as much as he needed them only on the way of ascending the various stages for a permanent union with the Divine.

However, from the ethical side, the Sufi concept of fana is closely connected with Buddhism in so far as both the systems emphasize restraint, purity, and the 'passing away' of evil qualities in favour of the good. Sufism also comes closer to Tantricism in so far as both the systems enjoin that body is not to be put off, but to be refined and made spiritual. In Sufism and Tantricism, body is like a metal that has to be refined by the fire of passion and transmuted. Again, Sufism is akin to Tantricism and Manichaeism in so far as it is essentially founded on celibacy. To a Sufi, it is not marriage which is the proper means of removing lust, but the triumph over sensuality by self restraint and the love of God. Nicholson argues that Buddhism which had exercised considerable influence in Persia and at ancient Bactria, the abode of the Sufis, must, therefore, have affected the development of Sufism in these regions" (R. A. Nicholson: 304).

On the basis of the aforesaid facts, it may be argued that continuous cultural encounter between India and the Arabs on the one hand, and between Spain and France on the other, led to the transmission of Buddhist, Tantricism, Manichaeism, Gnosticism and Sufism into the land of the Troubadours through the Arabs.

Denis de Rougement points to one Buddhist text, *Romance of Balaam and Jehoshapat*. The text bears not only, indisputable traces of Manichaeism, but also influences the twelfth century heretics of Provence. The Cathars were acquainted with version of the said romance which was akin to the original.

“Whether or not that suggestion comes one of these days to be verified, the Manichaeism origin of the romance is attested..... It is possible to trace the transformation of the Hindu names ‘Bhagavan’ and ‘Boddhisattva’ (Buddha) into ‘Balaam’ and ‘Jehoshapat’ via the Arabic forms of ‘Balawhar’ Va ‘Budhasaf’ or ‘Yudhasaf’ (*Passion and Society* :121).

Rougement’s startling observation tempts one to concede that Catharism is a renewed form of Buddhism and Manichaeism. The Cathars continued, like their ancestors, the Manichaeans, to profess the doctrine of dualism. At the same time, they established a church which repudiated the divinely instituted ordinance of marriage, while Christianity conceived of sexuality as innocent within the periphery of marriage, the Cathars condemned the perpetuation of human race through sex. Again, unlike Christianity, they condoned and even encouraged idealized adulterous love divested of physical union. To them, marriage was nothing but fornication, an attempt to vindicate the continuation of the world of evil created by Satan. The Cathars, therefore, took recourse to a lengthened course of ascetic discipline through self-detachment from the world of evil. All contact with the material world involved constantly a certain defilement and as such their engagement in secular duties and pursuits were all meant for the spiritual preparation of an escape from the domination of Satan to the abode of God. The word ‘cathar’ means ‘pure’, and the purity of Cathars consists in abstaining from animal food as well as in maintaining perpetual chastity. At the same time, Catharist asceticism involves celibacy and suffering, sacrifice and self-renunciation; and its renunciation is not only physical but also moral and spiritual.

Their initiation ceremony ('consolamentum'), reminiscent of Eleusinian initiation, is significant in as much as the Albigensian initiates under take to renounce the world in favour of an ardent devotion and love for God. In case they are married the adepts are advised at the time of initiation to maintain restraint. Their initiation is preceded by fasting for forty days which reminds us of the 'service of woman' Buddhist Tantricism that breaks up into ordeals of forty days.

The sole aim of Catharcism is to purify the soul by separating it from impure matter. Even death is looked upon as a pleasant means of deliverance of the soul from the prison. Besides natural death, the Cathars recommend suicide and Nirvana as surest means of spiritual perfection. To them, Nirvana can be attained in this life by withdrawing from the body through loss of sensibility of the exterior world. In Nirvana, one can think of a pure spirit untrammelled by body. Even though in reality, the soul is still joined with the body in Nirvana, in the state of forgetful consciousness their union is, however, hardly felt.

Out of the Cathartic thought which is characteristic of Buddhism and Manichaeism, emerges the basic pattern of courtly love. Even though courtly love is neither purely Neo-platonic, nor Arabic nor Buddhist and Manichaean, the fusion of these thoughts in Catharcism provides a thought pattern to the concept of human love of the Troubadours. Roger Boase (Roger Boase: 69) argues that courtly love grew out of Albigensian heresy either as a mouth piece of its mysticism or "as an indirect expression of Cathar sentiments". In this connection, A. J. Denomy's view seems to be apt:

“ There is no doubt that Courtly love arose, again in a background that was heretical and that the troubadours if not infested with Catharism, at least knew it and were familiar with its doctrine and practices (A. J. Denomy: 258).

Both Courtly love and Catharism glorify passion as a perpetually unsatisfied desire and extol the virtue of chastity. They agree on the fundamental point that the soul, basically of divine origin, is imprisoned in its material body and that the sole object of the soul is to return to the ‘source of all good’. Again the Catharists and the Troubadours emphasize the paraphernalia of purification, abstention from material enjoyments and cultivation of purity, both in living and thinking. Courtly love and Catharism celebrate the nostalgic and insatiable longing of the soul in terms of the ecstatic impulse of Eros. At the same time, the Troubadours, like the Albigensian heretics, recommend sexual continence in as much as marriage was condemned by the heretic priest (‘perfect’) and the lover poet as a satanic.

“The Catharian condemnation of marriage”, writes Roger Boase, “provided the troubadours with an excellent moral pretext for celebrating extra-conjugal love” (Roger Boase: 69). In this connection it is important to note that the Troubadours simulated chastity either as a tribute to the Cathar ‘perfect’ or to soothe the ladies of the castle who were decided believers of Cathartic heresy. Steven Runciman observes that “one of the most spectacular aspects of the Cathar movement in southern France was the enthusiasm with which it was supported by the great ladies of the country” (Steven Runciman, 1947 : 131).

Apart from Albigensian influence on Provençal poetry, it is also imperative that the Troubadours had been acquainted with Mithraism through Manichaeism and Catharism. It has been established that Mithraism, with its origin in Indian Mitra, the lord of 'light', had won wide-ranging popularity in the West. It professes a cult of pain, and postulates the philosophy of dualism between 'light' and 'darkness'. The Cathars were akin to Mithraism in so far as they used to worship 'Sun', as the sole source of light and wisdom. Montsegur, the huge Sun temple situated at the top of a steep and isolated peak in the lower Pyrenees was not only place of worship for the Cathars, but also facilitated the heretics for developing an esoteric cult centering round the Sun. It is interesting to observe that the Troubadours envisaged time and again, the domna (lady) of their love-lyrics as 'wisdom' and as the source of all light. Their ceaseless search for 'light' and 'knowledge' can be further correlated with the 'light of 'Eleusis' signified by the 'torch' of Demeter, the corn-goddess.

Thus, cultural encounter between India and the West through Greece and Arabs has been a dominant factor in the transmission of Vedanta and Buddhist-Tantricism, which influenced Provençal heresy in conjunction with Neo-Platonism, Mithraism, Manichaeism and Sufism.

England came into direct contact with India at the close of the 16th century in the year 1498 by the Portuguese navigator Vasco Da Gama. India has fascinated the English mind since the age of Alcuin, who was probably the first Englishman to have referred to India. However, it was Marco Polo (1254-1324 AD), a member of a patrician family of Venice, who informed the West, including England, with vivid details about India, China and other Eastern nations. Like Marco Polo's tales, the

voyage to the East including India made by Friar Odoric in the early 14th century was very popular. Both of them seem to have supplied Chaucer and his contemporaries with a fair amount of knowledge about India. Both Chaucer and Gower referred to India in their respective poetic masterpieces – *Canterbury Tales* and *Confessio Amantis* naming her, 'Inde'. The interface between England and India started at the beginning of the sixteenth century in the wake of the discovery of a new sea route to India in 1498 by the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama; India had interested the English mind at least since the age of Alcuin Albinus. Alcuin, who lived from AD 735 to 804, is in all probability, the first Englishman to have referred to India (Robert Sencourt, 1923 : 33). Later in the ninth century, Alfred (849-901), king of the West Saxons (871-901) is said to have sent gifts to Indian kings if we are to trust William and Malmesbury (d.1143), the English historian, author of *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and *Historia Novella* (Robert Sencourt, 1923, b : 33) And if pepper, cinnamon and frankincense are essentially and exclusively Indian commodities, then even the Venerable Bede (673-735), historian and scholar of seventh century England, author of *De Natura Rerum*, knew India for he is said to have been in possession of these commodities, and knew the country of their origin.

'The Great Emetrius', the king of Inde, occurs at line 2156 in the 'Knight's Tale' by Chaucer and Lib. V of Gower's work refers to India in the following words :

'And Thomas ekc with his beyete of Indi'. Chaucer indebted many of his tales to India those of the squire, Franklin, Merchant, Pardoner and the shipman, Researcher and scholars have found out the sources of these tales to the Jataka tales and the stories of the *Pancatantra* written by the great India, scholar Vishnu Sharma.

These interesting Indian fables had reached Chaucer through Arabian scholars to whom Chaucer was very grateful and also mentioned some of their names with specific reference (Robert Sencourt, 1923, c : 33). In the *General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, in characterization of the 'Doctor of Phisik, Chaucer refers to the Arab Pysicians Razis, Avicenna and Averroes, all of whom were deeply indebted to the Indian previous chapter, the Indian tales of Pancatantra and Jatakas had been translated first in Pahlavi, then in Arabic and then the Arabic version was translated into Latin and lastly from Latin it was translated into the regional languages of Europe such as German, French, Portuguese, Spanish. Italian and the Scandinavian languages. Long before the translation into Pahlavi, the Pancatantra tales had reached the Greek scholars through traders and voyagers for they can be found in Aesop's tales, but their Latin versions can be seen in *Decameron* and other collections of the Middle Ages. Chaucer's indebtedness to them is highly probable and comprehensible. After Chaucer and Gower, Sir John Mandeville is the most significant English writer to have dealt with India. *The Voyage and Travaile of Sir John Mandeville* (1357-1371) which purports to be an account of his own travel between 1322 and 1357 AD across different parts of the world Europe, Asia and East including India and China. After the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama, discovered his sea-route in 1498 AD more and more Europeans started visiting India and established political and commercial centre in India and England did not lag behind in this regard. The first Englishman to have visited India and spent some time in India was Father Stevens who learnt many language was so great that he wrote a 'Purana' centering on the life and teachings of Lord Christ could 'Khristapurana' in Marathi. The four other Englishmen who arrived in India after Stevens are John Newbury, Ralph Fitch,

Thomas Leeds and James Story. The first among these, had brought a letter from British Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth I, for the Akbar, which had a very great historic value because it paved the way for the establishment of the commercial relationship between Indian and England in 1600 in the form of launching of the British East India Company (John Ovington, 1984 : 109-10). The first British factory in India was established at Surat which came into existence in the early 17th century. After its establishment there started a ceaseless intercourse between the England and India.

Apart from the profound influence of Indian philosophy and religion during the classical and medieval period, Indian thought also passed on to the western world through the travelogues of world famous travelers such as Marcopolo (1254-1324 A.D.) of Venice, Nicolo deconti (1307-1378 A.D.) another Venecian traveler of the 15th century, Ibn Batuta (1304-1378 A.D.) of the Arab. The English writer from Chaucer, Gower, Mandeville, Marlow, Shakespeare, Dryden and Pope were all came under the prevailing influence of the writings of these travelers. This is all the more evident from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Gower's *Confessio Amentis* and Sir Mandeville's. The *Voiages and Travaille*, Chaucer's tales centering the merchant, Squire, Franklin, Pardoner and the shipman bear the traces of Indian tales like *Buddha Jatakas* and *Panchatantra* written by Vishnu Sarma. Merchant tales and squires tale owe their origin to the Jataka Tales, whereas *A Nun's Priests's tale* has close proximity with the stories of the *Panchatattra*. Here it is important to note that the Indian tales reached Chaucer and his contemporaries through various translation of the original Sanskrit texts into Pahlavi, Arabic, Latin, French. Italian, Portuguese and Spanish languages. In his book the 'Voyage and Travel' Mandeville gives to the west a fairly convincing knowledge about India and its rivers and after Mandeville, there

came the metrical romance of the *Gestes of Alexander* a text of unknown authorship which details about India's elephant, animals and wealth.

During the Renaissance the cultural interaction between West and East took a significant turn precisely because the golden rule of Queen Elizabeth established England as a seafaring nation taking keen interest in trade and commerce, expedition and heroic adventure. Be it court or countryside, city or parliament, people evinced over whelming interest in sea and adventure, trade and commerce, Indians silk and costly jewels, Arabia scent and the Oriental wealth. Both Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare were ardently curious about India as a wonderland of scenic beauty and enchantment, fabulous wealth and heroic passion. On the one hand the Renaissance writers were influenced by the writings of the continental experiences of adventure supplied by Sir John Hawkins, Sir Francis Drake and Richard Hakluyt in particular enthused the Renaissance men by providing them with charming description of Heroic deeds, adventures at sea and fabulous wealth of the Oriental world in his masterpiece 'Voyages' (1579 A.D.). Among the university wits, Christopher Marlowe evinced through his heroes, the renaissance man boundless ambition for Oriental wealth and costly stones for instance in *Doctor Faustus* Marlowe evinces his keen desire for gold from India and radiant pearl from the Oriental sea (1.1-79-80) Marlowe's renaissance imagination is satisfactorily at work in the 'Jew of Malta' in which Barabas- the Jew Merchant directly refers to Indian mines and metals, merchants and costly stones such as emerald, diamond, ruby, topaz, sapphire, amethyst, zades and jacinth. The dramatist presents the picture of a wealthy mood who picks up his riches in the eastern rocks and heaps pearl in his house like pebble stones. It is some what startling that Marlow being an atheist and bohemian

has put in the mouth of Barabas his keen interest in sparkling diamonds and beautiful rubies, Together with Marlow William Shakespeare seems to have realized the importance of costly Indian gems and stones that are astrologically prescribed to save human beings from perils, miseries and misfortunes. Barabas refers to this stone as saviours of great kings which reminds us of the practise of the classical and medieval kings and sultans of India whose crowns and thrones were studded with Jewels and costly stones show as to strengthen their power of judgment. Like Marlowe, Shakespeare was no less aware of a classical and medieval belief in astrology and in the remedial power of gems and stones. For instance, in the play 'King Henry' (VI.3) the luxurious king is found to be more interested in Heart than in his crown which is usually studded with Indian gems.

“My Crown is in my heart

Not on my head,

Not decked with diamonds and Indian Stones” (III, i 63-66).

King Henry is no Vikramaditya of classical India who stands for cool mind and righteous judgment. He is no medieval Sultan who would allow his crown to be studded with various talisman stones. Yet, Shakespeare's reference to 'diamonds and stones' justifies 'his knowledge about the importance of Indian gems and stones in the medieval market in the backdrop of the trade and commerce between East and West through Arabia. Barabas' reference to these stones in particular and his observation that they serve 'to ransom great kings from captivity' (1, i, 30-32) brings to our mind the picture of kings, Nawabs and their crowns in classical and medieval India. The classical Indian king Vikramaditya and the Nawabs

and Sultans of medieval India studded their crowns and thrones with jewels and costly stones in order to strengthen their power of judgment.

More startling indeed is the way Shakespeare uses Indian metal as veritable metaphor to describe the physical beauty of renaissance woman with the help of visual imagery. To cite another instance from *Twelfth Night*, Sir Toby Belch jokes with Olivia's Maria and wonders at her physical beauty by metaphorically conceiving her as 'my metal of India' (II. V.17). Here one is once again reminded of Marlowe's interest in Indian merchants and metals :

"Give me the merchants of the Indian mines,

That trade in metal of the purest mould." (Lines, 19-20).

By referring to Antonio's trade with Tripolis, Lisbon and India in *The Merchant of Venice* (III.ii, 270-272). Shakespeare too points to the commercial intercourse between the East and West. In the very opening scene of this play, the dramatist presents in the mouth of Salarino, England's commercial connection with the East through the picture of the cargo of spices and bales of silk (Lines 33-35).

As he did in case of the beauty of Maria, Shakespeare also envisaged the romantic love of Romeo and Juliet, of Troilus and Cressida in terms of merchandize with the help of Indian jewels. Whereas purity, beauty and the innocence of Desdemona in *Othello* is conveyed through Indian pearl which was underestimated by Othello like the best Indian (V.II. act V sum 345.47).

In Troilus and Cressida, the purity and glittering beauty of Cressida is conveyed through India as the bed of fabulous wealth and, Cressida as beauty queen dazzling like a pearl :

What Cressida is what ponderous and what we?

Her bed is India : there she lies a pearl!

Apart from India's wealth and jewels, Shakespeare has admired in the mouth of Titania India as a fairy land whose scenic beauty, lofty landscape and spicy air satisfies his romantic imagination (*Mid Summer Nights Dream* II. 1. 69; 124-127).

Here it may be noted that Shakespeare knew India not simply as a land of wealth and beauty but as a land of spirituality as well. This is all the more evident from *All's well that ends well* in which the dramatist reminds the reader of the Indian worship of Sun done in terms of elaborate rituals. Shakespeare was in all probability aware of the religious significance of Sun worships in India through Greek sources and through Iranian worship and overwhelmingly popular form of religion called Mithirism in the west (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977).

In 'Alls Well' dramatist present a love situation through an analogy drawn from Indian worship of sun and belittles the concept of courtly love by putting Bertram in a high pedestal and by treating Helena no better than a slave:

"Thus Indian like

Religious in mine error, I adore.

The Sun, that looks upon his worshipper

But knows of him no more (I. ii. 212-215).

The Oriental worship of Sun figures again in Shakespeare's sonnet (no.7). The poet presents the physical beauty and charm of his 'fair friend' through the three-fold worship of the sun. The reference to the worship of 'gracious light' of the morning sun with religious implication reminds a conscious reader of the elaborate ritual of Sun-worship in India.

"Lo ! in the Orient when the gracious light

Lifts up his burning head, each under eye

Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,

Serving with looks his sacred majesty". (VII. 1-4)

The references to 'Orient', burning head (hiranmaya-vapu), 'homage' (puja) and 'serving' with 'sacred majesty' in fact point to the ritualistic mode of worship of the sun in India. And when it is noon time, the worshipper still stands to worship his adorable lord by braving the scorching rays of the sun. The worshipper attends on his 'golden pilgrimage'. The image of the golden sun climbing upon the 'heavenly hill' and returning tired in his 'weary-car' can be confidently correlated with the Indian belief that lord sun takes triple strides (tri-vikrama) from the morning till evening in the sky on a chariot drawn by seven horses.

Even as Shakespeare and Marlowe were interested in Indian wealth and spiritual beauty, there was Dryden who was more interested in heroic passion. The Indian themes of high passion, heroism and adventure characterizing the Rajput heroes, Sultan's and Moguls enriched the thematic frame work of Dryden's heroic

tragedy. For instance John Dryden's heroic tragedy *Aurengzeb* (1675) written on the ground of heroic writings of the memoirs of the French traveler Bernier (John Fryer, 1697 : 186) who had spent several years from 1667-1675 A.D. in India. Sir Robert Howard's *The Indian Queen* (1664) is really another interesting writing to locate the possible Indian influence on the West. In this connection. John Dryden wrote his heroic tragedy *Aurangzebe* (1776) on the basis of Bernier's eminent book. It carries a lot of information on Hindu religion and philosophy, which includes a detail and faithful account of Indian yogis whose spiritual attainment the skeptical French doctor honestly attests.

As we pass from the 17th century and go through the English records of 18th Century, we saw the emergence of several great western writers who were able to grasp the Hindu philosophy slowly and steadily. References to India in the literary works of the early 18th century England were numerous indeed. Pope, Addison, Swift-all referred to India quite frequently. In the first canto of *The Rape of Lock* (lines 33-34). Pope refers to India :

“This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,

And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.”

In the *Windsor Forest* (lines 29-30), an allusion to India is made :

‘Let India boast her plants, nor envy we

The weeping Amber or the balmy Tree.”

References to India are numerous in the pages of ‘The Spectator’ by Addison and Steel. In Addison's essay there are references to India and Indian Things’.

However, the English man in India soon realized that if they were to succeed, they must study the psyche of the vast majority of the people called 'Hindu'- their religion, their mythology and philosophy. But this was not possible without the mastery of Sanskrit and other languages of India. The first Englishman who seems to have mastered Sanskrit to a large extent was Alexander Dow who was all praise for Indian culture and the richness of the Sanskrit language. He brought out the first volume of *The History of Hindustan* (1768). Dow's 'Introduction' to his 'The History of Hindustan' should be recognized as the Philip to learning Sanskrit that was to be undertaken by Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones, H.T. Colebrooks, H. H. Wilson, William Monir and Max Muller. The guiding spirit of this movement was no doubt Warren Hastings who himself had achieved a great proficiency in the Sanskrit language and had translated portions of the greatest epic *The Mahabharata*.

Indians should be deeply grateful to Hastings at least, for the publication of the English prose translation of their most popular religious text, namely 'The Gita' because it was this publication of the text in European language which opened the eyes of the west. The publication of *The Gita* in the native language of the English proved to be a Renaissance in the West, as it made the English readers highly eager to know about the literary works of ancient India. It was soon followed by Sir William Jones's translation of Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* in Latin and then its translation into English under the title of the 'Cakuntala'. These translations together with Indian philosophy influenced the English romantic poets like Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, Shelley and finally John Keats.

They were fascinated by the great book 'History of Hindustan' and Robert Southey's 'The Curse of Kehama'. Southey's Indian epic influenced Shelley and

Keats to a great extent. In the following chapter a detailed discussion has been made on Robert Southey, William Blake, William Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge and P.B. Shelley in relation to Indian culture.

CHAPTER II : Expanding Horizon: Dissemination of Indian Thought during the Romantic period.

II. I: Robert Southey and Indian Thought:

Robert Southey was undoubtedly an ardent devotee of Indic thought who inspired other romantic poets to know about Indian culture -her mythology, religion and philosophy. Of the last romantics, it was P.B. Shelley who was so powerfully influenced by him. As a colonist poet, Southey describes in “Modac” the stereotypes of good and bad Indians and also discusses how India was under colonies, and how the infection of commercialism, sensuality and superstition were endemic to the British character (G. Wilson Knight, 1971 : 210)

India had a great attraction for Southey from the very beginning of his literary career. In fact, he had planned to visit India as he once told his friend - William Taylor of Norwich.(J.W.Robberds,1949, vol.1.359). He used many Sanskrit words such as “the Ganga” and the different Hindu ages (*satya*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *kali*) (Longmans Green,1871,582). His mythic imagination and interest in Hindu thought is evident from ‘The Curse of Kehama;’ his master piece. Southey regarded it as his favourite poem which is the storehouse of his vast knowledge of Indian

mythology, philosophy, customs, religious beliefs and manners. In the 'Preface' to the poem, he does appear to be quite hostile to the mythology of the Hindus, for he asserts that the religion of the Hindus is 'of all false religions'. (Robert Southey, 1812, preface). By reading 'The Curse of Kehama', one is compelled to admire Southey's enthusiasm for the literature of India which he had realized with inherent beauty and sublimity. There are nine allusions in "The Curse of Kehama" to "The Gita" which he had mentioned in the 'Preface' of the book. The poet had borrowed nine ideas or concepts of "The Gita" to enrich the texture of the poem.

The first idea is associated with an allusion to the Hindu epic in "The Mahabharata". The poet describes Krishna, the mythological figure of the Hindu religion, and call our attention to the 'hundreds of heads' that Krishna possessed while revealing His universal form to Arjuna, in 'The Viswarupa Darshana Yoga' of the 'Bhagavad Gita' (Chapter II) with the result that 'His countenance turned on all sides' (S. Radhakrishnan, 2010 : 210)

'The Curse of Kehama' (1810), is conceived of within the framework of twenty four sections and the first two sections present the funeral of Arvalan, son of the cruel Indian Rajah Kehama and the curse that Kehama pronounces on Ladurlad, the peasant who killed Arvalan to protect his daughter Kailyal. The remaining sections deal with Kehama's pursuit of Ladurlad and Kailyal until, in a last minute reversal of fortunes, Kehama is doomed to eternal suffering in hell. Ladurlad and Kailyal on the otherhand are granted immortal lives in Heaven. The most crucial section of the epic is Canto II entitled 'The Curse'; it gives expression to the concept of 'immortality of the soul' as developed in 'The Gita' (Robert Southey, 1812):

“He is never born nor does he die at any time, nor having (once) come to be will he again cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, and permanent. He is not slain when the body is slain. He who knows that it is indestructible and eternal, unevate and unchanging. Just as a person casts off worn out garments and puts on others that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast off worn out bodies and take on others that are new. He is uncleavable. He cannot be burnt. He can be neither wetted nor dried. He is the same for ever.”

The third reference to “The Gita” in ‘The Curse of Kehama’ occurs in the poem’s sixth canto entitled ‘Casyapa’. In the fourth section of the Canto, the father of the Immortals addressed Ereenia, who out of sheer pity, has brought the apparently lifeless body of Kaliyal to be revived in the ashram of ‘Casyapa’ where no mortal can ever enter. Ereenia agreed that he should not have brought a mortal to the holy atmosphere of the father of the Immortals but then his heart had melted into pity at the sad plight of the fair maid : At this Casyapa said :

“What if the maid be sinful? If her ways
Were ways of darkness, and death predoom’d
To that black hour of midnight, when the Moon
Hath turn’d her face away,
Unwilling to behold
The unhappy end of guilt?”

(Southey’s Poetical Works, p-563)

The above speech acknowledges Southey’s indebtedness to the following words of Krishna in “The Gita”, ‘That the time in which, a religious man die he would never return and of that time in which dying, he should return again to the earth’ (Longmans, Green, 1871 : 563)

The next allusions to “The Gita” in “The Curse of Kehama” occurs in the seventh section of its thirteenth canto entitled ‘The Retreat’. Here, Kailyal’s libations to the souls of her dead ancestors have been described. Here, Charles Wilkin’s influence on Southey is noticeable because Wilkin’s note to “The Gita” speaks (Charles Wilkins, 1785) about ‘petree loka’, ‘narak’, ‘mookti’. When one dies in ‘petree loka to ‘narak’ and if the ceremonies are done one gets ‘mookti’.

