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Metaphors of Cultural Revitalization in Adi Shankaracharya's *Saundaryalahari*

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By

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Letter of Approval

This Thesis entitled “Metaphors of Cultural Revitalization in Adi Shankaracharya’s *Saundaryalahari*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Om Prakash Subedi has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge this thesis is original, and no part of it was submitted earlier for the candidature of any researcher anywhere.

Date: March 2023

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Abstract

The ancient Hindu scriptures have evolved parallel to the ways of quotidian rites and rituals of Hindu culture. The play of metaphorical constructs in the texts, and scriptures has symbiosis between the culture and relative texts. The text Saundaryalahari authored by Adi Shankaracharya has exemplified such concept by the abundant use of metaphors to represent the culture, and to shape the culture to embrace the further cultural formation in Hindu societies. The metaphorical concept thus exploited in Saundaryalahari represents the ethos of the Hindu culture and propounds the guidelines for other spheres of life especially tantric along with daily ritualistic worshipping among followers. Adi Shankaracharya contributed this text in the rivalry between Buddhism and Hinduism in South Asian societies. Interestingly, Saundaryalahari became the foundational text for Shaktism for the tantric practices in the society, and it had hitherto impacted the paradigm shift tremendously for the thinking patterns of its followers. In order to examine the use of metaphors for the revitalization of the culture and Shakti Upasana, the text will be analyzed through some sorts of metaphors discussed in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's text 'Metaphors We Live By' specially foregrounding conducive metaphors, ontological metaphors and personification. The metaphorical grounding will be applied in the contemporary practice of Hindu culture so far, and the representation of the culture in metaphorical disguise in the text. The whole research has found the correlation between metaphorical concept in the text and culture with the apparent conclusion of how dissipated Hindu culture from its origin had been revitalized: the metaphors helped rejuvenate the esoteric Hindu culture to its full-fledged cultural significance.

Keywords: Cultural Rejuvenation, Metaphorical disguise, Tantra, Yoga, Alienation, Rites and Rituals

This research intends to excavate metaphorical survey in *Saundaryalahari* authored by Sanskrit scholar Adi Shankaracharya who is believed to have born in the 8th century. Over 300 texts including *Saundaryalahari* are attributed to his name even in his short life span: only thirty-two years. He bestowed *Saundaryalahari* after some practices of preaching Advaita Vedanta in earlier life. *Saundaryalahari* etymologically denotes ‘waves of beauty’ which is an anthology of lyrical poems consisting of 103 verses composed in Sanskrit Shikharini metre to eulogize and devoutly worship goddess Devi in the form of *Shakti* (power). It is a foundational text for Shaktism. The text has two parts: *Anandalahari* (waves of bliss) and *Saundaryalahari* (waves of aesthetics). *Anandalahari* consists of the first 41 verses, and rest of the text is *Saundaryalahari*. Notwithstanding, the whole text is titled *Saundaryalahari*. The text begins with the philosophical and some esoteric tantric practices in ancient Hindu tradition in the first part *Anandalahari*, and later it turns out to be the titillating explanation of every nook and corner of the female body in romantic and erotic way through miraculous metaphorical experimentation. Metaphors, for George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*, are carriers of the culture which orient the customary behaviors of their users whether it is conscious or unconscious way. The metaphysics of metaphors revitalized Hindu culture as a carrier of the ideology to embody the intention in the culture because it transforms the way we live, distorts the reality, and represents the intended ideology as in *Saundaryalahari*.

While going through the text what struck my mind was the abundant use of explicit metaphors in the text at the time when Buddhism was dominant holding the notion of austerity, celibacy and minimalism in South Asian countries like India, China, Thailand, and Nepal itself: how Hinduism replaced the dominant Buddhist

culture by the contribution of Adi Shankaracharya even in the countries where Buddha was born and got enlightened, triggered my mind. In such time, the text emerged paradoxically. As Shashi Tharoor writes that “Buddhism has hardly any strength or presence in the land of its birth, having been absorbed and overtaken by the religion it sought to challenge” (Tharoor 24). At the moment of Buddhism, people alienated towards the aesthetics of lives and as a result of this the tendency of marriage and sexuality was gradually declined among the religious practitioners. Even the teaching of Vedanta prioritized the celibacy, and it heartened the apotheosis of ascetic nature of the followers, and how such ideologically deployed metaphors had to be coated across the text? Finally, Adi Shankaracharya realized that such religious practices could not lead the line of genealogy of the people which might lead the world desolate in the decades to come. Given this, I think he composed the metaphorically loaded text with the hair-raising eulogy of the body of goddess Devi to rejuvenate the alienated society from the vibrancy of life. In order to justify the use of such metaphors, I have attempted to traverse the metaphorical concept in the text.