Another references to the ‘Gita’ in Southey’s poem occurs in the tenth section of its nineteenth Canto called ‘Mount Calasay’, in the prayer of Greendover, addressed to ‘Seeva’ (i.e. Shiva).

“O all - containing ind,

Thou art everywhere

Whom all who seek shall find,

Hear me, O Seeva, hear the suppliant’s prayer.” (Robert Southey, 1812).

The use of the word ‘Seeva’ (Shiva) shows that Southey had deep interest in the worship of Lord Siva. The next reference to ‘The Gita’ in ‘The Curse of Kehama’ occurs in the fifteenth section of the poem ,23rd canto entitled ‘Padalon’ (i.e. Patala Loka) where Kehama’s triumph over the entire Universe has been brilliantly described:

“Following Kehama’s triumph, to press on

From world to world, and Heaven to Heaven, and sphere

To sphere, till Hemkoot shall be their own,

And Meru- Mount, and Indra’s Swerya-Bowers.

And Brama’s region, where the heavenly Hours.

Weave the vast circle of his age - long day.”

(Robert Southey, 1812 : 23canto).

Southey's interest in Indian mythology become evident from the word 'Indra' and 'Brahma'. Southey's concept of 'Brahma' refers to Hindu concept of 'kalpa' consisting of 1000 'yugas' which are equal to 432 million yrs. of the mortals. The idea 'the vast circle of his age-long day' is concerned with the glorification of 'Narayanan' or 'Krishna'. The last reference to 'The Gita' occurs in the ninth section of the epic's twenty fourth canto entitled 'The Amreet'.

"Mine thou must be, being dooms with me to share

The Amreet-up of immortality,"

(Southey's Complete Poetical works, 1871: 624)

Southey's use of 'The Amreet' refers to 'Amrit' found in 'The Puranas'. The significance of the 'Amrit' in Hindu thought is that by drinking this one can become immortal. In 'The Puranas, a war took place between Demons and *God*. In this war demons were defeated and God won. Sir Wilkins has given the genuine history of nectar, which was produced by churning the sea with the help of a mountain. Wilkin's note helps Southey to use the 'word' in his epic 'The Curse of Kehama'. Besides, the epic's connection with "The Gita", we also find depiction of Indian culture in the first section 'The Funeral'. There is the description of a procession of the dead body by Bramins in Canto No. 3 and 4. In Canto no. 6 there is the narration of the widow women after the death of 'Kehama'. So the epic 'The Curse of Khema' contains not only Indian philosophy but also evidences of rich Indian culture and religion.

Significantly John Drew (John Drew, 1987 : 236) is of the view that the "The Curse of Kehama" had played an important part in the process of recharging English

poetry by making the west familiar with the culture of India. To him Southey was one of the most noteworthy English writers who had been inspired and influenced by the wisdom of the Indians which paved the way for other great romantic poets to emulate the Indic ideals from 'The Curse of Kehama'.

II.II : William Blake and Indian thought :

Northrop Fry, an eminent critic on Blake, asserts that 'Blake was among the first of European idealists able to link his own tradition of thought with the "Bhagavad Gita"(Fry,1947:173).P. Berger(1914:199)another authority on Blake, locates certain striking similarities between the thoughts of "Bhagavad Gita" and the philosophical doctrines of William Blake. Since Charles Wilkins' translation of the "Hindu Bible" enthused the Romantics, together with the translations of Sir William Jones, a famous Orientalist, the "Gita" shaped the ideology and the transcendental outlook of the European mind. In England, among the Romantics, Blake was the first revolutionary poet-philosopher to reject the conventional codes of the orthodox Christianity and challenged the monopoly of the Jewish religion which denied freedom to the spontaneous expression of life. It was he who gave a revolutionary call for the salvation of the human soul from the bondage of imposition and oppression / suppression and who advocated primitive innocence and simplicity characteristic of a child, the innocent joy of an infant, the sweet lot of the shepherd, and the vision of spiritual blessings. And all those noble things / themes have been brilliantly accommodated in his "Songs of Innocence" which is contrasted with "Song of Experience". Blake's contrasting attitude is in fact a reflection of the dichotomy of

heaven and hell, of hope and despair - the dichotomy experienced by European civilization on the threshold of a crisis 'alternated between intensely high hopes of a paradise on Earth and the threat of total collapse into disorder'.

Following the great promise and failure of the French Revolution, Europe experienced a cultural crisis as the politicians and people had failed to usher in a new world. At a time when the horrors of the French Revolution undermined man's hopes and confidence, the romantic poets like Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge tended to rekindle hopes through romantic imagination. Unlike the 18th Century poets and thinkers of Enlightenment like Alexander Pope and John Locke who studied man in his social context, the Romantics, like the Renaissance poets, reposed full faith in the 'huge possibilities of the human self. Romantic poetry and for that matter, romantic imagination, is much more than a mere imitation of life. It is, in the words of C.M. Bowra (Bowra,1963:2) , strengthened by considerations which are both religious and metaphysical. Locke's theory holds that in perception the mind is wholly passive in as much as it merely records impressions from without ('a lazy onlooker in an external world). But Blake and Coleridge rejected Locke's view of mind and his conception of universe, and advocated an idealist view point inspired by the Upanishadic theory of self and emphasized the supremacy of spirit on the ground that the world of spirit is the only reality (Bowra,1963:2).

Coleridge's indebtedness to German transcendentalism of Kant and Schelling has been taken for granted though he was no less influenced by Indian Philosophy and spiritual thought. But, Blake who did not derive any inspiration from German sources, was under the profound influence of the Upanishadic celebration of self as adumbrated in Wilkins' translation of the "Gita". The Chapter II of the "Gita" under

the title ‘Samkhyayoga’ dwells on the true knowledge of the imperishability of the soul which is eternal, changeless and indestructible. It neither slays nor is slain. The Upanishadic thought is essentially grounded upon other worldliness, realization of the Real through disinterested action, self discovery and illumination as against ignorance, and there lies the key to salvation - deliverance of the soul from the bondage of finitude in a state of ecstasy, a state in which the soul feels itself being irradiated by the Light. The Romantics call it vision, insight, intuitive perception, a matter of feeling and experience rather than of reason and argument. Here, it won’t be out of place to mention that after having gone through the translation of the “Gita” by Wilkins, the Romantics might not have left unnoticed the concept of divine vision (Divyadristi) of Sanjaya and the celestial vision of the cosmic form of the Absolute by Arjuna as revealed in the “Viswarupadarshana Yoga” (S. Radhkrishnan, 2010 : Ch. XI).

Blake, the poet and mystic - visionary always envisaged an expanding vision and consciousness. What troubles him most is the failure of French Revolution on the one hand and the Age of Reason and doubt on the other. The greatest battle he fought was not against man made rule, but the fetters of mind. Thus he sings in the poem ‘London’:

“In every cry of every Man,
In every infant’s cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg’d manacles I hear”.

The world, to Blake, seemed to be disintegrating, and science dissecting life. In such a situation of fragmentation, Blake develops his holistic approach to the

world and his myth of Man by leaning toward Indian thought and her glorious civilization. In plate 31 of his *Epic Milton*, BK. II (1800-1802) he exclaims:

“And all Nations wept in affliction Family by Family,

German wept towards France and Italy: England wept and trembled

Towards America: India rose up from his golden bed:

As one awakened in the night”.

By unabashedly glorifying the ‘golden bed’ of India, Blake in fact admires her rich civilization and culture which is like dazzling gold and which remains a beacon light for the West even today. The analogy of an awakened man in the night when the whole world sleeps is directly taken from Ch. II of “Gita” (Samkyayoga, 69) where emphasis is laid on disinterested action characteristic of a Karmayogi. What is night for an ordinary man of the world is illumination (prakasha) for a man of stable mind (sthitaprajna) - a mind in which the man of action abandons all desires, and hence darkness is light for him and light darkness. For, the world does not see in the same way what the man of knowledge sees with his eye of knowledge and pure mind bereft of stains of senses. In Blake, mind is the central point, and without pure and active mind, nations are bound to weep. For the Romantics, the most vital activity of mind is the imagination (pratibha), the creative potentiality (prajna), the very source of spiritual energy which is essentially divine and the poets who exercise it become mini-gods and partake of the cosmic design of the Absolute. C.M. Bowra (Bowra, 1963:3) rightly states that for Blake ‘imagination is nothing less than god as He operates in the human soul’, and that ‘any act of creation performed by the imagination is divine’:

“This world of imagination is the world of Eternity; it is the divine bosom in to which we shall all go after the death of the Vegetated body. The World of Imagination is Infinite and Eternal, whereas, the World of Generation or Vegetation is Finite and Temporal. There exists in that Eternal World the Permanent Realities of Every Thing which we see reflected in this vegetable Glass of Nature” (Keynes, 1939:639)

These lines from Blake’s “A Vision of The Last Judgment” equates Mind-Imagination-Eternity. In “Tintern Abbey”, Wordsworth advocates a serene and tranquil mind and a ‘blessed mood’, whereas his friend Coleridge talks about an ‘active mind’ in the ‘sublimest sense’ the image of the Creator. Similarly, Blake emphatically hold that ‘mental things are alone real and that the existence of corporal things is an imposture. (Ibid,p.651) All that the Romantics stress here is nothing but the supremacy of spirit which was deprecated by Locke and which, the Romantics glorified under the profound influence of the Upanishadic wisdom as embodied in the “Gita”. Blake’s equation of Mind-Imagination- Eternity seems to be a continuation of the Upanishadic emphasis on the atman-Brahman relationship. For, the speculative mind of the Upanishadic seer does not distinguish the soul from the Brahman, and the “Brihadaranyaka” (1.4.8) sings that all loves imply the longing for atman-Brahman, the unheard hearer, the understander but not the understood. Elsewhere, the same text observes further that when the individual soul (purusa) is embraced by the Supersoul (Paramapurusa), he attains his proper form in which his desire is fulfilled and he is released from the bondage of the world.

This can be further correlated with Blake’s idea of emanation which is a theory admittedly professed in the Upanishads. The doctrine of emanation in fact

points to the relationship between God and soul which is established in the “Gita” time and again (XV.07): While subscribing to the philosophy the “Gita”, Blake in his “Song of Los” (1785) states that, all things emanate from the Supreme of which they are partial and inferior copies. Accordingly, Enitharmon emanates from Los; Urizen is the emanation of Eternity. Again Blake’s view that ‘God is Man and exist in us and we in Him’ reminds us of the Upanishadic thought that ‘I am God’ (‘Sivo’ham’ / ‘Aham Brahmosmi’) and of the ‘Atmasamyama Yoga’ of the “Gita” (VI.29) wherein it is enjoined that the universal self is always with us residing in the heart of every being. The Supreme is realizable only by one who gets rid of all dualities - likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain - and realizes the unity of all creations by visualizing God everywhere in everything, both great and small. This is the holistic approach which Blake recommends in his myth of Man.

Totally opposed to the materialistic philosophy of his time, Blake develops in Vala or The Four Zoas (1798-1802), an integral four-fold vision of life. For him single vision experienced by the eye is repressive; twofold vision perceives the value of things; threefold vision recognizes the emotion and inspires creativity, whereas four-fold vision is the achievement of spiritual ecstasy. The four-fold vision stated above can be linked with Blake’s myth of the Four Zoas which owes its origin to Greek ‘Zwa’ (life) and the Revelation (4.6-8) of the New Testament. The Zoas are in fact psychic energies which like the medieval humours must be balanced in the individual for achieving a unitive life. The Zoas, like the ‘Torah’ of Judaism are the regulating principles of life through which the human spirit passes. Blake’s hero in Vala, Albion, who stands for England and also for all Man originally experienced total harmony and was at peace with the universe and the self. His peaceful universe was

disturbed by doubts which led to division and hence the necessity of integration in order to get illumination / bliss.

It is really interesting to correlate the four Zoas with the four Purusharthas of the Hindu thought- Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokshya(The Mahabharata,Shanti Parvan,167-170) . In ancient India, Kama is associated with the four principal fruits (caturvargaphalan) of life, the other three being dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth) and moksa (liberation). In Vatsyayana's "Kama-sutra", Kautila's "Artha Sastra" and Bharata's "Natya-Sastra".

Kama is placed in close proximity to dharma and artha. All of them unanimously agree on the point that kama' is to be enjoyed without being detrimental to dharma and artha. Even "Apastamba Smriti", "Manu-Smriti", and "The Ramayana", hold similar view as to the pursuit of sensual pleasure which should be tinged with spiritual and economic considerations. Bharata's "Natya-Sastra" on the other hand, speaks of three kinds of love through different bodily gestures (angabhangi) - dharma- sringara (love in relation to duty), artha-sringara (love in relation to material prosperity) and kama -sringara (love actuated by passion). In the "Mahabharata", Bhima, the second of the Pandav as, argues in favour of the supreme efficacy of kama :

"Without kama there is no desire for artha and without kama there is none who desires - therefore kama is the best."(Shanti Parvan 167-170)

To Bhima, kama is nectar-essence (rasa); happiness arises from kama in much the same way honey is gathered by the bees from flowers. The idea is that there can be no mental, spiritual and ethical progress without desire and that desire (kama) is duty (dharma). However, the most derogatory treatment that kama has witnessed in the Indian scriptures is found in the "Bhagavad Gita" , where Krishna despises it as a

formidable evil, an all consume and all- devouring wicked enemy that destroys wisdom.

However, despite Krshna's serious polemical sermon to overcome lust in the "Gita", what the Lord actually suggests is neither wild exercise of senses nor their total extinction, but their subjugation through self-control and abstinence which is the secret key to salvation. On the contrary, it is Vatsyayana's erotic classic "Kama. Sutra" that glorifies, with remarkable ease, the pursuit of sensual pleasure as the indispensable essence of life. Vatsyayana defines kama as :

"the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the fire
senses of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling,
assisted by the mind together with the soul. The ingredient
in this is a peculiar contact between the organs of sense
and its object, and the consciousness of pleasure that
arises from that contact is called Kama".

Rejecting the objection that kama brings man into distress by causing him to commit unrighteous deeds, Vatsyayana argues that pleasures, being as necessary for the existence and well - being of the body as food, are essentially required. But, what Vatsyayana tends to insist is that pleasures are the results of dharma and artha and that they are to be followed with moderation and caution.

Thus, "Kama-Sutra" concedes that any action carried on in conformity with dharma, artha and kama breeds happiness both in this world as well as in the world yet to come. And perhaps keeping in view this idea that Vatsyayana in his salutation to "Kama-Sutra" has associated sexual impulse with religion and wealth in as much as the former are essential and vital for life as are food, wealth and religion. "

dharmartha kamebhyo namah” (obeisance to dharma, artha and kama). Thus in Indian thought emphasis laid over and over again on the pursuit of sensual pleasure signified by the term ‘ kama’, with moderation in conformity with material gain and moral ardour and this evinces that ancient Indians were not opposed to pleasure and happiness. Pleasure was to them not a shadowy, elusive, airy nothing; it was rather a concrete reality.

These four purusarthas of Hindu concept is very rightly compared with four Zoas. The first zoa termed ‘Urizen’, the first born of Eternity, epitomized head / reason and ‘star’ as the embodiment of nature and corresponds to dharma, the state of righteousness in Hindu thought, The second Zoa called ‘Luvah’ stands for the principle of human love / emotion / heart and ‘moon’, the embodiment of nature and corresponds to the Indian concept of kama (love) / pleasure. The third Zoa is called “Tharmos’ which represents loins / instinct and ‘earth’ as the embodiment of nature, and can be correlated with the vegetative power, blind forces of life, growth and productivity signified by the Indian concept of artha (wealth), whereas the fourth Zoa ‘Urthona’, the individual spirit that binds each individual to the universal spirit, can be correlated with the concept of “Mokshya”, liberation from the fetters of the materials world reminiscent of the atman-Brahman relationship in Upanishads. In Indian spiritual thought, the four purusarthas are recommended to be realized in terms of harmony, and that is what exactly Blake tends to mean through ‘unitive life’ of harmony represented by the four Zoas.

The concept of four Zoas and four Purusarthas can be further correlated with the four levels of progressive consciousness as adumbrated in the “Gita” - the level of the senses (Indrias), the level of the heart (manas), the levels of intelligence (budhi)

and the level of the soul (atman). Blake believes in the progressive growth of consciousness for composition of a 'complete man'. It is the highest level of consciousness (atman) that one perceives the principle of unity operating everywhere in the universe - God in all and all in God - a consciousness which is called 'Pantheism' in Wordsworthian philosophy. In the "Gita", it is clearly stated that one who visualizes God everywhere and everything in God does not perish.

Here it is important to mention that the correlation of the Hindu purusarthas with four Zoas has been accepted by foreign scholars too, and S. Foster Damon (Damon, 1924:135) in his important book "William Blake" concedes that the third Zoas Tharmos has been named after some concept of the "Bhagavad Gita", and obviously that Tharmos is nothing but an extension of the Indian concept of Tamas - one of the three attributes (gunas) of Nature (Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga, XIV) - a discourse on the three fold qualities of Nature. The Lord tells Arjuna that all beings of the Universe are the products of the seeds which He places in the womb called Prakriti (nature), the mother of all beings, who binds forcibly the divine elements (souls) in different bodies by three attributes of Nature - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Nature is the Energy (Shakti) of the Lord and constitutes His lower form (ksara purusa) whereas the higher form (aksara purusa) of His being is the soul, the immortal substance in the body - and He is its master (Purusottama). And obviously the three ultimate realities in the universe constitute : God, Soul and Nature. This is exactly what Blake tends to say with regard to the trio of 'Eternity - Imagination - Vegetable Glass of Nature' in 'A Vision of the Last Judgement'.

The soul can get complete freedom from the fetters of body only by transcending the modes of nature (gunas) and for this it has to follow the path of

egoless disinterested action, knowledge and devotion for the Lord. Of the three gunas, sattva manifests the pure, immaculate and illuminating aspects of nature ; rajas stands for cupidity and attachment, whereas tamas stands for sloth and deludes the soul into believing that body is the true self.

Now, the triguna theory of the “Gita” can be applied to the three fold classification of the children of Los in Blake’s epic “Milton”- the Elect, the Redeemed and the Reprobate - which can be further correlated with the Hindu trinity - Vishnu (the Lord of protection), Brahma (the Lord of creation) and Shiva (the Lord of destruction). In Blake’s poem, the three sons of Los - Satan, Palamabron and Rintrah - stand for the three attributes of prakriti. Satan like Vishnu represents purity and illumination (Sattva) in so far as he is mild, peaceful and believer in the order and harmony of the society - an idea strongly reminiscent of Lord Krishna’s pronouncement in the “Gita” (S. Radhakrishnan, 1948 : Ch. 11.47) that He descends in human flesh on the earth down the ages for establishment of order and harmony / righteousness as against chaos and destruction committed by evil elements. Palamabron is Blake’s Brahma, an inspired prophet, who obeys the dictates of his imagination to create. He is like Brahma not a destroyer of the social structure. Lastly, there is Rintrah who, like Rudra / Shiva, lives in a deserts like a hermit, a reprobate, a rebel who does not accept any social norms and established beliefs. The nature of Rintrah reminds one of the rivalry between Saivas and Vaishnavas in India because of their differences in beliefs, philosophy and methods of worship. Blake being a revolutionary himself seems to be more interested in Rintrah, the Indian Shiva and this is further evident from his poem “Song of Los” : Africa’ in which Blake states how Rintrah gave abstract philosophy to Brahma in the East:

Adam stood in the garden of Eden, whereas Noah was standing on the mountains of Ararat, and Urizen was giving his Los to the Nations. Meanwhile all were wonderstruck :

“Adam shuddered! Noah faded! black grew the sunny African

When Rintrah gave Abstract Philosophy to Brama in the East”

The identification of Rintrah as / with Shiva is interesting, as in Indian systems of esoteric philosophy and Tantra, Shiva is always regarded as the greatest ascetic and the source of mystic knowledge. He has been rightly acclaimed, in Indian mythology / religion / philosophy, as the teacher / preceptor / adorable Lord of Brihaspati, the guru of gods, of Sukra, the guru of demons and of innumerable sages and saints.

The threefold attributes of prakriti in Indian philosophy can be further correlated with Blake’s concept of the ‘Great Whore’ which is virtually an extension of the Upanishadic concept of Maya (illusion) whose deceptive nature has been delineated in the “Gita” (S. Radhakrishnan, Ch. VII. 13-14). Maya Shakti constitutes the lower aspect of the Lord and yet it has the invincible power of distracting the soul from God’s higher aspects by virtue of their threefold attributes discussed earlier. It is the M aya-Shakti of the Lord that moves all beings restlessly and even helplessly from one place to another and from one object to another as if they were mounted on a moving machine (S. Radhakrishnan, Ch. XVIII. 2010 : 249) ‘bhramayan sarvabhutani yantrarudharni mayaya). The concept of Maya exerts t remenduous influence on Blake’s concept of ‘Vala” as nature, the Great whore and scarlet Woman who dominates and distracts Albion, the symbol of soul, so much so that he becomes’ the tabernacle of Vala and her Temple’ “Jerusalem”. In the poem Jerusalem

it is Vala who slays humanity by subduing it to the natural process and established her suzerainty as a baffling and invincible force.

Thus, William Blake was astoundingly enamoured of Indian philosophy, religion, mythology, way of life, civilization and culture. His world view, like that of Wordsworth, comes closer to that of a Vedantin for whom ‘the world has no real and independent existence’ and for whom the actual world is a dream, whereas mental things (spirit) alone are real (Berger, 1914:80)

II.III : William Wordsworth and Indian Thought

There is no denying the fact that both Coleridge and Wordsworth were the eye witness to the French Revolution (1789) and Wordsworth in particular was inspired by Rousseau’s clarion call for equality, liberty and Return to Nature. But, one important factor which has been blissfully left unnoticed is that four years before the French Revolution, Wilkins’ translation of the “Gita”, came out in 1785, and that scholars on Wordsworth have not said much about the impact of Indian philosophy and spiritual thought in Wordsworth poetry. Northrop Fry, a learned critic on William Blake assertively maintains that Blake was among the first of European idealists able to link his own traditional thought with the “Bhagavad Gita” and his comment is also fairly applicable in case Wordsworth whose “Tintern Abbey”, “The Prelude” and, “Immortality Od” bears the sure stamp of Indian thought.

To begin with “Tintern Abbey”, the autobiography of Wordsworth in miniature, /Wordsworth reminds readers of Vedanta, Yoga, Samkhya, Saktism and Tantricism. Like Blake, Wordsworth was also inspired by the three modes of Nature

(prakriti) representing illusion (sattva), passionate action (Rajas) and ignorance (tamas) as adumbrated in Chapter III and IV of the Hindu Bible, the 'Gita'. In chapter XIV of the 'Gita' "Gunatraya Bibhaga Yoga" it is enjoined that all beings of the Universe are the product of the divine seed which is planted by God in the womb called Nature (Prakriti) and that Nature is the mother and God the father of all beings. The union of Purusa and Prakriti results in the birth of all being, and this fundamental philosophy was profoundly felt by Wordsworth - the reason why he regarded (Nature) as a kind mother, nurse, guide and guardian of all our moral beings ("Tintern Abbey"). Viewed in terms of Saktism, Nature is the primordial mother, the creative energy and Yoga-Maya Sakti, the divine mother that determines the course of creation, preservation and destruction, whereas as Para-Sakti, she is envisaged as the soothing mother who protects, consoles, cheers and nurses. Like an Indian worshipper of Sakti, Wordsworth reposes full faith in the benign benediction and healing power of mother Nature. As an ardent worshipper, a high priest of Nature he cordially proclaims: "Nature never betrays the heart that loves her" ("Tintern Abbey"). Therefore, he calls upon all to worship nature with abiding affection and his pantheistic outlook that 'One divine spirit rolls through all things' - be it green meadows, the setting sun, the rounded ocean or lofty cliffs is strongly reminiscent of the message of the "Gita" in which Lord Krishna himself proclaims that 'he is everywhere and that everything is surrounded by Him' thereby establishing the importance of Vedanta Philosophy that everything in this visible world is the manifestation of the 'Absolute' (sarvam khalu idam Brahma). There is a possibility that Wordsworth learnt through Wilkins English translation of the "Gita" about the

Hindu Philosophy of Saktism and the role of Nature (Prakriti) in binding the Purusa in the bondage of pleasure and pain, sorrows and sufferings.

There are three powerful modes that guide as well as plunge human beings into the bondage of the World, Nature in Wordsworth too mesmerizes, chastizes and finally shows the way to the subliminal beatitude. This threefold stage of training not only reminds us of the country girl Lucy's rearing in the lap of Nature for three years under her perfect care and guidance ("Lucy Poems"), but also points to Wordsworth's threefold progressive development in this attitude to Nature - from childhood innocence and boyish sensation to sensuous appetite, blind passion of gilded youth, and from kama (passion) to prema (true love) and bhakti (devotion) for mother goddess nature in "Tintern Abbey", Wordsworth states that there was time when the beauteous and colorful forms of Nature made him restless to run after every object of beauty with maddening sensation and blind passion: 'The sounding cataract haunted me like a passion', But in later years, Nature gifted him with the power to control his passion and the words like 'to chasten and subdue' suffice to establish the fact that Wordsworth read Wilkins' translation of the 'Gita', where Lord Krishna advises Arjuna time and again to control / subdue passion (kama) and to emulate the path of a man of self restraint (Yogi). Passion, together with anger and greed constitute, the three veritable hells in the 'Gita' and therefore one has to be away from them. In order to suppress or control them, Wordsworth recommends the path of Yoga - the path of meditation in a serene / 'blessed mind' - through which the 'heavy and the weary, weight' of this mysterious 'unintelligible word' is lightened . In "Tintern Abbey", Wordsworth clearly indicates the state of what Hindu Philosophy calls samadhi through serene and blessed mood in which the breath of this corporal frame

and even the 'notice of our human blood' are almost suspended, and then one becomes a 'living soul'. Here, the bhogi (passionate self) become a yogi saint, and then as samadarshi in order to realize like a vedantic the vital truth that God is in everything and that everything is in God. Wordsworth gives an indic message that we should treat others equally and everything as the manifestation of the Divine. (Samam pasyati sarvatra ya pasyati sa pasyati) :

“ We are laid asleep in body
And become a living soul.”
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things” (Tintern Abbey)

K.G. Srivastava (Srivasta;2002:160-162) cogently argues that, Wordsworth wrote the Immortality Ode under the influence of the 'Gita' - a text that exercised considerable influence on Southey's "The Curse of Kehama" and Coleridge's philosophical lecture and that the trio discussed regularly the various ramifications of the philosophical text. Wordsworth's reference to the sacred book lying for long in dusty sequestration and assuming the accent of 'native tongue' in fact points to Wilkins' translation of the 'Gita' which is called by him 'transcendent Boon'. Lane Cooper(cooper;1965:438,473-74) records how Wordsworth copiously alluded to Indra - 'Indian', 'Hindu', 'Ganges', 'Bombay' 'Rajput', 'Maharaja' and 'Bengal'. Interestingly, his interest in 'Indra' was increasingly aroused by his brother John Wordsworth who worked in Bengal as an employee of the British East India company and who was looking for an appointment for William too.

Wordsworth's interest in Hindu mythology is strongly vindicated from his reference to the descent of river Ganga from Lord Vishnu's nail in the poem Excursion (Book III, 254-60) and to the four states of consciousness - walking, sleep, dream and death as described in "Mandukyaopanishad". William Wordsworth imbibed in his poetry like 'The Excursion' the philosophical aspect of Indian Upanishads. Of all the English Romantic poets, Wordsworth was an ardent devotee and a high priest of nature for whom she is a goddess, a kind mother, a healing balm, a friend, philosopher and guide, the guardian of all moral being. Wordsworth's pantheistic belief is that the same divine spirit rolls through all things, both animate and inanimate, in nature which is in Indian concept of 'param brahma' the supreme being. His awareness of Indian philosophy, religion and mythology was quite intense that can evidently be comprehended from his reference to 'Gangvatarana' i.e. descent of the Ganges on the earth in the passage quoted below from one of his most Indic poem Excursion:

“then as the Hindus draw
Their holy Ganges from a sky fount,
Even so deduce the stream of human life
From seats of power divine, and hope or trust
That our existence winds her stately course
Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part”
of living ocean ;

(Book III, 254-60)

The term 'sky fount' points to Brahma's 'Kamandalu' or 'Vishnu's nails from which the Ganges has been reproduced. Her divine origin has been presented in the Valmiki's epic "The Ramayana" and other puranas. Wordsworth's fair knowledge of Hindu mythology and religion is succinctly evident from his knowledge of

Mandukyapanisad which the poet may have read in Latin translation of Du Perron's "Oupanikhat" which was published in two volumes in 1801-02.

No to me, who find Reviewing my past way, much to condemn, Little to praise, and nothing to regret, (Save some remembrance of dream-like joys. That scarcely seem to have belonged to me). If I must take my choice between the pair that rule alternately the weary hours Night is than day more acceptable; sleep Doth, in my estimate of good, appear. A better state than waking; death than sleep":

- The Excursion III. 270- 79

The last four lines of the above extract is purely based on (The Excursion, 111:270-79) Indian concept of Brahma how to attain the state of it as described in Mandukyaupanisad. There are four means of attaining Brahma The first stage is waking (jagrata) - a state in which the enjoys yogi where full consciousness or complete alertness (bahiprajna) of external world. With the help of this waking stage, the mediator of Brahma realises the absolute interns of seven limbs as adumbrated in "Chandogya Upanishad" (Canto. V, 18.2)

The ethereal world (divyaloka) is His head, Sun his eyes, Wind (Vayu) his Prans, Sky(Akasha) is his body, water (Jal) is his Uretra (Mutrasay) Earth is his feet (Pada) and Fire is his mouth (Mukha) and He has nineteenth faces, ten senses (Indriya) and five pranas.

The second stage of perceiving the Paramatman is dream which can be correlated with the Freudian concept of Subconsciousness and "Mandukya Upanishad" defines it as Antapraja (internal consciousness). In this stage Paramatman is compared with seven limbs in which He knows the internal desire of mind.

The third stage of perceiving the Paramatman is supta (sleep) or susupta- a stage in which there is no scope for desire and dream.

The fourth stage is called 'turiya' - a stage in which there is no scope for bahiprajna , antaprajna and susupti. This is not a state between dream and consciousness but a stage of the invisible and unthinkable, it is a stage which is realized not by karmendriya, not by works but by the soul, a blissful stage (santam, sivam) in which all dualities and multiplicities are dissolved. It is a stage which is akin to death because it is closed to the so called world of life represented by bahiprajna, antaprajna and human sleep. It is a state of ecstatic bliss. Wordsworth's Upanishadic leaning has been rightly reflected in the afore quoted lines of the poem 'The Excursion' and these thoughts Wordsworth had taken from Nathaniel Halhed's "Gentoo Laws"(1774). Halhed explains in an article in the 1782 volume of the Annual Register dealing with the character of the Brahmins of India as 'Three Modes of Being - To be awake, to sleep, and to be absorbed in a state of unconsciousness - a kind of Trance'. Whatever the source may be but the poet Wordsworth had intense praise and belongingness to Indian philosophy and religion to a great extent.

Wordsworth stayed in Germany at a time when the country was all out with praise for Indian wisdom and appreciation for translation of Kalidasa's 'Sakuntala', by Sir William Jones which impressed Goethe, Herder and Schegel brother. The 'Immortality Ode' was written in all probability, under Indian influence and immortality of soul which constitutes the core theme of the Ode - is in fact a continuation of Krishna's discourse on immortality in Arjunasya Vishad Yoga and the doctrine of trans migration of soul .The great 'ode' can be satisfactorily discussed in

the light of Indian philosophical thought which was imbibed by Wordsworth from the 'Hindu Bible'.

II.IV : Coleridge and Indian Thought :

Of all the English romantic poets, the most acute, deep and gluttonous reader was indeed Wordsworth's close friend and Southey's brother-in-law S. T. Coleridge. Charles Lamb, the Prince of English essayists, acclaimed him as a 'Metaphysician Logician, Bard'. Coleridge's wide ranging penetration into the world of Oriental knowledge is amazing. The poet read 'The Gita' quite early and was well versed in classical histories about India and her philosophical traditions. In his philosophical lecture delivered on 11 January, 1819, he made the following remark.

"Socrates seems to have proceeded with the same
temper which we are told was attributed to him with
some tenderness of reproach by an Indian philosopher
Calanos who speaking of (Socrates, Diogenes)
and other great man." (Kathleen Coburn, Lecture No. 4).

That Coleridge has relation with India is evident from his reference to an Indian philosopher 'Calanos'.

It was the German enthusiasm for Indian philosophy and religion that had inspired Coleridge to study the thoughts and beliefs of India with more care and seriousness. When he visited Germany in September 1791 in the company of Wordsworth and Dorothy and stayed there until July, 1799, the literary atmosphere was charged with Indianism. He read G. Forster's translation entitled 'Sakuntala order

der Entseheidende Ring' (1791) which was translated from Original text of Kalidasa in Germany (Kathleen Coburn, 1949 : 127-29).

Coleridge may also have been inspired by J. G. Harder's selection of few stanzas from "The Gita" in his 'Thoughts of some Brahmins'. Harder (j. G. Harder, 1792) has also been a great admirer of 'Sakuntala' and he had read many religious books of India such as 'The Vedas', 'The Upanishads' and 'The Puranas'. In fact Germany had become a second home of Sanskrit learning. Naturally when Coleridge visited Germany, he felt deeply inspired by German mentors-Kant, Herder, Goethe and Schlegel brothers. (Friedrich Schlegel, 1970 :13). The result was that he started analyzing the works of the Orientalists, dealing with India, with a renewed vigour and enjoyment, and in the process India became a 'land of knowledge' in his imagination and sensibility. In the edition of Coburn, in the Philosophical Lecture Number II, there is clear references by Coleridge regarding Pythagoras's visit to India. He frankly remarks. "To those who admit that he (Pythagoras) was in Egypt, that he went through Persia to India, I concede" (Kathleen Coburn, Lecture No. 2). In Coleridge's 'Biographia Literaria' (1817) India was mentioned as one of the countries where 'experimental research was still in its dawn and infancy'. In the same work Coleridge mentioned the name of one myth of India which he called it 'the Brahmin creed' and enlists it in the following analogy.

"We might as rationally chant the Brahmin creed of the tortoise that supported the bear that supported the elephant that supported the world, to the tune of this is the house that Jack built." (Georg Watson ed. 1965 : 77)

Coleridge further criticized the religious superstition prevailing in India of his day as reported by the missionaries in English journals and also criticized the

concept of Original Sin in all Indian religions. In his Philosophical Lecture number X of Coburn's book Coleridge revealed his acquaintance with Porphyry's eulogy on the Indians and states that the philosophical practices of the New Platonists were previously like those of the 'Brahmins' and 'Samaneans' (Kathleen Coburn, Lecture No. 10). In his lecture no. XIII, Coleridge associates the pantheism of India with that of Spinoza, who recognized as deity and a pendent creature. In 'Aids to Reflection' Coleridge, purports to state the high point of metaphysical thinking, stated in the expression. "I AM THE CREATOR." Here Coleridge referred to famous Upanishadic doctrine namely (aham brahmasmi i.e., I am brahma the supreme reality) and also displays his acquaintance with the "Gita, in which Lord Krishna proclaims to be the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world.

Coleridge had become familiar with many of the philosophical and mythological notions of the Hindus as early as 1797. In a letter (14 Oct. 1797) to his friend he wrote.

"It is better to sit than stand, it is better to lie than sit, it is better to sleep than wake, like the Indian Vishnu, to float along an infinite ocean cradled in the flower of Lotus, and wake once in a million years for a few minutes just to know that I was going to sleep for a million years more...." (E. L. Griggs ed., 1956).

The philosophy of the above extract is same on the following lines of Coleridge's book 'Poetical Works' in the year 1817.

"The God who floats upon a Lotus Leaf
Dream for a thousand ages, then awaking
Creates a world".

In both the extracts, the poet refers to the Hindu concept of 'kalpa' during which 'Narayana' or 'Vishnu' remains asleep and at the end of which He walked up for a new creation. In the 1st extract Coleridge writes the name of Indian God 'Vishnu' instead of 'Vishnu'. Moreover, according to the Hindu 'Vedas', the meaning of both the extract showed that Vishnu is normally represented as wrapped up by 'Ananta' or 'Sheshanaga' rather than a 'lotus', it is Brahma who is depicted as sitting on the flower 'Padma' or 'Kund' (Lotus) and hence His synonyms 'Padmasana' and 'Kamalasana'. Thus Coleridge followed only the practice of 'The Puranas' in describing 'Vishnu' as cradled in a Lotus although the Lord's normal pose is that of 'Sheshashaya' (one sleeping on the body of Sheshanaga). The above discussion clearly demonstrates that Coleridge knew a lot about India and her rich culture, religion and literature (Sanskrit) from Charles Wilkins English prose translation of 'The Gita' in 1785 and from Thomas Maurice's book "The History of Hindostan" (Thomas Maurice, 1795) and Edward Moor's 'The Hindu Pantheon'.

The influence of 'The Gita' on Coleridge was noticeable in his sonnet entitled 'On a Homeward Tourney Upon Hearing of the Birth of a Son' (1796). The following lines shows :

"We lived, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore.

O my sweet baby when I reach my door." (line 6-7)

The above two lines have marked similarity with the fourth chapter of 'The Gita' when Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna the lesson of 'Karmayoga'. In the third chapter of the scripture and in the opening line of chapter IV he tells Arjuna 'the History of Yoga, i.e. wise rise, growth and disappearance.

Coleridge's famous lyric "Eolian Harp" (1795) possesses Vedantic thoughts which the poet has received from "The Gita".

'O! The one life within us and abroad

Which meets all notion and becomes its soul,

A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,

Rhythm in all thought, and joy once everywhere". (lines 26-29)

The above extract of the poem contains the Vedantic theory that God is the creator and not a force acting upon Nature but it rather constantly communicating His being to all created objects and infusing His soul into them. He is the taste of water, light in the moon and sun, he is the intelligence of the intelligent, he is the spirit of all creatures. The line no. 48 of the poem "Eolian harp" possesses the supra-panteism philosophy enshrined of 'The Gita' where Krishna speaks the relations of soul and nature.

'Religious Musing' (1794), another poem of Coleridge contained Vedantic philosophy. The forty fifth line of the poem "We and our Father one" clearly provide the Upanishadic doctrine, 'Sivo ham' (i.e. I am Shiva, the Godhead) and 'aham brahmasmi' (i.e. 'I am Brahma, the Supreme Being'). The last seven lines of the verse-paragraph beginning with the word 'Lovely was the Death' seem to be the paraphrase of 'The Gita' that He is the enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices. But people do not know Him in His true nature and so they fall.

The fourth stanza of the most famous ode, by Coleridge 'Dejection : An Ode' (1802) is thoroughly Upanishadic in spirit and also has its basis in 'The Gita'. The following stanza possesses the spirit.

'Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,

A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud

Enveloping the Earth

And from the soul itself must there be sent.”

In above stanza from the ‘Ode’, three ultimate realities have been recognized - the body, nature and the soul or universal spirit. This is exactly the same as ‘The Gita’ acknowledges then as realities-purusa, prakriti and brahma (S. Radhakrishnan, 2010)

In the ‘Ode’ Coleridge was concerned with religious and spiritual problems rather than the purely aesthetic. This was evident from stanza V of the poem where purity of the heart has been described with joy.

“Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne’er was given

Save to the pure, and in their purest hour! (line 64-65)

The epithet ‘Joy virtuous Lady’ seems to have relation with the twentyfifth verse of the fifth chapter of ‘The Gita’ where beatitude of God has been described.

From the above discussion, it becomes quite evident that the thoughts and philosophy of aforesaid passages are basically based on Hindu thought derived mostly from ‘The Gita’ This shows that India is never far away from Coleridge’s imagination. German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling (1775-1854) suggests about Coleridge attachment with India that “Now we hear of nothing but the language and wisdom of India” (Friedrich Schlegel, 1970 :13) Coleridge inclination towards Hindu Philosophy, religion, mythology and literature can be further authenticated from his own observation mentioned below :

“Shall I confess the truth? Their next neighbour of the North, the temple throned infant of Thibet, with the Himala behind and the cradle of the Ganges at his

feet, conveys to my mind an impressive likeness, seems to me a pregnant symbol of the whole Brahmin Theosophy : without growth, without production! Abstract the enormous shapes and phantasms of the Himala, the Ganges of the fancy, and what remains? - A baby ! The personality and the mystery of secondary impersonation, metamorphoses, incarnations, these and all the attributes of persons dance in and out like wandering flashes, or motley aliens from a distant country, the mutes of the show, often enough to remind us of their incompatibility with the doctrines of omneity and infinity, which are the constant theme and the philosophical import of the Indian theology, but without even an attempt to resolve the riddle.

These impersonations or Avatars betray themselves as fables half verbal and built an accidents of language, and half symbolical; though nothing can be more obscure and conjectural than their direct interpretation.

This long quotation is a justified evidence of Coleridge's admission of his debts to the great Orientalists like Sir William Jones and Charles Wilkins and of his earlier attraction with Indian philosophy and religion as also of his subsequent disenchantment for them. It provides a specific mention of the "Bhagavad Gita" and displays Coleridge's close acquaintance with several aspects of Hinduism and with its inherent weaknesses.

Coleridge, a voracious reader who himself proclaims that he has read almost everything in Print, seems to have read the 'Gita' quite early. John Dew is of the opinion that Coleridge came to catch hold of Wilkins's translation of the Sanskrit around 1796.

‘Religious Musing’ , the poem further indicates the period of Coleridge’s liberal and even radical thinking and action with distinct traces of the Indian thoughts and ‘Ode to the Departing Year’ completely focused on the Hindu concept of “Rta”..

As discussed above, Schelling, a German like Coleridge had been very much impressed by the mass of ancient Indian literature that was being gradually unearthed and made known in the Western world in different European languages. German philosopher and their enthusiasm for Indian philosophy religion and mythology that had inspired the English poet’s imagination which their mind had already been in close connection with the newly discovered literary wealth of India. When Coleridge visited Germany in the company of Wordsworth and Dorothy, Germany had a spiritual affinity with India and the countries literary atmosphere was surcharged with Indianism. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) had already glorified India and her rich cultural heritage when he waxed lyrical over Kalidasa’s greatest play *Abhijnanasakuntalam* after reading it in G. Forster’s translation entitled *Sacountala oder der Entscheidende Ring* (1791) done in to German from the Latin translation of the Sanskrit play by Sir William Jones (1789) who had translated the same into English in 1790. It is verily evident that Coleridge had read Goethe’s eulogy on the drama of Kalidasa from his expression like.

“I name thee, O Sakuntala, and all at once is said?”

A copy of J.A. Dubois’s description of the Character, Manners and Customs of the people of India, popularly famous as *Hindu Manners* (1817), containing Coleridge’s autograph notes, is preserved in the British Museum library. In the marginalia to page 323-24 of this book, Coleridge describes Spinoza as ‘the sternest

and most consistent of Advaitamists. By the terminology 'Advaitins' the followers of 'Advaitavedanta' school of Indian Philosophy, founded by Adi Sankaracharya.

This explanation really an exact evidence of Coleridge is fair knowledge concerning India and her Philosophy. German philosophers and their thought surcharged by Indian was transmitted into English Romantics such as Shelley and Wordsworth (1770-1850) via Coleridge. In *Biographia Literaria* (1817), we find accounts of Coleridge own intellectual development (philosophical autobiography) as well as literary criticism. John Drew explores the history of Coleridge's encounter with Indian thought from the depiction of himself as the god 'Vishna' in 1797 and his authorship of the famous opium-fuelled poem *Kubla Khan : a vision in a dream* (1816) to his defence of Christianity. Coleridge's writings contain many references to India. Coleridge became concerned to undermine an idealized view of India as the ultimate source of wisdom.

II.V: P. B. Shelley and Indian Thought

As a confirmed idealist and a mystic-visionary, Shelley took India as an ideal and her rich culture fed Shelley's idealism, utopian vision and mythopoeic imagination. The great critic and scholar G. Wilson Knight (G. Wilson Knight, 1971: 210) had therefore correctly noted that 'India is magnetic to Shelley'. Shelley has evinced his keen desire to visit India. His tutor Frank Newton converted him to vegetarianism; Towards the end of his life he desired to migrate to India and to seek employment in the court of some 'Maharajah' of India which ironically remained a

desire (Fredrick, Jones ed., 1910 : 361). But Shelley's love for India remained unshaken and unbounded and found a sincere and profound expression in his poetry at all stages of the growth of the poet's mind. However, his swooning idealism, utopian vision and mythopoeic imagination prompted him to admire India from the core of his heart. Her mythology and cultural geography, natural landscape and rich philosophy bewitched him with bewildering sensation. This is precisely the reason why he read again and again his early mentor Robert Southey's Indian Bible 'The Curse of Kehama' which is a store house of rich Indian culture. He even recommended Southey's epic to many of his friends and relative including Mary Godwin and Elizabeth Hitchoner. Sydney Owenson's Novel 'The Missionary : An Indian Tale' is a book that appealed to Shelley very much. It narrates the story of a catholic missionary proceeding to India where he met a Hindu priest who is a devotee of mystic love and 'Vishnu'. Shelley recommended this novel to Hogg in the letter of June 21, 1811. In his essay 'A Refutation of Deism' he mounts a frontal attack on Christianity, but declares that Christianity has borrowed morality from the philosophers of Greece and India.

In 1811, there come the clearest record of India engaging Shelley's psyche. In June (1811), in a letter he addressed to his beloved and his close correspondent Elizabeth Hitchoner - Shelley warns the lady that, beautiful as it is in poetry, she should not in the true style of Hindoostani devotion personify virtue as the Deity. By the year 1811 Shelley kept himself abreast of Indian mythology that was made available to the English readers through the efforts of the English Orientalists such as Alexander Dow, Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones, Thomas Maurice, Edward Moor and R. Southey's 'The Curse of Kehama' (1810).

Shelley has great love for Indian mountain (Himalaya), river (Ganges and Yamuna), plants and flowers, Hindoostani virtuous woman, Vedantic philosophy and Sanskrit language and literature that will go a long way in moulding the West towards the East. Shelley's sensible reference will be drawn copiously from his poems 'Queen Mab', 'Alastor', 'Prometheus unbound', 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty', 'Hellas', 'Adonais', 'Indian Serenade' in order to justify as to how Shelley was influenced by Indian philosophy, naturalism and culture. Indian philosophy particularly the Upanishadic doctrine of 'indestructibility of soul' and the 'Indian doctrine of metempsychosis' - the theory of cycle of birth and death have all influenced him to a great extent. The Vedantic view is that the world is illusion and that the divine light shines through all things in the Universe has also exerted tremendous influence on Shelley. Shelley's magnum opus, 'Prometheus Unbound' is basically a poem that refers to India. The entire action of the play takes place in India. The poet precisely and clearly states that it is 'Indian'. The drama opens, 'on a ravine of icy rocks in the Indian Caucasus'. The very fact proves that Shelley had a deep interest in India. Joseph Raben has very brilliantly brought out the significance of the Indian locale of the play in an article entitled 'Shelley's Prometheus Unbound' why the Indian Caucasus?

Even many characters of the poem have received Indian treatment. Indian natural landscape, Vedic philosophy, myth and culture are all highlighted in the poem. Throughout the play, Shelley uses Hindu ideas -yugas of Time. Shelley's purpose is to express his sense of the present evil condition of the Universe to represent a sudden change in the Universe. In Shelley's treatment Prometheus represents not only superhuman helper of mankind, but also the heroic, gentle, and

the spiritual gladness. In the poem, Shelley depicts a conflict between the forces of good and evil. The conflict with which the poem begins, is between Prometheus (good) and Jupiter (evil), between the principle of reason and love and principle of tyranny and destructiveness which hates and harasses the good but is unable to destroy it. Here Shelley's faith is in the inevitable elimination of evil from the world by the victory of love. From first to last the theme of Man's conflict with evil is the counterpart of the 'beautiful idealism' which is evident in last line of the poem :

"This is alone life, Joy, Empire and Victory." (line 578). In the play, Jove one of the chief character represents evil by his selfish rule. Jove is the incarnation of all that prevents its free development. Prometheus resists Jove to the utmost and suffers physically or morally and finally for an Hour which shall hurl Jove from Heaven just as 'Asur' hurl from the Heaven by the Supreme power which is found in Indian mythology. That Hour arrives, Jove disappeared, the burden of the evil over man is removed and the Earth no longer groans in pain. Prometheus united to Asia, represents Lord Vishnu united with goddess Lakshmi. Shelley's philosophy is that the Universe is made real by spirit of Nature which is symbolically presented through the love with Asia. Love is the only law, Shelley recognized to overcome the realities of pain and crime revealed in Nature and society which has its parallels in the doctrine of Salvation in 'The Gita'.

'Prometheus Unbound' can be considered a spiritual allegory. Each spiritual character is personified in terms of human qualities to show the success and failure of each quality, and the truth that exists in the Universe. Shelley is a great myth-maker. He makes myths out of nature and also uses the ancient myth in his poetry. Clutton-Brock has paid a glowing tribute to 'Shelley's myth making faculty'. In 'Prometheus

Unbound' he uses the ancient Greek myth and makes use of Indian myth out of Nature. In the play, Prometheus symbolizes a great abstract idea. Shelley is not concerned with the story of a particular individual; his main purpose is to present before us a spiritual conflict dealing with a cosmic process that leads us from 'darkness to light', from 'death to life'. Shelley believed in a Supreme Power (Ultimate Reality in 'The Gita') which is at once immanent and transcendent. Shelley's God is only omnipotent and he believes that a powerful evil spirit interferes with the Supreme. The conception of the power of good struggling against and finally overpowering evil appears in the following lines :

"More glorious for than that which thou surveyest.

Form thine unervied throne, O Mighty God!"

(line 16-7)

Shelley believes in Hinduism while professing his conception of the soul. The principle of necessity of the soul of the Universe is that by its inspiration, the human soul must submit. The soul should attain the Heaven; then only it is delivered from 'darkness' and 'errors' of the body. His chief characters are instruments of some cosmic power or symbol. Self-reform is noticeable in his poems. If one banishes hatred from his heart and admits love, one can make mind a Heaven. Man should 'dethrone hate' and 'enthroned love'. Self-reform is the only trustworthy means of exterminating evil. To Shelley, if man were to achieve the act of purgatory within his own mind, his whole vision would be clarified and the great part of evil would be eliminated. This theory of purgation can make parallels to Vedantic doctrine (mukti).

The play comes closer to can be compared with Indian philosophy. Throughout the play Shelley uses Hindu ideas of the 'Yugas of time' - Prometheus

has suffered through “Three thousand yrs of the Hours?” He prefers the idea of the cycles of ages moving to and fro between golden and from ages in Hindu myths of periodic time of the concept of linear time. In the play the concept of Hindu myth (Avatars) appeared from time to time to restore cosmic order after its decay reoccurs in Shelley. The play is unique in world literature as in imaginative fusion of the Hindu and Greek thought of ancient wisdom. One can identify Prometheus and Asia with Vishnu (Lord of Universe) and Lakshmi (Mother of Earth)

As Prometheus is the supreme soul and destroyer of evil just as the Lord Krishna is the embodiment of ‘good’ and ‘destroyer’ of evil. Jove and Jupiter represent evil like ‘Rakshas’ of the Indian mythologies. When such amoral avatars torture the Earth (Lakshmi) and when such destruction reached the extreme point, Vishnu the supreme mankind manifests himself in form of ‘avatars’ (9 times) from time to time and save the life of The Earth from such devil.

The philosophy used in ‘Prometheus Unbound’ is compared particularly with the Upanishadic and the Indian doctrine of metempsychosis - the theory of cycle of birth and death. ‘Wilkins’ Jones translation of “The Gita” influenced Shelley to a great extent. The philosophy which is visible on the character of Prometheus is visible on the Lord Krishna. The advent of Lord Krishna as an incarnated person was the most significant event in the socio-religious history of the country. As Prometheus is the hero of Shelley; Krishna is the legendary hero of Indian culture and thought. His affectionate behavior, adventurous acts, magnetic personality and lovable nature can be seen in the character of Prometheus. Shelley speaks about purgation in the same way we find the path of complete salvation in “The Gita”. As in the play, Prometheus doesn’t hold arms to destroy evil just as Krishna also did not hold arms in the war of

‘The Mahabharata’. The supreme Lord of Hindu is an epitome of knowledge, truth, beauty and peace. Each chapter of ‘The Gita’ is called ‘Yoga’ meaning ‘meditation’. Shelley speaks about ultimate peace which described in ‘The Vedas’ and ‘The Upanishad’s as ‘Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti’ Krishna is the architect of drama and saviour of mankind. He takes birth in this world from time to time by punishing the unrighteous. He is the supreme power and root of this materialistic world. Lord Krishna himself said that He is the ‘Creator’ as well as ‘Destroyer’ of this world. He is omnipotent and omnipresent which is the philosophy of Shelley. The Universe comprising the sun, moon, sky, air, water and earth which are the characters of the play, is given form of God and Goddesses in Indian mythology. The mystic image of ‘Krishna’ is found in ‘The Gita’. A chapter has been titled as ‘Lordabant Transfiguration’. (:) Hearing from the Lord’s his own manifestations, Arjuna expresses to Him, his desire to see the Universal form of the Lord. Then Krishna showed his form - hundred - fold, thousand-fold, various in kind, colours and shapes which is a sign of divine attire.

The frequency with which references to India occur in the poem is surprising indeed. In the first act of the Second voice from (Springs) declares :

“Never such a sound before

To the Indian waves we bore” (line 93-94)

Even before these lines; in lines (62-64) of the play the word ‘India’ occurs in the utterance of Prometheus :

“Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,

Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept.

Shudering through India”. (lines 62-64).

Act II, Scence I reads : ‘Morning. A lovely vale in the Indian Caucasus’. But the scene has already been set in the closing lines of the preceding act in the mount of Panthea, addressed to Prometheus :

“Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian Vale.”

Here ‘eastern star look white’ refers to India which is a country of purity (white) where people of India worship Goddess Saraswati as symbol of purity and truth.

In Act II Scene III, Asia and Panthea, enroute of Demogorgan’s cave pause on “A pinnacle of Rock among Mountains which overlook”, as Asia graphically describes the India vale (Valley) as :

“..... a wide plain of billowy mist,
A a lake, paving in the morning sky,
With azure waves which burst in silver light
Some Indian vale”. (lines 19-23).

These lines show. Shelley’s bewildering interest in Indian scenic beauty.

In the fourth scene of Act II, Asia recounts Prometheus acts of civilizing mankind; among these was the fact that :

“He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-winged chariots of the ocean,
And the celt knew the Indian (lines 92-94).

In Act III, Prometheus portrays the cave to which he and his wife Asia will retire to eternal bliss :

“From its curved root the mountains’ frozen tears

Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires

Hung down ward, raining forth a doubtful light :

and there is heard the ever moving air

whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,

And bees; and all around are mossy seats

And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass.” (lines 15-21)

Through these lines Shelley admires that Prometheus desire to retire into the cave of eternal bliss along with his wife - remind us of the ancient sage king and monks of India meditating in the caves in a state of absorption (bhava samadhi).

Again Shelley’s interest on windy, icy mountains (of India) when Earth commands the spirit that will guide them all towards that place :

“Run, wayward,

And guide this company beyond the peak

Of Bacchie Nysa, Maenad - haunted mountain,

In the passage here Shelley clearly allude to the place of Bacchie’s nurture called ‘Nysa’, the mountain which had given the name ‘Dionysus’. It must be noted here that Nysa was shown by the classical geographers lying above Taxila (:)and that Alexander the Great had met a Nysan tribe that was the follower of Bacchus during his intrusion of India. Evidently, Shelley is exploiting this information creatively in his poetic drama. In Act I, the first Fury speaks :

“Of Hell - what if the son of Maia soon”

(Prometheus Unbound, line-342)

By using The word 'Maia' Shelley shows that he had deep knowledge of Vedantic philosophy. The philosophy of 'Maya' is evident in 'The Gita' which means it is the ultimate reality of spirit that inclines us sometimes to look upon the world as an illusion rather than as a misapprehension or a misconstruction. It is delimitation distinct from the unmeasured and the immeasurable. It is delimitation distinct from the unmeasured and the immeasurable.

In Act IV, we have seen use of the word 'Sandal' which is used by Indian sages during the Vedic times.

"For Sandals of lightning are on your feet" (line 90)

The last reference to India in the 'Prometheus Unbound' occurs in the last act of the play (i.e. Act IV) in a Chorus of the spirits of the human mind who sing:

"As the flying-fish leap

From the Indian deep,

And mix with the sea birds half asleep" (lines 46-88)

The meaning of the above line can be compared with 'The Gita' Chapter XV. Verse 8, when the Lord. takes up a body and when he leaves it, he takes the senses and mind and the subtle body accompanies the soul in its wanderings through cosmic existence.

That India is present always in the imagination of Shelley is clear from the poem 'The Sensitive plant' which had been written in 1820 and addressed to Mary Godwin where Shelley is found sensitive to Indian things both tiny and tall, trivial and serious. In the poem Shelley appears in the role of a Botanist and takes interest in many plants of fragrance and the plants used during the ancient times. The poem

contains two allusions to India. The first occurs in the eleventh stanza of the second part of the poem in the following lines.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof.” (lines 155-58)

These lines show Shelley’s deep interest in Indian nature. He describes how the basket is made from woof which is used for picking up flowers by the Indian Sages during ancient times for the worship of God.

And the second allusion to India occurs in the eight stanza of the third part of the poem :

And Indian plants of scent and hue
The sweetest that were fed on dew
Leaf by leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay” (lines 205-08)

With these lines, we can claim that Shelley has a deep interest in Indian natural beauty and like a botanist he described beautifully the Indian flower with full of scent and various colour. That Shelley is an imaginative poet becomes obvious when he describes the flower is so sweetest that it never fades on dew.

In the concluding section Shelley speaks about love and beauty :

“That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and dours there,
In truth have never passed away.
‘Tis we, ‘tis ocean, are changed; not they.

Fore love, and beauty, and delight,

There is no death nor change : their might

Exceeds our organs, which endure

No light, being themselves obscure.” (line 130-135)

In the above lines we locate ‘Shelley’s philosophy of immortality of beauty and love. Shelley is not sure whether the animating spirit of the sensitive plant and the Lady’s ‘gentle mind’ were destroyed along with outward forms. But he believes that ‘the beauty can never fade into nothingness’ and. that the Lady fair is a symbol of life, That garden is sweet is a symbol of the illusion that the mind has created under the influence of love. For Shelley ‘love is truth’. It meant the sensuous harmony of nature. In the conclusion, Shelley reasserts his faith in the “Life of Life”. Shelley’s belief in the Upanishadic doctrine of philosophy that our real world is only the shadow of true reality. Shelley insists that love and beauty still exists and leave the way open for the creation of more illusions, the pursuit of more phantoms. Beauty and love, after all, do not really die.

The reference to ‘India’ in the poem confirms that the locale of the action of the poem is Indian, in all probability, Cashmire, the ‘undefiled Paradise’. The fact that the poet has made India the venue of the action of the ‘Sensitive plant’ leaves in no doubt what so ever that the poet loves India from the very core of his heart.

Shelley’s another dramatic poem entitled ‘Hellas’ was written in 1821 in support of the Greek struggle for freedom from the serfdom of the Turkish rule. In that play India has been recalled several times quite prominently. Here, there is character called ‘an Indian slave’ who is posted in the seraglio of Mahmud, the Turkish King. The Chorus consisting of the Greek captive women at the very outset

of the play alludes to India twice once, directly and once by the vague use as 'Orient' rather wistfully. Wishing Mahmud profound sleep, they sing :

“We strew these opiate flowers

On they restless pillow;

They were stript from Orient bowers.

By the Indian billow

Be they sleep calm and deep

Like theirs who fell - not ours who weep.” (lines - 1-6)

In another chorus of the Greek Captive Women, we have the word 'Imaus', the Persian form of the “Himalayas”.

“And all its namded overchaos fled,

Like vultures frightend from Imaus

Before an earth quake's tread”. (lines 49-51)

Moreover, the Indian doctrine of metempsychosis - the theory of cycle of birth and death is echoed very lucidly and powerfully in the drama 'Hellas'.

“Worlds on worlds are rolling ever

From creation to decay' (lines (196-97)

and

“The spirits is present in the past, and sees

The birth of the old work through it cycles.”

(lines 745-746)

The above passage here clearly examplies, Shelley's belief in continuous cycle of births and deaths that the soul has to undergo.

In the last two lines, the poet has made a very crystal-clear use of the Hindu doctrine of karma, according to which, one's actions and conspicuous mode called guna in a particular birth determine the nature of his /her body in the next birth'

"Those who are established in goodness rise upwards: the passionate remain in the middle (regions); the dull steeped in the lower occurrences of the modes sink downwards."

The soul evolves through three stages; it rises from dull inertia and subjection to ignorance, through the struggle for material enjoyments to the pursuit of knowledge and happiness. But so long as we are attached, even though it may be to very noble objects, we are limited and there is always a sense of insecurity since 'rajas' and 'tamas' may overcome the 'sattva' in us. The highest ideal is to transcend the ethical level and rise to the spiritual. The good man (sattvika). should become a saint (trigunatita), until we reach this stage, we are only in the making; our evolution is incomplete.

Besides the Hindu doctrine of metempsychosis as well as that of karma as found in Plato's dialogues specially 'Phaedo' and 'Phaedrus' Shelley is also interested in Indian material wealth (gold) which is clear from the line :

"From Ypsilanti with ten camel loads
of Indian gold" (lines 577-78)

Before death Shelley wrote a drama with two fragmentary scenes which remain unfinished and is titled 'Fragments of an Unfinished Drama'. The drama is entirely an Indian piece and it is permeated with the descriptions of Indian islands, plants, enchantress and youth (Indian). In the fiftieth, line of the play, Shelley refers

to the Mountain Himalaya and water flowing from the mountain. Shelley refers the water of 'The Ganga' and 'The Yamuna'.

"A soft hand issued from the veil of fire,
Holding a cup like a magnolia flower,
And poured upon the earth within the vase
The element with which it overflowed,
Brighter than morning light, and purer than
The water of the springs of Himalah" (line 145-50)

In the play Shelley self-depicts the Indian Youth. K. Neil Cameron, suggests that the poet has paid a very rich tribute to the young lovers of India represented by Krishna (the God of Universe) the hero of "Geetagoindam", the lyrical drama of the Sanskrit poet Jayadeo.' which was available to the West in the English translation of Sir William Jones whose works were read by Shelley rather enthusiastically.

In 'Queen Mab'(1812-13) written during which was an early literary career, Shelley records the poet's fascination for the Himalaya which he describes as the 'rival of the Andes' (line 31). The romantic poet describes how the journey of the soul in a magic car that moves on from the Himalas' "Loftiest Peak" where from the protagonist can visualize the whole of the world. The poet sings between the lines:

The magic car moved on
From the swift sweep of wings,
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew
And where the burning wheels
Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak
Was traced a line of lightning." (lines 123-28)

The poet's love for Himalayas was very authentic and candid. Shelley retained this passage in the revised version of the poem entitled 'The Daemon of the World'. Though India by name has not been mentioned here yet in his view the highest spot from which man could visualize the whole of the world could be the most highly spiritualized place on the earth. The journey of the soul points to the fact that the Himalayas is the abode of spirituality (devatatma) - a fact that has been admittedly established by Kalidasa in the opening verse of 'Kumara Sambhabam'. To Kalidasa, Himalayas (naga adhiraja) stands dignified as the glorious measuring rod of mankind (prithivya eba manadandah) whereas Shelley conceives of it as an ideal land of beauty, peace and solace in his hour of distress. At the same time, the journey of the soul from the 'Mountain's lofty peak' reminds us of the last journey of the Pandavas through Himalayas as adumbrated in 'The Mahabharata'. In the poem 'Alastor' Shelley believed that India is the only place of the whole world that could provide solace and comfort to all creatures in the distress and 'Cashmire' was admired by him as 'Heaven of India' where the poet journeys through Arabia, Persia, HinduKush mountains and the source of the rivers Indus and Oxus to the valley of Kashmir in the North East India where the Soul after his journey took rest. This is evident in the following lines.

“The poet wandering on through Arabic
And Persia, and the wild carmanian waste,
And o'er the aerial mountains which pour down
Indus and oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way;
Till the value of Cashmire.” (lines 140-45)

Besides Kashmir (Cashmire), there are ariel mountains and icy caves, the Indus river and hollow rocks, the loneliest dell and sparkling rivulets, the flower bloom in the Kasmir and above all the natural bower in the valley of Kasmir that embodies the languid limbs of the hero - all these testify to Shelley's bewildering interest in Indian natural beauty which can be highlighted through the following lines:

"Its loneliness dell, where adorous plant sensitive

Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower

Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched

His languid limbs." (lines 146-49)

There are some poems of Shelley which had been influenced by the great poet of India, Kalidasa. His Sanskrit drama 'Abhijnansakuntalam' had been made available to the West in its Latin translation by Sir William Jones in early 1789 under the title 'Cacontala' and translated into English after one year. In 1813 another English Orientalist H. H Wilson presented in English Kalidasa's another lyrical poem 'Meghadutam'. (The Cloud Messenger). Both the poems of Kalidasa fascinated Shelley to a great extent. The opening verse paragraph of 'Alastor' reminds a passage from Kalidasa's 'Raghuvansam'(:) where Kalidasa suggested that Yonder Deodar has been adopted as a son by the bull bannered god (i.e. Shiva) and has (since) become capable of appreciating the flavour of Skand's mother milk flowing out of her breasts resembling golden jars. On one occasion, the daughter of the mountain (Himalaya) deeply bemoaned that she would do to Skanda (leader of the gods),who was wounded by the missiles of the demons.

Again Shelley's 'Alastor' had been greatly influenced by the Kalidasa's great creation 'Shakuntala'. In the lines 98-101 of 'Alastor',he describes the connection

established by the hero of his poem with wild animals and birds such as doves, squirrels and antelopes :

“He would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,”

(lines 98-101)

The above passage can be compared with the following speech of Sakuntala, addressed to Dushyanta in ‘ Sakuntalam’:

“At that instant a little fawn, which I had reared as my own child, approached thee; and thou saidst with benevolence : ‘Drink, thou first, gentle fawn’. He would not drink from the hand of a stranger but received water eagerly from mine when thou saidst with increasing affection : Thus every creatures loves...”(Jhhes ;:)

So, Shelley was highly influenced by Kalidasa, the great poet of India. Shelley was also a vegetarian which is evident from the word ‘food’ used in line 101 of the above extract. Even as critics tend to present him as an atheist. Shelley like Wordsworth, was a devotee of the Primordial Female Energy (sakti), endearingly called ‘Great Mother’ in ‘Alastor’ :

“Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only.” (lines 18-20)

‘The Indian Serenade’(1819) was one of his beautiful love poems. When the lady(Mary Williams) had returned from India to meet the poet, Shelley presents a poem with musical note of Indian background, plants and flowers she was familiar

with. The word 'Indian' in the title of the lyric is very significant because by presenting an 'Indian Serenade' to his lady, the poet wishes to identify himself as a symbol of true and perfect lover. In the poem, Shelleyan aesthetics is charged with the aroma of the Indian 'Champaka' flower that signifies mortification in the absence of the touch of bees. The description of 'Champak' flower in the second stanza of the poem runs as follows:

'The wandering airs they faint

On the dark, the silent stream.

The champak odours fail

Like sweet thoughts in a dream!

The nightingale's complaint

It dies upon her heart;

As I must die on thine

oh, beloved as thou art." (lines 9-16)

The use of 'Champak' in the poem shows Shelley's deep interest in Indian culture and literary traditions of India. Most likely the poet uses this word from Edward Moors 'The Hindu Pantheon' (1810) where there was a very interesting bit of information about 'Champaka' and has utilized this in his poem 'Indian Serenade'. The relevant information is that the flower is so strong in smell that bees refuse to extract pollen from it with the result that it remains sadly mortified. The flower falls under the scientific family *M. Champaca*. It is sweet, velvety, gardenic like floral. It is used for production of oil. The Champaka flower finds mention in 'The Shiva-puran' and the flower is used in Hindu religious ceremonies basically in the worship of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. The tree is mostly planted before the temples. It is

also mentioned in 'the Garuda Purana'. There are various types of Champaka-Nageswar, Dolan, Jahuri, Kantal. It is a beautiful, delightful and scented yellow flower. The flower was also used on the locks of Mother Goddess Lalitambika. It has been believed that the flower is often compared to the lustre of Radha's delicate skin. Different types of spices and oils are made from its flowers and leaves. Champaka has a smooth and rich aroma compared to orange blossom. The bark of the plant is used as a remedy to reduce fever and the roots are used for skin diseases. Thus, it has various functions in India from Vedic time onwards.

It may be conceded that Shelley was inspired by various hymns of Sir William Jones, like 'Hymn to Saraswati' and 'Hymn to Lakshmi' which leads him to write his poem 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.' The poem was regarded as an agnostic or sceptical piece and appeared to be a quasi-mystical composition to the Indian readers who feel prompted to interpret 'Beauty as the Female principal of the Universe. The Female principal of the universe is worshipped by Hindus as 'Durga', 'Lakshmi', 'Saraswati'. The poem is Indian in thought as well as expression. Durga is the symbol of 'shakti'. Among Hindu she is the supreme Goddess and is considered to be the repository of all energy governing the Universe. In this respect she is said to preside over creation (sristi) preservation (sthiti) and destruction (samhriti). Lakshmi is another form of Durga but she is not for destruction but for providing 'food' and 'wealth' to the people and 'Saraswati' is the symbol of purity and knowledge. Warren Hastings admired the poem, wrote a critique on it and published it in the volume called 'The Bengalee' (1829)(:). Hastings has been moved by the Indian metaphysics that permeates the poem which speaks in the voice of the Hindu scripture 'The Gita'. This point is evident from the first three lines of the second stanza of the poem :

“Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form, - where art thou gone?

(lines 13-15)

These lines remind us of Lord Krishna’s manifestation of His glory in most excellent object of the world in respect and energy in the tenth chapter of ‘The Gita’(:) that whatsoever being there is, endowed with glory and grace and vigour, know that to have sprung from a fragment of splendour. While all things are supported by God, things of beauty and splendour reveals Him more than others. Every deed of heroism, every life of sacrifice, every work of genius, is a revelation of the Divine. So, Shelley says about the expression of the spirit of Intellectual Beauty in the form of the most excellent thoughts and shapes of human beings.

Again, the echo of the Upanishadic doctrine of immortality of soul (atman), the spark of the super-soul (paramatman) and the transitoriness of the corporal frame (body) are found in ‘Adonais’. Indian metaphysical thoughts are also evident in the fifty second stanza of the poem :

“The one remains, the many change and pass,
Heaven’s light for ever shines Earth’s shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many colored glass
stains the white radiance of Eternity
Untill death tramples it into fragments” (lines 460-464)

The lines quoted above can be aptly juxtaposed with the famous doctrine of Sankara Vedanta.; only Brahman abides, all other things of the world are illusion (maya)- (Brahman satya Jaganmithya).

The word ‘fragments’ in the last line of the above stanza reflects that Life distorts the Universal One into many imperfect particulars, until Death permits the individual to reunite with the One. So, the term ‘The One’ can be compared to ‘Brahma’ and ‘the many’ stands for unstable world of individual beings. ‘Life stands for Hindu doctrine of Maya’- The variety and multiplicity all around ourselves and the ‘white radiance of eternity’ is what the Hindu calls ‘atmatattva’. This Vedantic philosophy inspired Shelley to a great extent.

In the fiftyfourth stanza of the poem Shelley depicts that light (God or Brahma) is only that ruled the entire Universe which in its turn is occupied by Him, and the idea is reminiscent of what Krishna says in ‘The Gita’ (12 verse XV chapter) :

“The splendour that illumines the world is the sun, the moon and the fire is His own”. The same Vedantic thought, prevades also the fortythird stanza of ‘Adonais’.

The secret of Shelley’s success lies in his own intuitional perceptions .He concludes that the first step to bring about the “millennium” - the golden age - is Universal love and brotherhood. Indeed, his philosophy was based on Love. But his Love was not the selfish and narrow passion for one object or individual or community. It knew no limits; it embraced all mankind which is evident in his magnificent poem ‘Epipsychidion’ :

“Narrow

The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,

The life that wears, the spirit that creates

One object, and one form, and builds thereby

A sepulcher for its eternity!”

Shelley was a pantheist and like the pantheism of 'the Vedas', he poured out in noble hymns addressed to the Sun, Moon, Winds, and Air and all that symbolizes the grandeur or serene majesty of the Universal Spirit. His worship of all that is beautiful in the wide world amounted to idolatry. Shelley was also a profound believer in the great philosophical doctrine of double existence - the doctrine that every object has its exact counterpart. He believed that history survives in a sort of phantasmal world and speaks when evoked by the human spirit which is highlighted in his poem 'Queen Mab', where the spirit of the heroine is separated from the body, and met in Heaven that can be obvious in the concept of rebirth in the "Gita" (punarjanma)

Last but not the least 'Ode to the West Wind' (1819) was also profoundly influenced by Indian Philosophical thought that Shelley was an ardent lover of Nature. Throughout the poem he expresses his passionate desire to instruct mankind which is clear from the following lines :

"Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!"

(line 63-67)

The idea of this poem is that "nature moves in cycles, each of which prepares for those which follow; that the wind which strips the leaves from the trees, sows the seeds of future forests; and that winter is the harbinger of spring." (:) This is but a cardinal instance of the manner in which he dwells upon the analogies between the

world of sense and the world of spirit, until the veil which parts them seems to be half-lifted. The 'West Wind' is at once a 'Preserver' and 'Destroyer' - an idea that reminds us of the holy trinity in Hindu mythology. To our surprise western scholars like Donald H. Reiman and S. B. Power have candidly accepted the fact that the titles 'Destroyer' and 'Preserver' were picked by Shelley from the translations and writings of Sir William Jones and Edward Moor's "the Hindu Pantheon". It is quite convincing that behind the duality in 'West Wind' lies the impact of the dual nature of Lord Shiva as 'Destroyer' as well as 'Preserver' - He is both Shiva and Rudra - the benevolent as well as a terrible God. Shelley too conceives the West Wind in his supreme ode in two aspects - the West Wind of autumn epitomizing Shiva's form as Rudra and the West Wind of Spring symbolizing Shiva's form as Shankara-the benevolent lord of the Universe.

CHAPTER III : Tryst with the Orient : Keats's Acquaintance with Indian Philosophy and Religion

III.1 Roads to Happiness : Keats and the paths of Disinterested action, Devotion and Knowledge

Like the senior Romantics, John Keats also evinced his engaging interest in India and was inclined to see India - a desire which ultimately remained unfulfilled. In his letter to Miss Jeffrey of Teign mouth, Devon, which the poet wrote from Wentworth palace, Hampstead, on 31st May, 1819, Keats proclaims his desire :

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“I have the choice, as it were, of two Poisons yet I ought not to call this a poison) the one is voyaging to and from India for a few years; the other is leading a feverous life along with Poetry- this latter will suit me best, for I cannot resolve to give up my studies” (Maurice Buxton Forman, 1952 : 343-44).

In the above lines , Keats has confessed his oscillation between two poisons - visiting India to and fro and the other, leading a pleasant life in the lap of poetry. His desire for a pleasant life, for an ideal world and for everlasting bliss is pronounced time and again in his works. such as *Endymion*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Hyperion* and the letter addressed to John Hamilton Reynolds, dated 19th February 1818. An analysis of these Keatsian texts would reveal that Keats was deeply disturbed by the transitoriness of all earthly things with three poisons he had had- death of his two brothers Edward and Tom by tuberculosis and disappointment in love with Fanny Brawn. The very word poison further points to Keats’s indebtedness to Buddhist philosophy. Buddhism entails the fact that life is essentially full of suffering and desire is the root of all sufferings and the end of suffering lies in the eradication of passions and desires and the culture of disinterested action. Salvation (Nirvana) consists in illumination . Keats intensely realizes like a Buddhist that life is full of sufferings and this becomes evident from his bitter awareness of suffering in life which is poignantly presented in *Ode to a Nightingale* :

“Ours is a world where but to think is to be full of sorrow” .

However, Keats was fairly acquainted with Indian mythology and the Hindu doctrine of trinity and theory of incarnation (‘Avataravada’) from Moor’s “Hindu Pantheon” and Coleridge’s lectures and in his letters addressed to his friend Thelwall on 14th of October 1797 (E. L. Griggs, Collected letters of S. T. Coleridge),

Coleridge refers to the Hindu concept of 'kalpa' during which Vishnu / Narayana, the Lord of protection/preservation, remains asleep and finally wakes up for a new creation. Coleridge repeats the pose of Lord Vishnu in his dramatic fragment, "The Triumph of Loyalty", He writes :

'The God, who floats upon a Lotos leaf,
Dreams for a thousand ages ; then awakening
Created a World, then loathing the dull task
Relapses into blessedness'.

In his letter addressed to George and Georgiana (S. T. Coleridge, 1060-73), Keats states about the Hindu doctrine of 'descendance of the 'Godhead' on the earth otherwise called Avataravada - theory of incarnation - which is emphatically detailed in the "Bhagavad Gita". The Hindu Bible reads that Lord Vishnu appears on the earth from time to time to save the righteous and to destroy the vicious only for the sake of establishing righteousness. Lord Vishnu's tenfold incarnation (dasavatara) and Jayadeva's eulogy for them in the opening section of the "Gitagovinda" could be another possible source which reached Keats through Sir William Jones's translation of the medieval text.

In the letter stated above, Keats emphasizes the 'system of soul making' and 'the palpable and personal scheme of Redemption' among the Zoroastrians, Christians and Hindus through the mediator / saviour called Oromanes, Christ and Vishnu respectively. In the same letter, Keats also states, how in the 'heathen mythology, abstractions are personified', and this directly points to the Vedic hymns to different gods and goddesses and to the Vedic seers' tendency to personify abstractions and to invoke them with personal attachment and filial affection. For

instance, in the ‘Nasadiya Sukta’ of “Rgveda”, the primal seed of mind (manaso retah) for procreation is glorified as Kama, later on designated as the god of love in Hindu mythology and puranas. Kama is compared to the desire of a thirsty steer for water, and is associated with one’s longing for happiness and fulfillment of desires (RV.IX, 113,11), whereas in “Samaveda” (11.8.2), the primordial seed of mind is presented as the son of Fire (Agni) epitomizing, from his father, the blazing heat of passion. Similarly, born of the mind of Brahma, the lord of Creation, Kama is called in the puranas, the mind agitator (manmatha) and intoxicator (madana), whereas his two wives Rati and Priti epitomize ‘deceitful desire’ and ‘delight’ respectively. In Vedic mythology, there are family gods often endearingly addressed though they stand for abstract elements of Nature - the lord of light (Surya), the lord of clouds (Indra), the lord of water (Varuna), the lord of fire (Agni) - all of whom are cordially invoked as father, friend and brother, and the Vedic devotee longs for them just as wives embrace their husbands, and the beloveds do for the tender affection of their lovers (A. K. Majumdar, 1965 : 431).

The Vedic invocation to the above gods, provided strong stimulus for Sir William Jones to write ‘Hymn to Camdeo’ (kama), ‘Hymn to Indra’, ‘Hymn to Narayana’, ‘Hymn to Lascshmi’, ‘Hymn to Sereswaty’, ‘Hymn to Surya’, ‘Hymns to Pracriti’, ‘Hymn to Ganga’, and of all these hymns, ‘Hymn to Narayana’, was powerful enough to influence Coleridge, Keats and P.B. Shelley. Shelley, following William Jones, in his ‘Hymn to Intellectual Beauty’, invokes in Vedantic terms that miraculous, unseen and all pervading power called Lord Narayana (R. M. Hewitt, 1942 : 59-56). Keats’s reference to Vishnu in the letter under question is therefore meaningful in the backdrop of the oriental wisdom which Jones, Wilkins, Moor and

Maurice spread in the West. At the same time, Keats was also convincingly aware of the Hindu triad - Lord of Creation (Brahma), Lord of Preservation (Vishnu) and Lord of Destruction (Siva), and in this respect, Southey's "The Curse of Kehama" and Moor's "Hindu Pantheon" (both published in 1810) were his guide. The romantic poet knew that the Hindu trinity lived in their respective heavenly abodes (Vishnu loka, Brahma loka and Siva loka), and this is evident from his beautiful romance "Endymion" which was written under the profound influence of "The Curse of Kehama". The Indian maid in "Endymion" sings :

"The King of Ind their jewel-sceptres veil
And from their treasures scatter pearled hail,
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,
And all his priesthood moans;
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale" (iv. 265 ff)

Since Alexander's invasion of India, the West had identified Dionysus or Bacchus with the Hindu god Siva and this has been attested by Megasthenes and the Orientalist, William Jones (J. Mac Crindle, 1977 : 221-225) and the lines quoted above from Keats's "Endymion" remind us of the birth of goddess Saraswati and Sandhya, the two products of Brahma's carnal passion as described in The "Brahmanda Purana", "Siva Purana" and the "Kalika Purana". Brahma fell in love with Saraswati and created out of himself four heads in four directions and the fifth one above to see her beauty and finally married her. At this Siva, the epitome of morality and restraint, and the destroyer of Kama and Daksha -Prajapati, the father of his wife Sati, became furious and avenged Brahma by cutting down one of his head (Vittam Mani, 1975:378). Through the references to the 'groaning of Brahma' and

his priesthood from mystic heaven and the eye-wink of Siva (Bacchus), Keats brings to the fore the entire mythological nuances and moral implications associated with Brahma-Sandhya -Sarawati episode and Siva-Brahma duel in the Puranas. The Victory of Bacchus over Brahma which puts his priesthood to 'shame' is further glorified by Keats's description of Siva's civilizing campaign all over the world from Egypt to India-thereby justifying the supremacy of morality over inordinate passion of the Creator Brahma for his creation. The dance of Bacchus and his kin with trumpet and cymbals brings to the fore the 'maddening dance of Siva' (Siva tandava) and the popularity of Saivism, which have been aptly contrasted with groaning of the 'priesthood of Brahma' with shame thereby pointing to the religious rivalry between Brahminism and Saivism in ancient India.

Like Shelley, Keats held India in high esteem and cherished this glorious country as his laudable ideal precisely because her scenic beauty, spirituality and profound philosophical thoughts overpowered his mind and soul. And out of the 'two poisons', he was ready to drink, 'voyaging to and from India for a few years' was one, whereas passion for an intoxicating life of poetry was the more endearing choice (Maurice Buxton, 1952:313-14). "The Curse of Kehama" (1810) which shaped the mind and heart of Shelley and Keats remained a veritable source of inspiration for them and enriched their ideal self, utopian vision and mythopoeic imagination.

It is from Southey's epic that both of them learnt about India's mesmerizing scenic beauty, her lofty mountain peaks, icy caves, sparkling rivulets, flora and fauna, heroes and heroines, virtuous women and sacred rivers like Ganga, Yamuna and Indus. At the same time, their reverence for the sacred rivers of India was prompted by Jones' 'Hymn to Ganga' and behind their search for an ideal woman and for that

matter, an ideal world, there remains the ineradicable stamp of the Indian worship of the Primordial Female energy (Sakti) so endearingly called by Shelley the 'Great Mother' of this unfathomable world' ("Alastor" 1820). Jones' various hymns to Hindu gods and goddesses also shaped / formulated their spiritual appreciation / interpretation of India's heroes and heroines, and the Orientalist's influence on "The Curse of Kehama," which both Shelley and Keats read with endearing interest, is candidly acknowledged by Southey himself in the preface to the Indian epic (John Drew, 1987 : 239).

Behind the character of Kalial, the heroine in "The Curse of Kehama", lies the powerful influence of the epic heroines like Sita, Damayanti and Sakuntala of Kalidasa's drama already translated into Latin and English by Jones. Under the influence of Southey and Jones, Keats was in search of an ideal pair of lover and beloved, the embodiment of supra-sensuous beauty, and the greatest tribute to India he paid is in form of the creation of the 'Indian Maid' in "Endymion" (1817) which is interpreted as a parable of a soul's experience in pursuit of the ideal. Endymion, the shepherd king falls in love with Cynthia the moon-goddess, and forgets her for the charms of a mysterious Indian maiden who is in fact none but the goddess herself in disguise. The Indian maid is projected as the highest form of beauty and through Endymion's address to her, one finds Keats's unconditional eulogy of India and of all that she claims to be her precious treasure : beauty, mythology, religion and philosophy :

"My sweetest Indian, here,

Here will I kneel, for thou redeemest hast

My life from too thin breathing." (John Keats, 1996:151, Endymion)

To Keats, India is considered a veritable land of solace and peace, of tranquility and beauty, and like Marlowe's Dr. Faustus praising sweet Helen ("Heaven lies in thy lips / Sweet Helen make me immortal with a kiss") , Keats's Endymion too exclaims:

" My Indian bliss !

My river-lily bud! one human kiss!" (J ohn Keats, 1996, Endymion)

Endymion is transformed at once into an Indian obedient hero (anukula nayaka), lover (premika) and connoisseur (rasika-bhakta) who kneels before her 'Indian bliss' with suppliant knee, devotion and unconditional surrender which is strongly reminiscent of Krishna's admiration of Radha, in courtly fashion, as his ornament (bhusanam), life (jivanam) and the jewel of this earthly existence in Jayadeva's "Gitagovinda". Since Jones had already translated "Shakuntala" and "Gitagovinda" into English, it is rather tempting indeed to discover whether Keats had gone through both the immortal Sanskrit texts through Jone's translation! The juxtaposition of the sacred and profane and the evocation of the spiritual in terms of sensual love in the "Gitagovinda" have their apt parallel in the initial dichotomy between the ideal (goddess Cynthia) and the real (Indian maid) in "Endymion". And the final dissolution of duality into 'one' on revelation of the truth at the end that the goddess and the Indian maid are one and the same binds the sacred and the profane within the same casket. What Keats tends to establish here is that the ideal beauty can only be achieved by love and sympathy immanent in human life thereby leaving no room for escapism.

It is here that the hero of Shelley's "Alastor" differs from that of "Endymion". Shelley's hero can die disappointed for having failed to find his veiled maid, where

as Keats seems to have transcended Shelleyan dichotomy between the world of experience and the world of imagination, and his Endymion succeeds in his quest, of course, by apparently compromising his love for a goddess with his love for a mortal even though ultimately they are proved to be 'one'. Keatsian aesthetic is akin to the Indian position that true love shines bright in suffering and separation (*vipralambha*) and that it finds its perfection only in union (*sambhoga*). The earth is meaningful and real; herein lies the paradise, and true love can only fulfil itself through participation in the actual conditions of human life, and hence the central Indian thesis is that the meaningful ideal can be achieved through the 'relishable real'.

To pass on to Keats' philosophical view of life and his aesthetics of pleasure and pain, one has to recall the substantial influence which Wilkins' translated version of the "Gita" exerted on him. There is no denying the fact that the Hindu Bible is famous primarily for its theory of disinterested action (*nish- kama karma*), path of devotion (*bhakti-marga*) and the path of knowledge (*jnana-marga*). The chapter three of the sacred text under the title ' karma yoga' is a discourse on right and disinterested action which enjoins that one should do one's prescribed duty without any thought of fruit or reward. Perfection is secured not by mere renunciation but by being in harmony with the cosmos by virtue of selfless and disinterested action. One should do one's duty for the maintenance of the world-order (*lokasamgraha*; ch. 3.20). People working with selfish motive cannot transgress the cycle of births and deaths and therefore all works under the sun should be selfless, God-oriented and unaffected by the three modes of Nature (*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) which are the root cause of *samsara* or cycle of births and deaths. The Lord strongly warns Arjuna in the "Gita", against the three hells i.e. desire (*kama*), anger (*krodha*) and greed (*lobha*) that disturb a man

of action. Keats is under the decided influence of the 'path of action' as adumbrated in the "Gita" and in "The Fall of Hyperion", he emphasizes action directed towards human good/well being of the society which is the surest way to salvation. Keats, like Krishna, is critical of selfish people of the world and advocates the idea that the selfless people, working for the well-being of the world can attain the shrine of Moneta, symbolizing highest bliss : The poet glorifies those selfless souls in the following :

"Who love their fellows even to the death
Who feel the giant agony of the world;
And, more, like slaves to poor humanity,
Labour for mortal good". (Canto I. 154-60)

The philosophy of disinterested action is further reiterated in Keats ' Letter to George and Georgiana Keats (Written on 14th February- 3rd May, 1819):

"Very few men have ever arrived at a complete disinterestedness of mind : very few have been influenced by a pure desire of the benefit of other" (Maurice Buxton Forman, 1952 : 313-14). This is a direct echo of the concept of sacrifice (tyaga) as emphasized in the vedic and upanishadic texts wherein the seers stress enjoyment through sacrifice, service to mankind (bahujana hitaya, bahujana sukhaya) and the principle of happiness for all (sarve bhavantu sukhinah) by transcending the narrow corridors of selfishness and egotism. Desiccation of egotism coupled with disinterested action and sacrifice for the society is the sure key to knowledge (jnana), and the fire of knowledge, the "Gita" asserts, annihilates, all baser desires and purifies the human being and makes him composed and equally stable in moments of pleasure and pain, fortune and misfortune. This state is called 'sthitaprajnata' (stable

mindedness) in which pleasure and pain, heat and cold, adversity and prosperity are treated as all the same. This is a stage in which the wise man never rejoices in anything nor does he show any sign of rejection or disapproval. Transcending all dualities and sticking to the principle of disinterested action, the man of stablemindedness (stithadhi) welcomes everything. Keats, under the impact of the “Gita”, develops the doctrine of disinterested action and of a man of knowledge in the “Hyperion : A Fragment” (Book - II) wherein Oceanus, the sea god, asks Saturn to remain perfectly placid and calm in the face of his abject defeat:

“Now comes the pain of truth, to whom it is pain :

O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,

And to envisage circumstance all calm,

That is the top of sovereignty”. (Hyperion : A Fragment, II. 2030-06)

A true man of disinterested action and sacrifice progresses to the stage of true knowledge in which all narrow and selfish desires are burnt away finally transforming him into a true man of devotion for whom the Lord is the sole motto. Neither desire for power and passion nor any anxiety, fear and malice for anybody / anything counts for him. While working without any attachment whatsoever, a man of devotion remains ever-satisfied (trpta) and loves all alike without any fear, malice or discrimination. In the chapter XII (‘Bhaktiyoga’), the Lord makes it clear that He loves who are totally dedicated, and completely detached from the world. These men of devotion have no hostility towards anyone and while viewing joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour, praise and blame alike, they are full of compassion for all and are equally true to all (sama sarveshu bhutesu). The attitude of a man of action, knowledge and devotion as adumbrated in the ‘Gita’ can be correlated with Keats

real man of 'negative capability' who possesses the capability to remain in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason (W. J. Bate, 1939). Keats' man of negative capability seems to be the English version of the Indian karma yogi- bhakta' who is supposed to be liberal and objective, broad-minded and impartial, receptive of everything / every body/every opinion tolerantly without any irritating motto-a concept discussed separately in this chapter.

Thus India was very near and dear to Keats and while adulating her culture, he was under the profound influence of the Orientalists of his time whose books and translated versions moulded his thought- process and his view -point about this glorious country and her rich cultural heritage.

III. 2 The Aesthetics of Pain : John Keats and the Philosophy of Buddhism

Keats's engaging interest in Indian philosophy and metaphysics is further evident from his references to suffering, Hindu concept of soul making and the Buddhist idea of 'thirty two palaces of delight' in his letter to John Hamilton Reynolds (dated 19 February, 1818) (Maurice Buxton Forman, 1952).

Though Keats has often been interpreted as a poet of the warm world of senses and sensuous perception of nature for whom the poetry of earth is never dead, the undercurrents of nameless melancholy and numberless woes in his poetry nevertheless justify the fact that he was disturbed deeply by the problems and miseries of life and the world. The Romantic melancholy or What Mario Praz calls 'romantic agony' in his poetry is often characterized by a haunting note of sadness that brings to the fore the fundamental Buddhist understanding that life is essentially

full of misery and suffering. Buddhism, like Sankhya system of philosophy, enjoins that all life is necessarily suffering. This brunt of sorrow in life reminds us of the medieval Christian belief that mankind carries over head the tragic burden of 'Original Sin' committed by Adam and Eve which subsequently led to their fall from the Paradise. Though Buddha did not speak specifically about any metaphysical doctrine of sin, he located the cause of suffering and pain in the ignorant craving (tr̥sna) which reminds again of the Sankhya view that the root cause behind the suffering of man is that he is guided by certain involuntary patterns of seeing and judging things. It is our ignorance (avidya) about the ultimate reality that causes all our sufferings. Again, human life is an endless chain of suffering - unfulfilled desires, fears, regrets, remorse and pain- which is handed down to us from generation to generation, from the previous births to the present and future ones (Heinrich Zimmer, 1969 : 467-68).

Keats' poetry can be meaningfully understood, in a comparative perspective, in the light of the metaphysics of pain and suffering in Buddhism. The "odes" which strike us as the crown of his achievement are serious musings on the dichotomy between the ideal and the real, the permanent and the transient, life and death. In our spiritual ignorance of things, we dream of 'a thing of beauty' as a joy forever' ("Endymion"), But the next moment we become rather painfully aware of the fact that :

'She dwells with Beauty -

Beauty that must die'(Ode on Melancholy)

Life is essentially full of sorrows and sufferings, and 'joy' on the earth is nothing but 'aching pleasure' , a desperately fragile and transient thing. Permanence

is a far cry. Singing to the tune of Buddhism, Keats says that things are not in reality what we take them to be. And this mistake is the cause of all sufferings. Our heart 'aches' and a sort of numbness 'pains' our 'sense', and drunk with the 'hemlock' of the world-disease, we are gradually sunk toward Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in Greek mythology, signifying death. We are born to a world where intense 'desire' for consummation of passion results in despair and loss of paradise. Ours is a horrible world :

"Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin dies;
Where leaden-eyed despairs,
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow"

("Ode to a Nightingale"; III.4-10)

This mood of depression and despair is also marked in "Ode on Indolence". The extremely indolent and lethargic condition prompts the poet to bid farewell to love, ambition and poetry knowing them to be ephemeral rather than eternal. He is now convinced - that the only unchanging reality is death :

"Death is life's high meed",

("Why did I laugh tonight")

And this death-wish is prompted by his terrible awareness of the sufferings and misery of the world. Knowing it fully well that death is by nature painful, the poet paradoxically wishes a 'happy death' for Moneta in "The Fall of Hyperion" (1819). In "Ode to a Nightingale" which is steeped in melancholy and deep sense of sorrow, he

confesses his love for 'easeful death'; his preparation for death is marked right from the very beginning from the use of such expressions as 'aches', 'drowsy numbness', 'hemlock', 'Lethe-wards sunk' and 'fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget', even the poet takes to a powerful 'draught of vintage' which is required as a necessity to forget the misery and sufferings of the world :

“O for a beaker full o f the warm south,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim”

(“Ode to a Nightingale”. II.5-10)

Death would perhaps carry him to the ideal world of 'immortality' and as such the 'nightingale' is viewed as the representative of this ideal abode. Hence it is an 'immortal Bird', very much reminiscent of the concept of the Enlightened One' (Buddha). The Enlightened one sees and realizes perfectly the misery of the world and develops within himself the knowledge of cessation, of the discontinuance of worldly existence, of utter repose by emancipation. Buddha could defeat death (Mara) and overcome all temptations and trials offered and inflicted upon him by Kama, the god of passion and enjoyment. Behind Keats's conception that the nightingale is an 'immortal Bird' whom 'no hungry generation can tread down' , we mark the Buddhist idea of the 'Enlightened Being' :

“He has perfect insight into the manner of the springing into existence of our sensations and feelings, and into the manner of their vanishing again with all their

sweetness and bitterness, and into the way of escape from them altogether, and in to the manner in which, by non-attachment to them through right knowledge of their character he has himself won release from their spell” (Digha-nikaya, Philosophies to India : 478).

The Buddhist solution is that the state of suffering and world-disease can be healed through the Noble Eight fold path (Heinrich Zimmer, 1969 : 469). One should avoid both the extremes - excessive indulgence in worldly pleasures and pursuits, and total austerity or mortification characteristic of Jainism. The Buddhist therapy recommends that one should overcome passions and desires through detachment and extinction (nirvana) of the fire until he realizes that he has been released from the Universal law (Karma), from the sphere of the currents and cross-currents of delight and despair, pleasure and pain. This is the stage of ‘Sthita-prajna’ in “Gita”-a stage in which the enlightened one neither desires for profit nor laments for loss. It is a stage in which the soul’ bereft of pleasure and pain, realizes its true identity with the Absolute (Paramatman). It is a stage of attachment in complete detachment in which the ‘yogi’ is emancipated from the bondage of the world through the removal of ignorance (avidya) and the establishment of true identity with the supreme Reality. It is highly probable that Keats knew Indian metaphysics of pleasure and pain, and the philosophy of action in detachment (karma yoga) as taught in the “Gita” from Wilkins’s prose translation. The young poet prefers to brave the spectacle of human suffering knowing it reasonably well that escape from life is neither possible nor desirable. With the matured vision characteristic of the Indian man of action (karmayogi), the poet proposes to live through sacrifice. Pleasure and pain remain all the same for him, and hence he bids farewell to the joys of life on the ground that a

life of nobility is grounded upon the ethics of sacrifice. That Gita's doctrine of 'Disinterested Action' (nishkama karma marga) exerted tremendous impact on Keats's mind becomes clear from his famous letter to George and Georgiana (dated Sunday 14 February - Monday, May 1819) :

“Very few men have ever arrived, have been influenced by a pure desire of the benefit of others-in the greater part of the benefactors of and to Humanity some meritorious motive has sullied theirs. From the manner in which I feel Haslam's misfortunes I perceive how far I am from any humble standard of disinterestedness” (Maurice Buxton Forman, 1952 : 313-14). To live well is to die well, and to die well is to necessitate the concept of living well. The Keatsian metaphysics of pain therefore entails the fact that there is pleasure in drinking away, like Lord Siva, the poisonous potion or tears of life. Despite his morbid realization of sorrows and suffering, he is admittedly awakened to 'life' and to the necessity to live on :

“Where I may find the agonies, the strife of human hearts.”

(The Fall of Hyperion)

The Keatsian metaphysics of pleasure and pain too conditions his aesthetic outlook and the poet asserts that immortal poetry arises out of human suffering alone:

“None can usurp this height, returned that shade,

But those to whom the miseries of the world.

Are misery, and will not let them rest”.

(“The Fall of Hyperion”, 147-49)

Even in a poem like “Hyperion” which was supposed to be written as an escape into the remote world of Greek mythology from the misery of nursing the poet's dying brother, Keats tended to express an experience of agony and suffering

relished by Saturn and raised the perennial question of how such unhappiness and agony were to be endured by immortals. Keatsian aesthetic in “Hyperion” reveals his deeper insights into the tragic aspects of life. Beauty is not only the fountain-source of ‘Joy’ and ‘truth’ forever, it is also intertwined with pain and suffering. An experience bereft of sadness belongs to an inferior order of beauty, and as such a true votary of beauty, should search the ‘most-soul searching sorrow’ in the very ‘temple of Delight’. The path to real beauty lies therefore through the realm of sorrow. And obviously in “Hyperion” beauty is perfectly blended with sorrow in the picture of Thea :

“But oh : how unlike marble was that face,

How beautiful, if sorrow had not made

Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty’s self”. (“Hyperion”.....)

Behind Keatsian aesthetic of pain here, one can locate the stamp of the Buddhist ethics that emphasizes pity (karuna) for suffering (dukha) and sympathy for every form of sentient life. The commandments in Buddhism call upon humanity not to kill, not to harm, but to feel pity and become perfect and this view is incompatible with world negation. In his unfinished poem “The Fall of Hyperion A Dream” (I. 154-60), Keats echoes the Buddhist principle of pity and compassion (karuna) and holds that a work directed towards the wellbeing of humanity is the surest path to salvation. Interestingly, it is also strongly probable that Keats derived Inspiration, for this idea, from the concept of maintenance of the world-order (lokasangraha) as advocated in the “Gita” (III.20) Similarly, the emphasis on selfless work, sacrifice and well-being of the world in “Gita” and Buddhist texts finds its dignified presence in “The Fall of Hyperion” where the poet glorifies selfless people. Like the ‘Indian

karmayogi', a selflessman can attain perfection (siddhi)which is symbolized by the shrine of goddess Moneta :

“Who love their fellows even to the death;

Who feel the giant agony of the world;

And, more, like slaves to poor humanity,

Labour for mortal good”. (“The Fall of th Hyperion”)

And through the rejection of narcotics and suicide as the ways to escape sorrows and sufferings, the poet of “Ode on Melancholy” registers his resistance to the temptations which melancholy brings in its trains :

“No, no! not to Lethe, neither twist

Wolf’s -bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;

Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed

By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;

Make not your rosary of yew-berries,

Nor let the beetle, nor he death-moth be

Your mournful Psyche, or the downy owl

A partner in your sorrow’s mysteries” (“Ode On Melancholy”)

Robin Mayhead (Robin Mayhead, 1967 : 89) observes that the resistance to temptation here is in line with ‘ moral fortitude’ in order to keep ‘one’s sorrows in check’. This is strongly reminiscent of the Buddhist therapy of overcoming pleasure and pain with the help of the ‘boat of discipline’ in the complex river of life. The

journey is, in the words of Zimmer, “ from the shore of spiritual ignorance (avidya), desire (kama), and death (mara), to the yonder back of transcendental wisdom (vidya), which is liberation (moksa) from this general bondage”(Heinrich Zimmer, 1969 : 475). In course of this arduous journey, Keats seems to suggest that one should not seek easy escape from sorrow and that one should feel and experience ‘ the wakeful anguish of the soul’ calmly and patiently, and then proceed progressively for the highest moment of transcendental illumination.

III. 3 Keats’s Negative Capability and the art of Disinterested Action (Nishkama Karma)

Negative Capability constitutes another significant contribution of John Keats to the realm of art, poetry and philosophy that deserves a thorough discussion in the light of Indian theory of detachment, both Hindu and Buddhist. It is the capacity to negate things that are personal and then remain calm and composed during uncertainty. One who possesses negative capability usually nourishes the habit of reconciling with difficulties, complex and contradictory aspects and develops a solution for closed and justified phenomenon without irritating the reader. Negative Capability strengthens one’s capacity for facing hostile and belligerent situation and in the process allows a person to endure all adverse circumstances of all kinds so that human beings can realize the supreme reality. It may be understood as a positive capability of enduring negative personal feelings.

Keats defines negative capability in the letter written in 21st December 1817 to his brothers George and Tom Keats ;

“I spent Friday evening with Wells and went the next morning to see Death as the Pale horse. It is a wonderful picture, when West’s age is considered. But there is

nothing to be intense upon, no woman one feels mad to kiss, no face swelling in reality, the excellence of every part is it's intensity (John Strachan, 2004,:14).

Keats criticizes Coleridge as he philosophizes things in a greater intensity but he appreciates Shakespeare for his artistic detachment. Unlike Coleridge who theorizes things, Shakespeare did never theorize or philosophize; there is no imposition of Shakespeare's ego in his works, wherein one locates that Shakespeare is everywhere and in the long run he is no- where. The discussion of negative capability further stimulates the sensitive reader to correlate his view point with another bold pronouncement by Keats about the 'design' of his poetry :

"My poetry has no palpable design" to impose. Poetry is not a propaganda because the poet has no palpable design to impose upon the reader. Keats was not a propagandist compared to Bernard. Shaw, the play- wright whose every play has a motif or certain design - the reason why they are called problem plays or plays of ideas. Only Shakespeare, characterizes various persons in his plays, from a king to the cobbler-regardless of social status - from queen to the cabbages. Keats has developed the concept of negative capability from Shakespeare, as the latter only designs his characters with detachment. and the romantic poet was impressed with the technique and ability of Shakespeare to present different natures and even starkly opposite characters, equally exuberant and dramatic in life, to show as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen or an Ophelia. (John Keats, Macmillan, 1984)

Keats acknowledges the fact that Shakespeare played with his character " in different natures with Joy and Sorrow" ("Letters" of John Keats, 1.218-19)

Negative capability is Keats's gift that allowed him to feed his way into his own body and other bodies with words. Keats uses the term 'negative capability' after

hearing the great critic William Hazlitt's lecture on Shakespeare in the early months of 1818 which stirred Keats's imagination, challenging him to expand the scope of his poetry.

Dorothy Hewlett, Keats' biographer in the book "Adonais : A life of John Keats" verily pointed out that Keats was "strongly influenced as he was by the Elizabethans and by Shakespeare". When he set out in April for the Isle of Wight, 'he took with him also seven precious pocket volumes of an edition of Shakespeare edited by Dr. Johnson and George Stevens (Dorothy Hewlett, 1938 : 241). Hewlett further elaborates Keats' picture of journey at Southampton :

"That morning at breakfast in the inn at Southampton, he felt lonely so he went and unboxed a Shakespeare. It was probably "The Tempest" (the first play in Volume I) that he read over his solitary meal for he wrote to his brothers, "Here's my comfort", Shakespeare was ever his warming draught, his pleasure and a source of spiritual strength, his letters are full of Shakespearean quotations and allusions" (Dorothy Hewlett, 1938 : 105).

His mother, Frances (Jennings) Keats, remarried and abandoned the siblings —Keats, his two brothers and a sister, with her parents. When Keats was fourteen, his mother whose second marriage was snapped, returned to her parents, terminally ill with tuberculosis. He had seen the very critical juncture of her life - sufferings at her sorrowful final days. Keats was dismayed with the unbearable situation of his beloved younger brother Tom dying of tuberculosis. His brother's death in December was a deep blow for Keats. Few days after this tragedy, he first met Fanny Brawne with whom Keats quickly fell in love, but was not responsive to commit himself to anything except his poetry. Disqualified from marriage by his unpromising career as

well as by some private sense of his own social inferiority, he was relentlessly frustrated and dejected in love and pulled his hand about the result of romance while passionately pursuing its ideal in poetry. During this emotionally turbulent period, Keats with his great expressive power, depth, style and beauty wrote the poem “Ode to a Nightingale”, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” and “Ode on melancholy” in which his successive leaps of growth started and he earned the power to remain calm and composed during his days full of uncertainties.

Like an Indian ‘Yogi’, Keats envisages an ideal world which is beyond the trials and tribulations of life.

In ‘The Bhagavadgita’ the passage runs as follows :

na karmanam anarambhan

naiskarmyam puruso snute

na ca samnyasanad eva

siddhim samdhigacchati

Not by not starting actions

Does a man attain actionlessness,

And not by renunciation alone

Does he go to perfection” (The Gita)

In the “Gita”, the supreme Godhead declares the two bases of good action- the path of knowledge and the path of action. The path of knowledge means ‘actionlessness’ which rightly points out not to the cessation of action but to action with passionlessness or detachment. It is distinct from ‘non-action’. The real ‘actionlessness’ is the execution of action without expectation of result. It is non-attached action. An Yogi who generally chooses the path of knowledge silently sits

trying to eliminate all activity. This rejection is for attaining the goal of perfection. An ordinary man thinks himself to be the agent or the performer of all works, but the wise men never think himself so. In the “Gita,” it is enjoined that what is ‘day’ for an ordinary man is night for a yogi- a man of action in contemplation. A superior person only can undertake the action called ‘Karma-yoga’, the yogi who acts but without attachment to the consequence is then a right man of action. He controls senses along with the mind and so a yogi is said to be unconcerned about the accomplishment of the action and this kind of action is termed as disinterested action (Niskama Karma).

Like an Indian yogi, Keats also wants to work without attachment or expecting result. To him, human life is full of complications and contradictions. We work and worry, grow old, become feeble and feel pain with sufferings. Keats writes, ours is a world where “But to think is to be full of sorrow / and leaden eyed despairs”. At our youth, though we know that we will die one day, even then we forget the cruel clutches of death. When we fall in love at our juvenile state, we also forget that the beauty and freshness will disappear one day. With this poignant, sorrowful self-awareness, Keats contrasts the easeful happiness of the nightingale with the misery and pain of man on the earth of which he is the prototype. The poet says: “Thou was not born for death, immortal bird”. Death can not compete with Nightingale because the nightingale knows nothing of death. The bird epitomizes the immortal soul and the idea is essentially upanishadic. The upanishadic seers talk about two birds - one that eats (body), and the other that watches on (soul). In the bower, Keats has reached a state like the nightingale. He would be free from everything that might be precious to him. The poet compares his ‘life of action without passion’ with the nightingale’s song, which is ‘such an ecstasy’ to everyday life full of trials and tribulations. The

nightingale's 'art' touches him very much and leads him to the same experience that will enable him to transcend like the nishkama karma yogi performing action without attachment to the consequence, to a state of perfection of that 'immortal beauty'.

Dorothy Hewlett, the biographer of Keats wrote about an incident of Wentworth place, which rightly exemplifies Keats' awareness of the Hindu concept of rebirth and rituals performed after the death of a relative or a member of a family:

"Wentworth place, Keats's new home, was then surrounded by open heath and small animals would penetrate into the garden. One day Dilke shot a white rabbit on his ground and Keats declared it to be the spirit of his dead brother returning to him. Perhaps the soft creature's pitiful eyes were too like the dying boy's ...The unimaginative Dilke had the rabbit cooked and brought to table, but Keats's earnest conviction had so played upon the feelings of the household that no one could touch it. (Dorothy Hewlett, 1938 : 241-42).

There is a fair possibility that Keats drew his idea about rebirth from Wilkin's translation of the "Bhagavad Gita" that reads:

"Eternal self or soul is never born, nor does he die at any time, nor having (once) come to be will be again cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain." (Katha Upanishad : II, 18).

As Keats knew the self to be invulnerable, the eternal does not move from place to place but the embodied soul moves from one body to another. In the 'Gita', it is said that just as human being die by leaving older clothes and wearing new clothes, we are born in the same way to die and assume new forms with a new birth. That means the body is perishable whereas the soul is not. So no one can ever preserve

body for ever and our real self is not destructible. In this connection “The Gita” observes:

“Know that to be one perishable by which all this world is pervaded. None can bring about the destruction of the indestructible”. (Katha Upanishad, II : 17)

In Indian Philosophy, the principle of action (karma) and the principle of knowledge (jnana) are treated not as two different things but as two sides of the same coin. A true man of action (karmayogi) is also a true renouncer, because he despises nothing and desires nothing. The “Gita” proclaims that a true karmayogi is pure at heart and he does everything for the sake of the society through continual self sacrifice and bereft of attachment, craze for reward or fruit of action. He works dispassionately by resigning all his action to God. A practitioner of niskama karma is like a burning incense stick, a man of continual self sacrifice as he is never touched by sin just as lotus leaf remains untouched by water though it resides in it. A true man of action (karmayogi) is affected neither by excitement and joy nor by sorrow. He is neither pleased nor displeased because he is united all the time with the universal spirit and this is a stage of what the “Gita” calls the stage of ‘sthitaprajna’ or ‘sthitadhi’ (chapter II). In the “Bhagavad Gita,” the ‘sthitaprajna’ is characterized as one who has direct and precise control over the senses, one who is always aware of the inner spirit, does everything in the awareness of the soul and as an offering to God with love and affection without anxiety or emotion. Mahatma Gandhi, the great Indian freedom fighter, was profoundly influenced by “Gita”’s selfless action. Gandhiji observes: “I must confess that when doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the ‘Bhagavad Gita’ and find a verse to comfort me, and immediately begin to smile.”

In chapter two of the Hindu Bible emphasis is laid on the fact that a man cannot remain inactive even for a single moment. Now the difference between being active with 'selfish motif' and 'selfless activity' is that the former is active for selfish gain and has no scruples whatever means he employs in order to achieve his selfish ends. On the other hand the latter is active in the service of others, never slips from the path of truth in respect of activity and consequently overcomes all likes and dislikes. The selfless active life can help us to attain the goal of God realization and soul making. If we actively and dispassionately do our work with dedication then only we can attain self-realization. Self-realization suggests purity of self that helps cultivate humility which leads to salvation - ultimate goal towards immortality i.e immortality of soul.

Keats urges for immortality through the Nightingale in his great ode and rightly reflects the philosophy of the disinterested action in "Gita". Karma Yoga straight- forwardly proclaims that every one has right to perform one's duty without claiming for fruits. One should not be the creator of the fruits of action, one should not be attached to one's body, senses, mind and intellect. It is the discipline of disinterested action which can be correlated with knowledge and devotion in a state of disinterestedness. At the beginning of the "Gita" the Lord explains how body and soul have two independent existence. Whereas body is transitory, inert (insentient) and perishable, soul is permanent, real and imperishable. In chapter thirteen of the "Gita" body and soul have been named as 'Ksetra' and 'Ksetrajna' as well as 'Prakriti' and 'Purusa'. The body deals with the worldly activities, but the self is directly connected with God. According to Lord Srikrishna in the "Gita", the

distinction between these two is the principal formula that leads a man to the path of salvation. The Gita states:

“People knowing with the eyes of wisdom the difference between the field (ksetra) and the knower of the field (ksetrajna) and between Prakriti alongwith its evolutes and the self, attain the supreme” (S. Radhkrishnan, 2010 : ch. 13 : 14) The striver who desires to attain salvation, should first decide which entity he accepts instinctively- the world or the soul or the Supreme Soul (God). If he accepts the world as true, he will attain salvation by the path of action (karmayoga), if the person accepts the soul as true, he will attain salvation by the path of knowledge (jnanayoga), if he accepts God as true, he will attain salvation by the path of devotion (bhaktiyoga). If somebody never accept the soul as true, he will also attain salvation as he is free from attachment and aversion and is not motivated by anyone and this liberty will lead him to salvation. Freedom from attachment and aversion will automatically lead him to salvation.

When the striver offers service to the society bodily, by rendering service, his assumed affinity with the body will be renounced naturally and he will get established in the self - this is what the “Gita” termed as karmayoga. If the individual separates the self from the body and the society- the “Gita” calls it Jnanayoga. If the individual surrenders himself whole heartedly with his body, the “Gita” explains it as Bhaktiyoga. When the striver does not look or regard any material things as his and does not do harm to anybody he will attain salvation by karmayoga. A karmayogi provides service to the Apra (world) with the body, the evolute of Apra Prakrti (lower nature), and he (self) naturally becomes separate, and a Jnanayogi separates himself from Apra, therefore both of them attain salvation or self-realization. But a

devotee besides attaining salvation, also attains supreme devotion (love). Therefore the Lord has declared karmayoga and Jnanayoga as the Laukika viz. worldly paths to attain equanimity. (Gita 3/3). But devotion is Alaukika viz. the unworldly path where only God reigns. Within the unworldly, the worldly is also included because both the worldly (Para and Apara) Prakriti belong to God. From this point of view, the laukika and Alaukika (unworldly) are different. On the other hand, from the unworldly (divine) point of view, all is divine, nothing is mundane :('Vasudevah sarvam') viz. 'All is God'. In the divine, there is no-existence of the mundane, the body and the world are also divine - 'Sadasaccaham i.e. God is both real and unreal (being and non-being). In Karma yoga 'Akarma' (inaction) is important (S. Radhakrishnan, 2010 : Ch 4 : 18).

When inaction remains, the world in the form of actions and objects disappears and thus peace is attained.

The world being God's Apara Prakriti (Lower Nature) belongs to God. So an individual serving in his surrounding is loving us. Similarly, if we, without any selfish motive, serve the world, we will be loving the world around and in us this way a close relationship develops with God. We will become God's own self and objectives of human life will be totally fulfilled or achieved.

In the process of Karmayoga and Jnanayoga, 'negation' is necessary and in the discipline of Devotion 'affirmation' is important. The reason is that we have to renounce affinity with the world, which we have accepted by an error, we have to accept our relationship with God that generally we forgot. In 'karmayoga,' by service, there is negation of the world, and in Jnanayoga, by discrimination, there is negation of the world. This idea of negation in "Gita" can be correlated with Keats's negative

capability which entails involvement in action without passion. A man endowed with negative capability can do anything during distress; he is never frustrated during nervous situation or in uncertainties and impossibilities. In “Gita”, the Lord makes it clear that He loves them who are totally dedicated and completely detached from the world. These men of devotion (bhakti) have no hostility towards anyone and while viewing joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour, praise and blame alike, they are full of compassion for all and are equally true to all (sama serveshu bhutesu). The attitude of a man of action (karma), a man of knowledge (jnana) and a man of devotion (bhakti) can be further correlated with Keats’s ideal man of ‘negative capability’ who possesses the capability to remain in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. Keats’s man of negative capability seems to be the English version of the Indian ‘karma yogi- bhakta’ who is supposed to be liberal, objective, broad-minded, impartial, receptive of everything / everybody / every opinion unhesitatingly without any irritating motto.

The concept of negative capability is the capacity to contemplate about the uncertainties of the world without the passion to endeavour and reconcile contradictory aspects or adjust it into closed and justified phenomenon . Keats himself defines negative capability in the letter written in 21 December 1817 to his brothers George and Tom Keats.

“ I spent Friday evening with wells and went the next morning to see Death on the Pale horse. It is wonderful picture, when west’s age is considered. But there is nothing to be intense upon, no women one feels made to kiss, no face swelling in reality, the excellence of every art is its intensity....., I had not a dispute but disquisition with Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, at

once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously I mean Negative capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact reason Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetrallium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge. This pursued through Volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration”.

From the creative point of view, Negative capability is a sublime expression of understanding and sharing of feelings, cultures of another. It is a design to cooperate, to comprehend each other. In a broader perspective, it may be compared with multiculturalism which also denotes sharing and understanding of one's culture, customs, traditions and feelings.

The leading expounder of negative capability' W.J. Bate in his seminal thesis 'Negative capability: The Intuitive Approach in Keats' (1939) explains 'the quality which characterizes both the poet and his approach'. He further articulates the concept that it is not objectivity nor yet Wordsworth's 'wise passiveness', neither is it an implicit trust in the Imagination nor, even, Shakespearean quality of annihilating 'one's own identity'.

Lionel Trilling, another powerful critic eulogizes Keats not as a great poet but as a heroic figure and most importantly pointed out that Negative capability constitutes the kernel of Keats's heroism.

“No one reading the letters of Keats can come on the phrase and its definition without feeling that among the many impressive utterances of the letters this one is

especially momentous. It is indeed, not too much to say that the power and quality of Keats's mind concentrate in this phrase, as does the energy of his heroism, for the conception of Negative capability leads us to Keats's transactions with the problem of evil, and if we are to understand the high temper of his mind, we must follow where it leads" Trilling here emphasizes Keats's capability to endure suffering without slightest irritation towards adverse circumstances (evil).

W.J. Bate, the Pulitzer prize winner biographer of Keats wrote that Keats was highly influenced by Shakespeare's idea of impersonality and disinterestedness, broad humanitarian sympathy and universal feeling.

John Middleton Murry in his "Keats and Shakespeare" (1925), analyses Negative capability as "in fact a very positive capability", and in Keats's eyes it is the highest of all capabilities. Murry further states that

"Shakespeare possessed it so enormously and for this supreme quality there is no familiar name, for the moral quality we can find a word; but it is more than tolerance, it is forgiveness. It is that quality which Christ pre-eminently possessed. But for this other kind of forgiveness, a forgiveness which forgives not only men, but life itself.....we have no word.. let it be called, though the word cannot fail to be misunderstood Acceptance" (Murry :79).

Murry considers Shakespeare as an 'idea' and Keats as the 'way'. He further emphasizes that the importance of Shakespeare and Keats was not only restricted to literature but also permeated to the whole existence.

An analysis of the poem "Ode to a Nightingale" in relation to negative capability and philosophy would be more illuminating and relevant. The Nightingale

is not an ordinary bird. It represents nature, cosmos and its detachment with the mundane world. The melodious song leads the bird to an emphatic union with nature which never gives her 'pain' and 'suffering'; but the bird enjoys 'pleasure' and 'ease', delight and fulfillment. On the other hand, the man of the world, like Keats, is always living a life full of misery, pain, sufferings and frustrations. In 'Ode to a Nightingale' Keats writes :

“The weariness, the fever, and the fret

Here, where men sit and hear other groan ;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies :

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs,”

(Paul Wright, 1994 : 218, L-23-28)

Therefore, Keats desires to be associated with the Nightingale and designates the bird as 'immortal bird'. He wants to experience the absolute joy like the bird. The very state of this absolute joy is the state of experiencing the 'Brahma' the infinite, all pervading and imperishable. Keats again writes in 'Ode to a Nightingale':

“Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down;” (L -61-62)

'Taittiriya Upanisad' rightly pointed out that 'Brahma' is Bliss (ananda) and a blissful state is begotten by 'Brahma' (Ananda Brahmiti Vyajanat).

Ananda or Bliss is the Brahma, because out of bliss, indeed, these beings originate; through bliss, they having originated, live and in to the bliss, they, departing from here, enter again.

The upanishads enjoin that there are four requirements to achieve absolute joy i.e. 'Brahma'. To achieve the state of 'Brahma', one should not depart from the objective nor should he get disturbed. He should remain firm and free from the feeling of uncertainty and disbelief and should be free from illusion. Viewed from this stand point, it is obvious that the nightingale could reach the highest state of 'Brahma' or absolute joy by fulfilling these requirements, whereas the poet, the man on the earth, suffers from pain and ache in the absence of these rare qualities.

'Ode To a Nightingale' is a poignant presentation of human mind that urges to achieve absolute joy or 'Param brahma'. Through his mind and his consciousness, the poet wishes to attain the state of bliss like the Nightingale. The bird is 'too happy' with her melodious song sung with 'full throated ease', and is hailed as the 'light winged Dryad of the trees' sitting in some 'melodies plot of beechen green' and shadows number less'. The very first stanza of the poem compares the contradictory condition of human mind which represent the external world and the nightingale, the representative of Supreme reality where happiness is abundant. In the poem, a dichotomy between the real and ideal is prevalent from beginning to the end. The bird possesses the necessities to be 'brahma', Nightingale is free from all the worldly ties like pleasure and pain, sorrows and sufferings, beliefs and disbeliefs, reality and illusions which is reflected only in nature. The bird is described as 'dryad' which is a tree nymph that takes the form of a young woman and lives in trees singing a pleasant song with 'full throated ease and' further corresponds to the two Upanishadic birds- one is eating and another is looking at, as described in Mundaka Upanushads :

(“Dva suparna sayuja sakhaya samanam vrksam parsasvaja tayor anyah pippalam avadv atty ansnann anyo bhica ka siti. “(Mundaka 3 Section-I)

“Two birds, companions (who are) always united, cling to the sell same tree. Of these two, the one cats the sweet fruit and other looks on it without eating” .

Here one bird is perfectly attaining the absolute likeness of joy enjoying a life of immortality and the other is immersed in the world of sorrows and deluded on account of the state of helplessness. The Nightingale is not a simple bird, but god-absolute, whereas the poet is a simple living being. Both of them are the two birds living together in the same body like the same tree. Out of these two bird , one enjoys the fruits according to its deeds, happiness , sorrow, pleasure and pain and the other,least affected by pleasure and pain attains absolute truth or supreme bliss.

III.4 A : The History of Soul in the West : A Short Glance

Any systematic study of the concept of soul in the western world must start with the view points of pre- Socratic philosophers like Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Pythagoras. But surprisingly, none of them could give a clear concept of soul, even as the early Greek Philosophers right from Thales to Anaxagoras conceded that there must be one substantial entity as the ultimate principle behind the multiplicity of the world. Obviously then, behind the ‘water’ of Thales, Fire of Heraclitus, air of Anaximander ‘matter’ of Anaxamines and the ‘number’ of Pythagoras, there flows the currents of one substantial Reality. And that is precisely the reason why the Eleatic philosophers including Parmenides assertively hold that “it is not being only Being truly is” (W. T. Stage, 1962 : 44). It was only Socrates who for the first time in

the Western World gave a clear concept of the soul. While emphasizing virtues as knowledge Socrates stressed that purity and goodness could be attained through the call of the soul. The Greeks were essentially lovers of body and physical beauty, but it was Socrates who first advocated the idea of 'know thyself', behind the 'vale of body' and in that sense he comes closer to the Vedic and Upanishadic seers of India. Moral goodness, human conduct and rationality play a powerful role in the making of a pristine soul. In the words of W. K. C. Guthrie (W. K. C. Guthrie, 1969 : 469), for Socrates 'psyche is the true self, and the body is its instrument only'. Plato extended Socratic concept of soul by devising a ladder in which body occupies the lowest step. Plato envisages soul as a composite entity consisting of three interacting elements - reason, heart and appetite (Republic bk.iv, viii).

Whereas the reason desires 'spiritual good' and knowledge of the ideal and immutable forms of thing in an intellectual world, the 'heart' is the seat of passionate and spirited element and lastly 'appetite' is the desiring element that eyes upon material pleasure. Plato's threefold division of a composite soul is given a new twist by Aristotle. In Plato's scheme of things, love of the soul and the Absolute is an arduous journey imagined in terms of a ladder in which body being the lowest rung falls out of sight when the soul reaches the higher rungs by living the lower ones behind. Platonic worship of soul therefore warrants a steady progression from one stage to another until the soul is united with what is 'imperishably Beautiful'. The Platonic duality between body and soul is considerably bridged by Aristotle who logically emphasizes the interactive relationship of the faculties - appetitive, spirited and rational. In Aristotle's scheme of things soul and body constitute a single substance and the idea becomes clear in his "De Anima"(1.1). Whereas Plato took

delight in imperative moral order of the creation, Aristotle considers the world of senses to be a part of the universal.

The Platonic and Aristotelian concept of soul took a religious turn in the hands of Neo-Platonists who emphasized the emotional manifestation the drunken frenzy of ecstatic soul. The Neo Platonists like Plotinus and Proclus seized upon the religious and mystical elements in platonic thought and in their scheme of things, it was enjoined that God's ineffable joy and immortal beauty can be relished in a state of emotional ecstasy in human heart. (B. A. G. Fuller, 1969 : 309-310)

During the Christian Middle Ages, the Christ philosophers and theologians took longing of the soul for union with God in terms of 'divine eros' and the biblical 'Song of Songs' was taken a prototype of passionate longing of the soul. No doubt St. Augustine distinguished 'cupiditas' (love of body) from Charitas (love of humanity). The tension between body and soul constitutes the dichotomy of his works. However in the seventh book of his 'Confession', St. Augustine feels fired with Eros for the Divine. The Neo-platonic concept of sickening soul combined with the Augustinian doctrine of eros passed on to the Middle Ages and Christian philosophers like St. Bernard, St. Victor and Abailard continued the tradition of Eros piety and passion mysticism finally transforming soul into a beloved devotee who longs for a romantic union with God. In Minne- poetry and bride mysticism, soul's love for Christ is viewed in terms of passionate attachment.

Whereas Socrates was the first philosopher of the Western world to give a clear concept of soul, in the East the credit goes to the Vedic and Upanishadic seers. These seers have allotted a region for the human spirit beyond the body and the intellect. In the words of S Radhakrishnan, "it is called the soul of a being, the

determining principle of body and mind” (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977: 2). As discussed earlier, in the West the Stoics denied personal immortality; Socrates developed an irresistible passion for knowing the soul (daimon). But like the Upanishadic seers of the East, it was perhaps Plato who first declared, in the mouth of ordinary young Athenian named Glaucon that, ‘Our soul is immortal’ (Republic, 608). Ancient Indians believed that the soul is the spiritual post of human being and that it is very difficult to realise this spiritual potential. In the “Chandogya Upanishad”, (vi.i.3) both Narada and Svetaketu lament that they have not been properly taught about the true nature of the self. Like Plato, the Upanishadic seers also distinguish body from soul. The ‘Katha’ enjoins that people opening the senses only look outwardly and the real self tend to realize with the help of the “third eye”, the spiritual eye of the pure hearted person, who overcomes the passions of lust, greed, envy, hatred and suspicion. Neither the senses nor the reason can see the spirit. True knowledge of the soul and of God, the master of souls can be attained only by clear sighted intuition and a dawning of insight. In “Brihadaranyaka Upanishad” (iv-4.21), it is rightly said that to taste God one has to pass beyond reason to take the help of love and longing. In India therefore the concept of soul making involves both philosophy and religion. In “Brihadaranyaka Upanishad” (iv. 3.6) self is envisaged as light (jyoti) through which one seeks return to the Divinity. Whereas the body perishes and is misguided by illusion (maya), the self remains immortal and indestructible. The “Bhagavad Gita” therefore rightly reads that a soul can not be destroyed by fire, nor water can wash it away, wind can not sweep it away. It is invisible, inconsumable, incorruptible. It is eternal, universal, permanent, immovable; it is inconceivable and unalterable; soul is

some thing without a birth; it is constant and eternal not to be destroyed in this mortal frame. Soul can neither kill nor can it be killed.

In Hindu thought, soul in its purest and pristine form is called 'atman'. On the other hand, when housed in body sharing laughter and sorrow, it is regarded as 'Jivatman' which reminds us of the beautiful distinction between the two birds in "Mundaka Upanishad" (11.1.2) dwelling in the same tree one eating the bitter sweet fruit and the other one looking on without eating. The former according to Radhakrishnan (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977:27) is the empirical self and the latter the transcendental self. Defined as 'I' the 'atman' is analysed as the universal self infinitely simple and is designated as a trinity of transcendental reality (sat), awareness (cit) and bliss freedom (ananda). The "Chandogyaupanishad" enjoins that 'That is the reality', the real of the real (satyasya satyam). This 'Sacchidananda Brahma' ('Supreme Absolute') is the first principle out of which both the personal god (Iswara) and the world soul arise to mediate between the Absolute and the world. In the West, the 'personal god' is called 'nous', whereas in Hindu thought 'Iswara', the personal god becomes Hiranyagarva. According to "Svetasvataraupanishad", Hiranyagarva is the world soul which is taken for granted as the first born son of God. The highest objective in Hindu thought is to become divine a stage in which 'I' and 'You' (God) become one. Radhakrishnan rightly observes that the sole objective of a human being is to satisfy his hunger (daimon) for truth and eternal life, for beauty and goodness and for achieving harmony. A man with a pious soul loves God and his love is manifested through his disinterested action (Niskam Karma) or world activity. The knower of the Brahman becomes a man of knowledge (jnana), a man of humility (bhakti) who can not dislike or despise anybody or anything in this world. Such a soul

realises that he can rejoice in divinity and let others rejoice in a similar way by discharging their activities in detachment. “Brihadaranyaka Upanishad” (S. Radhakrishnan, 1977:130) emphatically holds that the knower of Brahman is a free individual and that his action done in disinterested spirit can neither bind nor sully the soul. That highest message which the upanishadic seer delivers to the mankind is that life is a constant quest for discovering and realising the ultimate reality. At the same time, a disinterested yogi who progressively becomes a man of knowledge and a man of devotion finally realises that atman is dearer than anything else. Knowing this truth fairly well, a man with enlightened soul should enjoy and utilise everything in the world with a spirit of detachment. “Isa Upanishad”(Paul Deussen, 1980) very befittingly stresses that one should enjoy by renunciation (*tena tyaktena bhunjitha*)-an idea which is emphasized with equal vehemence in Buddhism.

III. 4(B): Keats’s Concept of Soul Making : An Indian Perspective

To begin with Keats’s acquaintance with the concept of soul- making and God realization, one has to go deep into the chapter XV of the “Bhagavad Gita” entitled “Purusottama Yoga”. As the very title suggests, the chapter deals with different kinds of Purusa (Ksara and Akhsara) and the three stages of the realization of atman. Of the two purushas, ‘Kshara’ points to the perishable living bodies that are bound with all the chains of action of this material world. In ‘ksara’ stage, people are not free from worldly desire of material needs; they hanker after wealth, family, friend and futile power. On the other hand, ‘Aksara purusa’ is associated with the incorruptible who stands on the pinnacle called ‘kootastha’. In sixteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter of the “Gita”, it is said:

“Dvavimau purusau loke ksarah

Ca'ksara eva ca k'sarah sarvani

bhutani kutastha ksara ucyate”

The distinction between ksara purusa and aksara purpusa can be correlated with threefold classification of atman i.e. jivatman, atman and Paramatman. When an atman builds a body in accordance with the work done and gathers experiences of pleasure and pains of life, it is called ‘jivatman’ because it is earth-oriented. As long as attached with the worldly elements, the individual does not realize his or her originality or true nature (which is the state of atman), then he resides in the jivatman state. Only when he recovers its pure nature, it becomes atman free from all kinds of fears and limitations. Here it may be noted that a ‘jivatman’ cannot become ‘atman’ by escalating the worldly assignment, rather an individual must encounter the painstaking realities of life in an utmost distracted manner in order to free the true atman residing within as an invisible force. This is also the central theme of the “Bhagavad Gita” that tells us to perform our duties with complete detachment and utmost trust, with devotion to God, the Supreme Being. Atman is the primeval stage where all actions one has performed comes to an end in a detached mood. In that state souls are free from all earthly desire, pride and delusion; they abandon all wishes and are liberated from pleasure and pain, sorrows and sufferings. They are not moved by the circumstantial change of nature either enlightened with the sun or the moon or water or fire. There is the last form called Paramatman, the Iswara or God, the Supreme Spirit which is the highest existence, that pervades all the two stages. Paramatman, is undeluded knower of everything and the epitome of knowledge and

wisdom. Atman reaches the state of Paramatman and never returns to the world full of sufferings.

In Indian Philosophical thought, the soul (atman) and the Super- soul (Paramatman) are identical in so far as the former flows out of the latter. Since the atman is fettered by the matter and is housed in the prison of body, it is therefore imperative that the jivatman should realize its true identity. While going to do so, it can not escape the chains of prakriti (nature). Instead, he should face the harsh realities of life by performing his duties in a disinterested manner. “The Gita” enjoins that a true man of action is far above the petty questions of pleasure and pain, profit and loss, appreciation and humiliation and such a stable minded person who remains equal to pleasure and pain perceives the Supreme reality (Paramatman). Such a man is called a “yogi”, a muni and a sthitadhi in the “Bhagavad Gita” (chapter 2). In the “Fall of Hyperion”, Keats puts in the mouth of Montesa how to realize the ideas of stable- mindedness characteristic of an Indian yogin :

“None can usurp this height,
returned that shade,. But those to
whom the miseries of the world,
Are misery, and will not let them rest.”

In foregoing pages, an analysis has been made regarding an illumined soul that progresses towards bliss through disinterested action. knowledge and love of the world with renunciation. Among the romantics, John Keats was perhaps most seriously influenced by the Oriental art of ‘soul making’. Wordsworth was more influenced by the method of meditation / contemplation and Vedantic concept of pantheism, but under the awful impact of suffering of the world, Keats wanted to

culture the oriental art of soul making and nourished a longing for enjoying the ‘temple of delight’ which is strongly reminiscent of the concept of ‘Sukhavati’ and ‘great bliss’ (Mahasukha) in Tantricism. In the ‘Sukhavati Vyuha Sutras’, the pure land is described as ‘Joyous world’, a world of ecstasy, at once soft and glowing a field with the music of birds and the tinkling of trees adorned with precious jewels and garlands of golden bell.

The concept of ‘Pure land’ is essentially based on three Sanskrit scriptures : the Amitayus Vipasyam - Sutra. Pure land schools postulate the idea of ‘rebirth’ in Amitabha’s western paradise, and that Sukhavati, known as pure realm, is ensured for all those who invoke Amitabha’s name with sincere devotion. ‘Amitayus’ means “Infinite Life” or Immortality. Amitabha is the Buddha of the western quarter whose name signifies ‘infinite light’ (amita).Again, connected with boundless light is the splendour, light, lustre, colour and beauty which is conveyed by the expression (abha). Amitabha dwells in his pure land called Sukhavati - the happy realm- which is described in the “Sukhavativyuha Sutras”. Amitabha is closely related to Amitayus - infinite life - who is sometimes described as his ‘reflex’. In the longer “Sukhavativyuha Sutra”, the Buddha begins by describing to his attendant Ananda a part of the life of the Buddha Amitabha. He states that in a past life, Amitabha was once a king who renounced his kingdom, and became a bodhisattva monk named Dharmaka (Dharma Storehouse). Under the guidance of the Buddha Lokeshvararaja (world sovereign king), innumerable buddhas land throughout the ten directions revealed to him. After meditating for five eons as a bodhisattva, he then got series of vows to save all sentient beings, and through his great merit, created the realm of Sukhavati (ultimate bliss). This land of Sukhavati would later come to be known as

the Pure- Land. In Chinese translation, Pure land of Sukhavati is described as a land of beauty that surpasses all other realms. It is said to be inhabited by many gods, men, flowers, fruits and also blessed with wish granting trees where rare birds come to rest. On entering this pure land, a person can perceive the attainment of enlightenment. In order to enter the pure land, a person should prepare by bathing and reciting the name of the Buddha- Amitabha. Amitabha-Buddha and the two bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara on his right and mahasthamaprapta on his left, appear and welcome the dying person. Visions of other buddhas and bodhisattvas are disregarded as they may be bad spirits disguising themselves, attempting to stop the person from entering the pure land of Buddhists who have been known to leave body (sarira) after cremation.

In Buddhist teaching, souls that enter the Pure Land leave the body through the fontanelle at the top of the skull. The pure land teachings and meditation varies from place to place like China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and India. In the backdrop of the above discussion of Pure land of bliss called Sukhavati, Keats envisages the attainment of enlightenment and bliss like Buddha in his expression ‘soul making’ in the letter to George and Georgiana Keats, 21 st April, 1819.

“Last Sunday I took a walk towards high gate and in the lane that winds by the side of Lord Mansfield’s park I met Mr. Green our Demonstrator at Guy’s in conversation with Coleridge- I joined them, after enquiring lay a look whether it would be agreeable - I walked with him at his older man after dinner pace for near two miles I suppose in those two Miles he brooded a thousand things let me see if I can give you a list: Nightingales, poetry - on Poetical sensation Metaphysics the common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is ‘a vale of

tears' from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven - what a little circumscribe straightened nation! Call the world if you please 'The vale of Soul makinghow then are Souls to be made ? ... to have identity given them so as to possess a 'bliss' peculiar to each ones individual existence?..... Seriously, I think it probable that this system of soul making may have been the parent of all the more palpable and personal schemes of Redemption, among the Zoroastrians, the Christians and the Hindus" (John Strachan, 2004:19).

Keats was frustrated with the death of his two brothers and with his disappointment in love for Fanny Brawne, and as such, he wanted to overcome the sufferings, 'the fever and the fret' of life. In order to free himself from the worldly anxieties of life, Keats envisaged an ideal world and also talked about entering like Buddha in the pure land of bliss— of sukhavati - through his quest for the 'vale of soul making'. What is called 'Sukhavati' in Buddhism is called great bliss (Mahasukha) in Hinduism. The concept of great bliss (Mahasukha) inevitably reminds one of "Taittiriya Upanishad" that emphasizes 'rasa' and 'ananda'. 'Rasa', the aesthetic experience, is equated with divine experience (ananda). "The whole world or Cosmos is created out of joy and tends towards the ultimate joy itself (anandat khalu imani bhutani jayante) (Paul Deussen, 1980:217-22). Viewed from the oriental perspective, Keats's concept of soul making points to his quest for immortal beauty and divine ecstasy which has been discussed in the chapter that follows with emphasis on temple of delight and thirty two palaces of delight.

CHAPTER IV : Indian Thought as Reflected in Keats's Poetry

IV. I : Keats and Indian Mythology and Culture

John Keats was one of the greatest romantic poets, who was a pure artist and worshipper of beauty- beauty in body , woman and art . He worshipped strongly the goddess called Imagination. But it would be unwise to call him only the worshipper of beauty and imagination . He was also a truly religious man with a holy mind and a pure heart. He worshipped many mythological gods of various countries especially Greek mythology and his worship of Apollo is significant indeed . Further , in his writings one locates an engaging interest in Indian philosophy, mythology and culture as a whole .

India's bewitching beauty and glittering charm had attracted Keats's mind and soul and this is evident from his letter to Miss Jeffrey of Teignmouth, Devon on 31st of May , 1819. In this letter , Keats confessed with utmost honesty and sincerity.

“ I have the choice, as it were, of two Poisons (yet I ought not to call this a Poison) the one is voyaging to and from India for a few years.” That Keats was very much interested in political affairs between India and England becomes obvious from his letter to Georgiana Keats, the wife of his younger brother on 13th of Friday , 28th of Jan 1820 .In this letter , he mentions about the event that took place at Calcutta in 1756 between Siraj-ud-daula's Bengal and East India Company .At the same time , Keats was fully sensitive to the dark episode in Indian History which is known as 'The Black Hole 'tragedy' : “He is making now one of an Ode to the

Nightingale which is like reading an account of the Black hole at Calcutta on an ice berg” (Maurice Buxton Forman, 1952 : 343-44).

Keats’s eagerness to know about India- her philosophy and religious ideas- got through the works of such Orientalists as Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins and Colebrooks. That he was interested in Hinduism becomes clear from the perusal of his letter to George and Georgiana Keats-(3 May 1819). In this letter , Keats evinces his knowledge of the Hindu doctrine of ‘Avatarvada’-the theory of Incarnation. :

“Why may they not have made this simple thing even more simple for common apprehension by introducing Mediators and Personages in the same manner as in the he (a) then mythology abstractions are personified- seriously I think it probable that this system of soul-making-may have been the parent of all the palpable and personal scheme of Redemption, among the Zoroastrians, the Christians and the Hindoos. For and then Vishnu” (Macmillan Selected letters, 1984:98).

The emphasis on heathen mythology and personification of abstractions in the letter clearly indicates that Keats was decidedly influenced by Sir William Jones’ translation of the Vedic hymns in which the Hindu gods and goddesses have been invoked as persons with endearing attachment . For instance , the abstractions like intelligent speech (‘Vagdevata’), the god of rain, (‘Indra’), cosmic wisdom (‘Brahma’) , god of medicine (‘Ashvini Kumara’)have been personified in Vedic mythology as family gods .Moreover , the use of words like ‘Hindoo’ and ‘Vishnu’ also prove that Keats was fairly acquainted with the religious beliefs and mythology of India, through the translations of Jones and Wilkins , and by Edwin Moor’s *The Hindu Pantheon* . Keats knew very well that Vishnu is the saviour God of the

Hindus, who had descended on the earth nine times in the past thereby vindicating the concept of incarnation (Avatarvada) in Hindu mythology .

In the poem 'Endymion', Keats describes the progress of Bacchus , the god of wine , in civilizing mankind from Egypt to India. In line 265 of the poem, the poet mentions about Bacchus's victory over 'Brahma'.

“The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail,

And from their treasures scatter pearly hail.

Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,

And all his priesthood moons;

Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.”

(Endymion lines 245-67)

References to Indian mythology in the above lines are numerous. In the first line of the quotation, 'India' has been mentioned by another of its name : 'Ind' which is a diminutive form of 'India'. In the 3rd line, there has been mentioned the name of the Indian God 'Brahma' who is a member of the Hindu trinity or trimurti- 'Brahma', 'Vishnu' and 'Mahesha' or 'Shankara'. From his reference to Brahma's 'mystic heaven' , it is clear that each member of the Hindu trinity had his own heaven called 'loka'- *brahmaloka, vishnuloka and shivaloka*. Here , Bacchus is none other than Shiva, as Sir William Jones has aptly argued. It is then quite possible that the poet was exploiting in the passage concerned the Hindu myth according to which Shiva had once vanquished Brahma in the form of 'Daksha-Prajapati'. Moreover, in the fourth line of the quotation, by the expression 'his priesthood' the poet suggests the priestly class in India called 'Brahmanas'. It is also important to note here that

Brahminism symbolizing Brahma was ideologically opposed to Shaivism in ancient India.

However, the greatest tribute to India paid by Keats is in form of the creation of character called 'Indian Maid' in his romance 'Endymion.' The lady, as the poet projects her in the poem, is the highest form of beauty; she is ultimately transformed into the moon goddess 'Cynthia'. Keats has given expression to his own appreciation of India -her religion, mythology and philosophy in the following lines :

"My sweetest Indian here,
here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast
My life from too thin breathing." (lines 648-50)

Keats was very much interested in two natural objects of India, i.e., the 'Himalayas' and 'the Ganges' which seem to have a great impact on the imagination of the Romantic poet. He mentions these two names in his two major poems: 'Endymion' and 'Hyperion'. In Endymion (Book IV, line 33), he states in the mouth of the Indian maid: 'A view to Ganges and their pleasant fields', and in line 465 occurs the expression 'Thou swan of Ganges'. In the 'Hyperion' (Book II, line 60), there is a reference to 'By Oxus or in Ganges', which shows that Keats is a great lover of Indian Nature and that he was aware of the sacred nuances with which the river Ganga is associated in India. Here one may recall that the river Ganga had been introduced to the west by Sir William Jones through his translation of the vedic hymn addressed to Ganga, the river goddess. The very expression 'sacred isles' further reminds us of the mythical episode of Ganga's genealogy from Brahma's ritualistic bowl (kamandalu), Vishnu's nails, and finally her descentance by the penance of king Bhagiratha from heaven to earth through the matted hair of Shiva. Again, in

the poem 'The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream' (canto I, line 5) by using the word 'Bhojpatra', the skin of a tree used for writing in ancient India, Keats lovingly calls it the 'wild Indian leaf' which is ritualistically used by Indian priests and Tantrics in recording certain esoteric hymns and instructions. That Keats was also interested in Ayurveda is evident from the use of the name of Hindu's most sacred plant 'Tulasi' which appears in the subtitle of the narrative poem 'Isabella' i.e., 'The Pot of Basil'. 'Basil' being none other than the Tulasi plant, its leaves have great medicinal as well as spiritual value in India. Again, Tulsi is sacred to Vishnu or Krishna and it is very near and dear to the devotees of Vishnu who think that their Adorable Lord can be pleased only through the worship of the plant. Here it is also important to note that Tulsi along with the waters of the river Ganga makes a sinner purified in Hindu belief system. Besides 'Tulasi' and 'Basil', the cloves and pearls of India had impressed Keats very deeply which is evident in the poem 'Isabella' in line 103 (stanza XIII):

'In the warm Indian clove'

That Keats is a lover of Indian Vedantic philosophy is evident from the poem 'Hyperion'. In this poem the concept of 'sthita prajñata' or stable mindedness', as a means to salvation has been beautifully exploited by Keats:

"Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain

O folly! for to bear all naked truths.

And to envisage circumstances, all calm.

"That is the top of sovereignty." (Hyperion 303-06)

The doctrine of 'stable mindedness' which is strongly recommended in the above lines are evident in "The Gita". He, whose mind is untroubled in the midst of

sorrows and is free from desire, pleasures, and for whom passion, fear and rage have passed away, he is called a sage of settled intelligence .

In the poem ‘Hyperion’, Keats describes the joys and sorrows of Nature. In view of the Vedanta philosophy, joys and sorrows are due to the mysterious change of Nature, her three strands or modes called gunas (The Gita 3.27-28). The phenomena of pleasure and pain, joy and grief are evident in the following lines:

“We fall by course of Nature’s law, not force
of thunder, or of Jove.” (Hyperion 181-82)

Thus India plays a very significant role in Keats’s poetry and other writings. Had that not been the case, he would have never raised the Indian Maid to the status of a goddess (moon) in the ‘Endymion’ (Book IV) where he speaks of his ardent love for India, her cultural traditions and her philosophy. He also makes numerous details through out his writings, the rivers of the country (Ganges), its greatest mountain (The Himalayas), its mythology and some of its Vedantic philosophical concepts in his philosophical poem ‘Hyperion’

IV. II : In quest of Bliss and Beatific vision: Keats’ ‘Thirty Two Places of Delight’.

Interestingly, Keats was profoundly influenced by Buddhist concept of delight and pain. Keats admittedly recognizes the Buddhist idea of pain and suffering in his exhaustive letter written to John Hamilton Reynolds dated 19th February, 1818.

“I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me the first we step into we call the infant of thoughtless chamber in which we remain as long as we do not think we no sooner get into the second chamber of Maiden thought we

become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there forever in delight. However, among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of man of convening ones nerves that the world is full of Misery and Heartbreak, pain, sickness and oppression - whereby this chamber of Maiden thought becomes gradually darker and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open but - all leading to dark passages. We not the balance of good and evil. We are in a Mist- we are now in that state - we feel the burden of the mystery" (P. S. Sastri, 1984).

In this world of transitoriness 'beauty can not keep its lustrous eyes' and lovers look for new faces every time. Since everything is fragile and impermanent, Keats's search for an idea world is fulfilled in the world of nature represented by 'Nightingale, in the world of art represented by Grecian Urn and in the philosophical emphasis on soul making and spiritual progression as adumbrated in Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. In his letter to his friend John Hemilton Reynolds Keats longs for a pleasant life, a spiritual voice through different stages in order to realize the 'thirty two places of delight' as elaborated in Buddhist mysticism. These thirty two palaces can be correlated with the thirty two signs of great soul that has been described in *Lalitavistara* and *Buddhacharita*. Keats's 'thirty two places of delight as mentioned in his letter to his friend John Hamilton Reynolds quoted above, very evidently point to the concept of Buddha's birth where it is clearly mentioned:

'Thirty two signs' appeared in king 'Suddhodhana's garden ; which thirty two? All flowers. (though) in bud, did not bloom. The blue, red, night and white lotuses produced buds, did not bloom. In the same way, flowers, fruits and trees arose

from the ground, budded but did not bear fruit. Also, eight jewelled trees appeared. Twenty hundred thousand of jewelled boxes suddenly arose, and were seen separately. In the inner quarters, jewelled plants arose. Fragrant water, cool and hot, flowed, scented with sweet scented oil. Lions cubs from the side of the Himalaya mountains came (down) to pay respects to the noble city named Kapila, circumambulated it, and remained at the gates, but did not harm any creature. Five hundred young white elephants came to king Suddhodana, going from lap to lap. The naga maidens were seen in the sky, half their bodies showing, carrying various objects for worship..... all the deities of the sala woods were seen bowing with half their bodies showing from the leaves. These thirty-two signs appeared (Bijoya Goswami, Trans. 2001 : 79).

‘Lalitavistara’ further explains thirty two signs of great man which Keats has mentioned in his letter quoted above. In the Buddhist text ‘Lalitavistara’ thirty two signs of great man have been described as :

“Your Majesty! Prince Sarvarthasiddha is endowed with thirty two signs of a great man. What thirty two? Your Majesty! Prince Sarvarthasiddha has growth on his head. This is the first sign of a great man. Your majesty, by which Prince Sarvarthasiddha is endowed. His hair is as blue as ground collyrium or the peacock’s train and curls to the right. He has an even and wide forehead. There is a circle of hair. Your majesty, between Prince Sarvarthasiddha’s eyebrows, the colour of snow or silver. His eyes have (long) lashes like the cow’s. His eyes are blue. He has forty even teeth. None of his teeth missing. He has white teeth. sir, prince Sarvarthasiddha has the voice of Brahma. His tongue is moist. His tongue is long and slender. His jaw

is like the lion's. He has well rounded shoulders..." (Bijoya Goswami, Trans. 2001 : 30).

These thirty two sign of a great man (dvatrinsat mahapurusa lakhsanani) can be rightly correlated with the thirty two places mentioned by Keats through which the thirty two signs of great soul have been established. It is highly probable that Keats has been influenced by Edward Moor's "Hindu Pantheon" which has sufficient information about Buddhism and religion. In this connection, K.G. Srivastava's comment on thirty two places is worthy to be mentioned :

"I think that the poet is alluding to the 32 signs of really great souls, pointers to their divinity : these have been called dvatrinshat Mahapurusha Lakshanani in Buddhist texts in Sanskrit, dealing with the life of Lord Buddha such as Lalitavistara and Buddhacharita" (K. G. Srivastava, 2002:310).

In the 'Satipatthana Sutta', Lord Buddha taught how to use the thirty-two unclean parts of the body as objects of meditation and taught one to see each as it truly is and how each is by nature unclean, disgusting and repulsive. The meditator who practices this technique is usually trying to overcome lust or attachment to the body. When viewed piece-by-piece, none of the thirty-two parts is conducive to lust, so how can the thirty-two parts be desirable when put together into "a two-mouthed sack" ? When practicing this meditation, it is important that the meditator does not develop aversion to the parts of the body. The meditator must be constantly mindful to see the body and its parts as they truly are: impermanent, ever changing and composed of nothing worth attachment".

There are five ways to contemplate each of the thirty-two items; by color, by shape, by sector (upper or lower body), by habitat or place of origin and by borders.

There are also five ways to contemplate the repulsiveness of each body part: by color, by shape, by odor, by habitat or place of origin and by borders.

When the meditator first contemplates head hair, he or she must gain and maintain the sign or Nimitta of head hair, signifying deep concentration. The meditator pulls out one or two hairs from the head then hold them in the palm of the hand and note the color. The meditator can also go to a place where hair falls, such as a barber shop, drinking fountain or in a cup of milk. If the hair is black, contemplate it as black. If it is white, contemplate it as white. If the hair is mixed colors, contemplate the predominant color.

When the meditator sees it clearly, here are the five Characteristics to hold on to the sign: (1) color, (2) shape, (3) sector (upper or lower body). (4) habitat or place of origin [for example, head hair, location can be by the ears, or the front, back or crown of the head] and (5) delimitation.

The meditator contemplates repulsiveness in five ways: (1) color, (2) shape, (3) odor, (4) place of origin and (5) delimitations. This way Buddha talked about all the thirty two impure parts of the body in *Satipatthana Sutta*.

In the West it is not Keats alone but many others who talk about different stages of soul making and spiritual progression. One such example is twenty-nine bathing ghats in human body. Whitman's few lines on "Twenty Eight Bathers : A guessing game" is as follows:

Twenty - eight young men bathe by the shore,

Twenty-eight years of womanly life and all so lonesome,

Dancing and laughing along the beach came the twenty ninth bather,

(Sujit Mukherjee & D. V. K. Ragavacharya, ed. 1969)

Apparently though the number twenty ninth bathers reminds us of number games in American folk song but it has tried to establish esoteric meaning in the number directly referring to the ancient Hindoo book “Vishnu Purana” in which Parasara acted as the poet Vyasa’s mouth piece and described different classes of creation of Maitreya. Here, in this regard O.K. Nambiar observe:

“The animal creation is described” having the quality of darkness, they being destitute of knowledge being formed of egotism and self esteem, labouring under twenty-eight kinds of imperfection, manifesting inward sensations and associating with each other.” W.H. Wilson adds in his note : “Twenty-eight kinds of Badhas which in the Sankhya system mean disabilities as defects of intellect, discontent, ignorance and the like.” Man, by reason of the twenty-eight imperfections is unable to see or know the soul. The soul (the richly drest invisible lady) sees them and sports with them, herself remaining unseen and unknown. The sea, as always in mystical writings, is the symbol of the phenomenal world process, its cycles of birth and death.”

This explanation provides the number of imperfections, the twenty eight which represents ignorance and spiritual futility and the rest one is the soul that is the supreme what is everlasting soul. This 29th bathers also can be correlated with principles of yoga as described in the Shantiparva of “Mahabharata”. King Yudhishthira asks Bhishma, the great grandfather of them, to explain the difference between Jnana, Vijnana and Bhakti, the three paths of yoga. He explains that Jnana, the supreme illumination, consists in perceiving nine principles, the eleven organs, the five elements and the three gunas in all creatures and the one supreme soul (Purusha)

or Paramatman permeating them all. The Vijnana way is the way of discursive knowledge and Bhakti is emotional and devotional wholehearted surrender. Bhisma suggests that man is constituent of twenty eight mind-matter and soul is the twenty ninth, the invisible power, which is beyond the reach of the twenty-eight mind -matter busy with worldly activities (Samsara) and the cycle of birth and death and rebirth. Whitman's conception of body-mind complex of man and invisible and powerful soul corresponds to Keats different stages of soul making, spiritual progression with the 'temple of delight' as mentioned in the 'Hyperion' and 'thirty two palaces of delight' as mentioned in the letter under question. It can also be satisfactorily analyzed in the light of chakra philosophy in Yoga system as referred to in *Patanjali's Yogasutra*. There are six cycles (chakra) in human body such as anus (adhara chakra), genital (linga), navel (navi), heart (hridaya) voice (kantha) and forehead (lalate). Each of the six cycles (chakra) has a lotus with petals. When all these cycles (chakras) become active with the petals completely open, Sadhaka realises ineffable ecstasy. Every cycle is a seat of delight and Keats' 'Thirty two palaces of delight' in his letter and 'temple of delight' in *Hyperion* and in 'Ode to Apollo' bear true testimony to the fact that at the height of unbearable suffering, misery and pain, Keats took refuge in Indian Thought – both Hindu and Buddhist. Through his systematic journey of soul-making and attainment of bliss as an antidote to the sufferings of the world, Keats searches for the temple of delight as adumbrated in Indian Tantras and Yoga Philosophy which is admittedly established through his reference to Thirty two palaces of delight.

Conclusion

The overwhelming dissemination of Indian philosophy, religion, mythology and spirituality created an Oriental Renaissance in the West during the 19th century. And right from the 16th century till the climax of modernism in the 20th century, this cultural continuation remained unabated. Thanks to the untiring efforts of Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Thomas Maurice and Edward Moor who, by their valuable books and translation of Sankrit texts, acquainted the West with the rich Indian cultural tradition, the stamp of which can never be erased. Here it is important to note that following the path of Sir William Jones, several scholars and critics have shown their engaging interest in Indian culture. This is evident from Edwin Arnold's book on *Bhagavad Gita* (1885) and his *Light of Asia*, H.T. Colebrooke's *Miscellaneous Essays*, John Drew's *Indian and Romantic Imagination*, Northrop Frye's *Fearful Symmetry*, Charles N.E. Eliot's *Hinduism and Buddhism. An Historical Sketch* and Robert Sencourt's *Indian in English Literature* (1924). This exercise was not altogether one-sided because cultures thrive and disseminate through interaction interface and transaction. In this respect there were valuable critical books on the transaction between East and West with regard to philosophy, religion and literature.

For instances, S. Radhakrishnan's *Eastern Religion and Western Thought* (1977) is a valuable contribution in which the Indian, scholar has exhaustively analyzed and shown the interface between tantricism and Gnosticism, Indian religion and Greek religion, Indian mythology and Greek mythology and the mutual interaction between the East and the West. Besides Radhakrishnan, E. Pockocks *Indian in Greece* (1852), Raghavan Iyer (ed.) *The Glass Curtain between Europe and Asia* (1965), Arnold Toynbee's *Between Oxus and Jamuna* (1961) E.H. Warmington, *The Commerce between Roman Empire and India* (1928) and Henrich Zimmer's *Philosophy of India* (1951) have fortified the cultural interaction between the East and West. So far as literature is concerned, Northrop Frye and G.Wilson Knight have made some startling comments regarding the interaction of East and West and the

impact of India on the West. In his book *Fearful Symmetry* (1947), Frye has assertively mentioned that William Blake was among the first European idealists to link his own tradition of thought with the *Bhagavat Gita*. Similarly, in his monumental creation *The starlit Dome* (1971), G. Wilson Knight emphatically observes that 'India was magnetic to Shelley'. Be it criticism or poetry or philosophy, Indian culture has been widely acclaimed down the ages and in the following pages, we shall see how the Oriental Renaissance created by 19th century romantics of England was subsequently carried forward by the American transcendentalists and the Victorian and modern English poets and critics.

Though transcendentalism was originally derived from the German romantic philosophy of Kant, Hegel, Fichte and Schelling, the American transcendentalists such as Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman were profoundly influenced by the Vedantic / Upanishadic idealism and there was a sudden resurrection of the Oriental philosophy. Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman are often acclaimed as American Brahmins for their faithful allegiance to the teachings of the Indian Vedantins and the Upanishadic seers. To begin with Emerson, his interest in Indian thought was aroused during his Harvard days when he had a chance of reading the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Kathopanishad*. Emerson's appreciation of the *Vedas* further testifies this fact. To him, the *Vedas* are as sublime as heat and night and breathless ocean, and they carry all the grand ethics and religious sentiments which enriched his poetic mind. Significantly, Emerson's concept of nature is grounded upon his allegiance to the Vedantic Philosophy that Brahma is all-pervading, eternal and unfathomable. He wrote a poem on 'Brahma' in which the immortality and indestructibility of the soul has been established in the light of the Indian philosophy of soul as developed in

Kathopanishad. The first stanza of the poem 'Brahma' beginning with 'the red slayer think he slays' corresponds to following lines of 'Kathopanishad'.

"If the slayer think I slay, if the slain thinks

I am slain, then both of them do not know well.

It (the soul) does no slay, nor is it slain" (2.1)

At the same time, the second and third stanza embodying the nature of Brahma as the 'doubter and the doubt' and 'the hymn the Brahmin sings' seems to be a direct echo of the *Bhagavad Gita* where Lord Krishna declares himself to be the 'ritual action', the 'sacrifice', the 'ancestral oblation', the 'sacred hymn', the 'melted butter', the 'fire' and the 'offering', 'immortality' and 'death', 'being' and 'non-being'.

Apart from the Indian concept of the indestructibility of soul, Emerson, like Wordsworth and Keats was influenced by religious aspects of rebirth in Hindu philosophy. In one of his journals, Emerson echoes the teachings of the *Gita*:

"Then I discovered the secret of the world : that all things subsist, and do not die, but only retire a little from sight and afterwards return again."

Keats's allegiance to Indian concept of soul making can be located in Emerson's essay the 'Over Soul' and *Self Reliance* in which he recognizes the magnanimity of the six thousand years old Vedic and Upanishadic philosophical tradition. In these essays, Emerson develops the concept of the Hindu philosophy that one's self is identifiable with the *Over Soul* (Brahman). Like a true Brahmin, Emerson emphasizes the concept of fundamental unity between soul and over soul and the ecstasy of losing 'all being in one Being summarizes the central philosophy of soul. That man is responsible for his suffering and that he enjoys the harvest of his

own action from previous existences and that sin leads to suffering - such is the overwhelming allegiance of Emerson to Indian thought.

In some respect Henry David Thoreau was more powerfully influenced by Indian philosophy than Emerson. Whereas Emerson found the Hindu doctrine of soul conducive to his conception of fundamental unity of men with the universe through nature and of soul with super soul, Thoreau found, in Hindu scripture, a way of life with which he felt a profound affinity. (William J. Fishers, 1990: 35). While beginning his intensive study of Hindu scripture, Thoreau felt elevated and morally enriched. Throughout his life, Thoreau intended to live a meaningful life of contemplation in which he could understand his relationship with nature, other men and with the universe in terms of a monistic unity. From the *Bhagavad Gita*, Thoreau learnt the ideal qualities of a man of action, a man of knowledge and a man of devotion and emphasizes simplicity and purity of thought. In his magnum opus *Walden*, Thoreau forwards, like Gandhi, a life of plain living and high thinking and emphasized spontaneous relationship with man and nature. He was interested in Yoga philosophy and remained absorbed in contemplation by the Walden pond and like the Indian monks abandoned all lust of the flesh, all inordinate desire, pride and pretence in order to obtain pure happiness. At the same time, in *Walden*, he describes a state of mind which corresponds to that of an Indian Yogi and to the transcendental self of the Upanishads. His *Walden* can be rightly called a quest of the self from the mundane society to the abode of spiritual bliss. In the chapter titled as 'Sound', Thoreau himself writes: 'I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation, where the divine absorbs the human'. (E.S. Oliver : 36) The lines unabashedly reflect the fact that Orientalism was a part and parcel of Thoreau's life, thought and expression.

Like Emerson and Thoreau, Walt Whitman sought inspiration from India for the formulation of his concept of spiritual democracy. *His Leaves of Grass, Song of Myself* and *Passage to India* bear true testimony to this point. In his hands, the Upanishadic philosophical traditions attained a high degree of perfection. Whereas Emerson praised his *Leaves of Grass* for ‘incomparable things free and brave thought’, Thoreau exclaimed that the work was ‘wonderfully like the orientals’. Whitman caught the spirit of Oriental mysticism from his reading and understanding of *Bhagavad Gita*. Like a Vedantin, Whitman embraces everything, both tiny and small in this universe in terms of cosmic unity and homogeneity. Behind his formulation of the concept of ‘dynamic self’ in *Song of Myself*, one locates the impact of the Upanishads and of the cosmic form of Lord Krishna in the ‘Viswarupadarshan yoga’ of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Krishna’s revelation to Arjuna that ‘He is immanent and transcendent’ and that he is present everywhere’ in the universe is reiterated by Whitman through the expression ‘I contain multitude’. Whitman’s formulation of “I” corresponds to the all pervading presence of Krishna. At the same time, Whitman believed in a cosmos where everything joins hand to constitute an undivided unity. Through the act of procreation, Whitman presents the exercise of the divine energy for the continuation of the universe (*Song of Myself*).

The Oriental philosophy and love for India as a whole continued to engage the attention of the American writers and in this respect one may recall for discussion here Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Romance* and Poems of Emily Dickinson. Hawthorne, Melville and Dickinson explore the East and wonder at India as a land of fabulous beauty, mythology, religion and philosophy. Dickinson, a product of Emerson’s transcendentalism, individualism and self-reliance, developed her

metaphysical sensibility with a zest for an ideal world of infinite bliss and beatitude. From Shakespeare, Keats and Shelley, Dickinson felt inspired about India- the 'elusive other' and the earthly paradise. This is obvious from her preoccupation with symbols and metaphors centering India's geographical location, natural sights and sounds, historically famous places, colourful textile, the great Himalaya, the bower of Kashmir, the miraculous summer and the rose flower from the bosom of Kashmir producing aromatic oil (attar). Behind her zest for Indian symbolism, the reader locates Dickinson's search for an ideal world - delight, peace and spiritual fulfillment which India stands for. Like Marlow and Shakespeare, she evinces her proto-romantic interest in the beauteous world of Indian gold, diamond, mines and gems and praises the South Indian city of Golconda as the treasure house of wealth and pleasure :

"I'm sure it is Golconda -

Beyond my power o deem -

To have a smile for Mine - each Day

How better, than a Gem" (Paul Lauter , 1990 : 2855)

While occupying a permanent place in Dickinson's imagination, Golconda is envisaged as an ideal for imaginative satisfaction, visual relish and mental solace. Besides Golconda, Dickinson was also enamoured of Cashmere and Himalaya, the two veritable symbols of paradise on earth embodying eternal peace, happiness and fulfillment. From Keats and Shelley, Dickinson derived a strong fascination for Himalayas, the abode of gods and goddess in Indian mythology and a veritable symbol signifying spiritual ascendance, height of dignity, opulence and magnificence. In the poem "I can wade grief", Dickinson comes closer to the Buddhist notion that life is essentially full of suffering and that human beings should be ready to receive

like an Indian yogi both pleasure and pain, summer and winter with equal respect. As a disciplined patron of pain, Dickinson tends to argue that power is only pain and that a man of suffering is much more happy than a man enjoying the alcohol of happiness. Dickinson uses 'Himalaya' as a central metaphor that stands for patience and capacity to bear with infinite suffering with disinterestedness:

“ Give Himmaleh -

They' Carry-Him!' (Paul Lauter : 2850)

Surprisingly, Dickinson associates Himalaya with divinity and spirituality and like a medieval Indian Vaishnava poet, she holds that Himalaya can be easily attained by trust, devotion (bhakti) and wholehearted surrender. It is at the height of devotion and surrender that Himalaya, the divinity, stoops to shower blessings even on the insignificant creatures and things like squirrel and daisy flowers. Dickinson wishes to transcend from the world of suffering to the world of spiritual bliss by tasting : 'My-drop-India' which points to the drop of devotion that guarantees spiritual bliss. In the poem "Indian summer", she has envisaged Indian summer as her handsome lover who is ready to desert her in the month of 'hot August' signifying suffering. However, the beloved wishes for the last communion with her lover and this indicates her desire for immortality which Indian summer stands for. Behind her love of the sylvian landscape of the valley of 'Cashmere', one locates Dickinson's love for India in a big way. To her, as it is for Shelley, 'Cashmere' represents her ideal world of beauty, happiness, peace and spiritual solace. Her journey from 'Amherst' to 'Cashmere' and her desire to pluck a rose from the bower of 'Cashmere' indicate that India in the eyes of Emily Dickinson epitomizes a sure spiritual shelter of eternal happiness. (O. Donnel, Patrick, 1977, 21:1:62-73).

Besides Dickinson, there was Hawthorne who, like Keats was greatly influenced by Oriental tales of travels and discovery of romance and adventure, of which mention may be made of the *Arabian Nights* and the gothic Oriental tales. Luther S. Luedthke has written a seminal book under the title *Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Romance of the Orient* (1989) in which emphasis has been laid on the significant role that the Oriental tales and Romances played in shaping the form, characters and themes of his writings. Unlike the transcendentalists who were more interested in Indian philosophy, Hawthorne evinced keen interest in the adventure and exoticism of the 'gorgeous East' (Thomas Johnson H., 1979 : 1136) Jac, Tharpe (1972) on the other hand emphasizes the impact of the *Ramayana* and Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* on Hawthorne's *Rappaccini's Daughter* and *Roger Malvin's Burial*. Even Luedthe himself argues that there are close similarities between Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. The signet ring in *Shakuntala*, can be correlated with the Scarlet letter of Hester Prynne and there are close points of resemblances between *Shakuntala*'s son Bharat and Hester's daughter Pearl. Here it is important to note that Sir William Jones' translation of *Shakuntala* (1789) was republished in Boston periodical named *The Emerald* and the transcendentalist read it. Thoreau has already made reference to *Shakuntala* and Hawthorne might not have missed the chance of reading the same.

In Melville's masterpiece *Moby Dick*, the whale has been twice characterized as the first incarnation of God in Hindu mythology (the incarnation of fish), in Chapters 55 & 82 and therefore there is every possibility of the impact of Edward Moor's *Hindu Pantheon* (1810) on Melville. At the same time, Melville has presented in the character of mysterious 'whale', the demiurgic creative power of Brahma - the

lord of creation, the benevolent power of Vishnu - the lord of protection and the destructive power of Shiva - the lord of destruction.

The Indian Upanishads and the teaching - of *Bhagavad Gita* and Buddhism have gone a long way to enrich the thought process of great English and American writers of 20th century. Behind the mystic mind of the American poet Carl Sandburg scholars, locate the impact of *Bhagavad Gita* and his thirty three definitions of poetry are grounded upon Indic Mystical as well as philosophical thought. For instance 'Sandberg's observation that poetry is a search for syllables to know the unknown and the unknowable reminds us of the Vedic- Upanishadic view of 'poetry as 'incantation' - a fact which was later on established by Sri Aurobindo in his *Savitri* and *The future Poetry*. Again Sandberg's pantheism, identification with the animate and inanimate objects of the universe, immense love for masses of mankind and his view of time as an eternal river - all these sound characteristically Indian. Moreover, his long poem "Timesweep" has striking similarities with the chapter 10 of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The Bibhuti yoga (Chapter x) details the most eminent manifested glories of the ultimate reality - the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. The Lord reveals his most prominent glories (Bibhutis), to facilitate his devotees for remembering him.

The Lord introduces himself as Vishnu - the luminous of all Adityas. He is the sun, the wind, the moon, the fire, the bird of birds, mountain of all mountains - the Himalaya, the spring of all seasons and the Ganges of all the rivers. And thus the Lord pervades the whole universe and also transcends the same. In the poem "Time, Sweep" the poet describes 'I' with cosmic glory and identifies it as both creator and destroyer and concedes the fact that the sun, the wind, the earth, the fire, the ice, the

season are all powerful components of the 'mystic salt'. Sandberg's concept of 'I' is orientally viewed as 'one in all'. This is an echo of the *Bhagavad Gita* where Lord Krishna declares that He is the creator, preserver and the destroyer. (Carl Sandburg, 1969)

In the novels of J.D. Salinger, a reader is tempted to locate the Hindu view of life and critics like Tharpe, Jac, (10:107-115) and Josephine Jacobsen (1960:589), maintain that Salinger's fiction pursues religious insight and spiritual solution. (Jacobsen, Josephine, 1960, 589-91) Salinger's interest in Hindu religion and philosophy is widely reflected in his novels. In *Franny* Salinger presents an impatient plea for a contemplative life with emphasis on the activation of seven subtle cells in the body (Chakras). Franny indicates that the mystic eyes which is called the 'third eye' between two eyebrows is awakened only when subtle centres become active and powerful. At the same time, Franny is also well aware of the Indian mystics, meditation of the sacred syllable "OM" identified with "Brahman" in terms of meditative chanting (Japam). It is this repetition of the sacred syllable that leads ultimately one to escape from reality to the realms of spiritual bliss. Franny's knowledge of Hindu religious practices establishes the firm conviction that a contemplative life can bring in peace and happiness. The dialectics of the active and the contemplative which is manifested through yoga and disinterested action in the *Bhagavad Gita* influences Salinger to a great extent and the story of 'Teddy' testifies this point. Salinger has depicted Teddy as a mystic with the Oriental religious vision with due respect to meditation- an exalted state of meditation in which he realizes that God is everywhere and everything. (Elizabeth N. Kurian, 1987, Vol. 17)

The doctrine of disinterested action as exemplified by Keats in his poetry and in his theory of negative capability continued to influence the critical sensibility of Matthew Arnold. In his poetical discourses, Matthew Arnold is both an admirer of Keats and *Bhagavad Gita* and the influence of these two great sources on his theory of disinterestedness in literary criticism is undeniable. In his essay “The function of criticism at the present time”, Arnold prescribes that English criticism should be grounded upon the doctrine of disinterestedness which involves a free play of mind and of all subjects it deals with. At the same time, an ideal critic following the path of disinterestedness should remain impartial and should not be misguided by political and topical consideration of the period with which literary criticism has nothing to do. The theory of disinterestedness inspired Arnold to follow the path of honesty and action without depending on practical consequences, “Its business, is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them” (S. Ramaswami & V.S. Sethuraman, 28-29).

Like Keats, Arnold’s emphasis on theory of disinterestedness attained perfection in Eliot’s theory of impersonality of art as developed in “Tradition and Individual Talent”. Under the impact of the *Bhagavad Gita*’s doctrine of action in detachment, Eliot emphasized the extinction of self so as to establish his theory of depersonalization. To him, honest criticism is directed “not upon the poet but upon the poetry”. (S. Sivkumar (ed.) *Three Essays of T.S. Eliot*, 25)

Gita's emphasis on devoted action with humility, dedication and whole hearted surrender at the expense of pride, arrogance and self assertion is attested by Eliot in the following :

“The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (S. Sivkumar (ed.) Three Essays of T.S. Eliot, 20 An ideal critic is a dispassionate judge and like a man of action (Karmayogi) he has no personality to express but whole hearted concentration out of which results a new type of experience. Emotion and bias, selfishness and parochialism have no place in disinterested criticism : “Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion, it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality” (Siv. K. Kumar, ed. Tradition and Individual Talent).

What is true of a critic is true of a great poet, the benefactor of mankind who always strives to transmute his personal experience into something universally valid. This is nothing but an echo of the “Gita's” emphasis on action in detachment for the well being of society (*lokasangraha*). The impact of *Bhagavad Gita* on T.S. Eliot is further evident from the 3rd section of “Four Quartets”, whereas “Burnt Norton” is dominated by Heraclitean overtones of fire, “East Cooker is” overpowered with Christian implication of love and the “Dry salvages” inhabits a sunken world symbolizing distracted humanity. No man is an island and no island is an island, the river is within us whereas the sea is by reinforcing the law of Karma and this is direct impact of Buddhism and the theory of disinterested action (Karma) cannot be avoided in so far as we are caught in the play of Becoming. Real action in self sacrifice culminates in knowledge and pure love offered to the Divine. This world is Kurukhetra of the *Bhagavad Gita* where action links the past and future. Since karma

cannot be evaded, one has to work in freedom from fear and desire without depending on fruits of action:

“And do not think of fruit of action.

Fare Forward”

Finally, Eliot emphasizes in the light of the *Bhagavad Gita* with humility and devotion (bhakti) the importance of prayer and nishkama karma. The only wisdom we can hope to acquire is the wisdom of humility:

“Humility is endless and the rest is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action”.

Eliot has made direct reference to Krishna and Arjuna. Krishna’s admonish to Arjuna in “The Dry Salvages’ amply testifies Eliot’s interest in The *Bhagavad Gita*. At the same time, Eliot was well versed in yoga philosophy and Sanskrit language and there is no doubt about the fact that he went through Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutra-and the Upanishads*.

In his *After strange Goods* (1933:40-41) Eliot himself said :

“Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lenman and a year in the mazes of Patanjali’s metaphysics under the guidance of James Woods, left me in a state of enlightened mystification. A good half of the effort of understanding what the Indian philosophers were after - and their subtleties make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys - lay in trying to erase from my mind all the categories and kinds of distinction common to European philosophy from the time of the Greeks. My previous and concomitant study of European philosophy was hard better than obstacle. And I came to the conclusion- seeing also that the “influence” of Brahmin and Buddhist thought upon Europe, as in Schopenhauer, Hartmann and

Deussen has largely been through romantic misunderstanding - that my only hope of really penetrating to the heart of that mystery would lie in forgetting how to think and feel as an American or European, which for practical as well as sentimental reasons, I did not wish to do.” (S. Ramaswamy, 1988, 17-22).

The passage quoted above shows that Eliot learned Indic philosophy from Lenman, a Sanskrit scholar who had studied the Vedas under a German master. After having learned Indian Philosophy under Lenman for two years in 1911, Eliot studied Indian Philosophy again under J. H. Wood, a student of comparative religion and an author on yoga system of Patanjali. At the same time, he also learnt about Buddhism and in the fire sermon of ‘Little Gidding’ (*The Four Quartets*). He came under the influence of Buddhist ascetic ideals and emphasized purgation, self denial and detachment from the world. Under the guise of Christianity, Eliot in fact teaches Buddhist concept of renunciation and a doctrine of detachment from self, from things and from persons. His emphasis on sacrifice, detachment, control, humility, and peace are essentially Indian. This is further evident from the final section of *The Waste Land* under the title ‘What the thunder said’. Though Helen Gardner objected to Eliot’s introduction of Indian philosophy in the *Waste Land* and the ‘Dry Salvages’, one thing is certain that, the highest messages of peace, humility and sacrifice are rightly found by Eliot in Indian philosophy. For the devastating *Waste Land* created in the backdrop of the horrible World War that bedeviled humanity, Eliot finds the message of peace (shanti) uttered by the Upanishadic poet and the optimistic pronouncement of *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* echoed in the last line of the *Waste Land* :

“Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata

Shantih, Shantih, Shantih”

Eliot seems to say that at a time when Ganga has sunken, hope for return to fertility and salvation and rain consists in the philosophy of becoming charitable (datta), self restraint (damyata) and sacrifice (dayadhvam).

Thus , with her opulence and magnificence, profound philosophy and variegated religious systems, scenic beauty and artistic wonders, India has remained a wonderland for Western scholars, preachers, poets, philosophers, travelers and conquerors right from the heyday of civilization down to the climax of modernism.

Notes

1. For Arnold's views on disinterestedness exemplified by Keats, read his essay entitled "Keats" in *Essays in criticism* (second series, 1888) and for his interest in the Bhagavad-Gita see his early readings in *The Note Books of Mathew Arnold*, edited by H.F. Lowry, K. Young and W.H. Dunn, London, 1952, pp 551 ff. Kenneth Allott believed that Arnold's interest in the Bhagavad-Gita was awakened in 1945 by Victor Gollancz's Introduction to *History of the Philosophy*. See his paper 'Mathew Arnold's Reading - Lists in Three Early Diaries', *Victorian Studies*, II (1958-59), pp.254-66.
2. Buddhism proclaims 'Four Noble Truths' : (i), all life is sorrowful, (ii), the cause of suffering is ignorant craving (trsnā); (iii), sufferings can be healed; (iv), the way is the Noble Eight fold Path-Right view, Right Aspiration, Right

Speech, Right conduct, Right Mindfulness and Right Contemplation, Zimmer,
op-cit, p. 469.

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