This research contends that how would Hinduism have succeeded to rejuvenate its conventional ways of living in Indian subcontinent must be the metamorphosis of mentality towards the day-to-day rituals and living standards and customs of the practitioners by returning into the praxis of what people had to live with, before Buddhism: the down-to-earth customary psychology. In order to identify the congenital politics of the metaphors and their action-led consequence in society, I will examine the minute ratiocination behind the deployment of metaphors to energize the Hindu culture against the pervasive Buddhism of the time.

What Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* argue regarding metaphors is that we live by the concept of metaphors. He further claims that

metaphors are pervasive in everyday life by impacting the customary behavior, and observes:

We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning down to the most mundane details..... Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. (Lakoff 12)

Moreover, Motilal Banarsidas asserts that *Saundaryalahari* is both a devotional poem and a tantric practice. The first part of the text deals with the essence of tantric practices with philosophical benefits.

The *Saundaryalahari* of Shankaracharya is a text of hymns to pray the Divine Mother. It is a poem of intense devotion. It also contains the Tantric concept of Shiva and Shakti, the Absolute and the Energy which are one in themselves. They are each *Sat, Chit, and Ananda*. These hymns contain auto-suggestion and self-hypnotism that help the spiritual aspirants in his upward path *samipya* and *sayujya*. (Motilal 124)

What else has to be added is that Shubhangana Arte argues goddess Devi to be the origin of the universe. She further states that “the primordial energy or Shakti is perceived as the source of the universe” (Arte 152). Similarly, she claims “Devi,

Shakti is looked upon as the embodiment of energy. For a devotee she is the ultimate support of his being and it does not even occur to him to subject her to analysis. For him the truth is that “She is” (Arte152)! Given this, the pivotal subject (Devi) in *Saundaryalahari* is perceived as an emergent entity of the cosmos. Thus, the text has been researched on the ontological aspect of the universe by her.

Many scholars have written and commented on the tantric and philosophical realms, and Devi as an ultimate source of universe in the form of power in *Saundaryalahari*; however, the metaphorical study has hitherto not been attempted in this text by the previous scholars. Some scholars also have researched on Kundalini awakening procedure based on the text, and others have written exegesis on devotional aspect on it. I found no scholar writing from the linguistic and literary perspectives on this text. I mark a point of departure from only tantric and other spiritual commentary and endeavor to analyze metaphorical study and their functions to shape the cultural orientation in my thesis.

The claim to be substantiated with textual evidence, *Saundaryalahari* has been chosen to examine metaphors which are used to perform their functions from the eyes of Lakoff and Johnson. The research of the metaphors regarding the carriers of the cultural dynamics looks how it plays a vital role to transform the society by unconsciously shaping the mentality of practitioners. Such examination in *Saundaryalahari* has never been a scholarly discourse before and the researchers have not hitherto seen the consequence this way. This research helps scholars behold the reality in innovative and different ways while analyzing the human nature and its mannerism towards the further actions and attitude.

I have applied the “metaphors as cultural bearers and carriers”, as suggested by Lakoff, intervening the inextricable combination of certain concepts with linguistic

devices to transform the human mentality and nature. The theoretical insight will be taken from George Lakoff's and Mark Johnson's "Metaphors We Live By" along with Denis Donoghue's "Metaphor" to justify my claim. Regarding my research methodology Lakoff argues that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff 24), and "we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines" (Lakoff 13). Because of the abundant use of metaphors along with philosophical move towards vivacious life and living in the text, *Saundaryalahari* has been chosen as it encapsulates varieties of traces and evidences of cultural revitalization with the help of metaphors in Hinduism. The translation of *Saundaryalahari* by Swami Tapasyananda and Uma Krishnamurti has been chosen for the analysis. Some international journals and articles published in different periodicals both online and offline which are available in library too are gathered as factual fountain to justify my claim as authentic sources.

It is interesting to note that the first part of *Saundaryalahari* which is called *Aanandalahari*, hides some philosophical secrets of tantra vidya which are believed not to be revealed to everyone, has been beautifully and diplomatically disclosed by using metaphorical title "*Saundaryalahari*" by the author. In this regard, Swami Tapasyananda in *Saundaryalahari*'s translation based on Laxmidhara's commentary writes that "the text is highly technical", and most of the texts "are out of print or beyond the reach of ordinary readers" for the sake of misuse of some technical aspects such as tantra and yantra worshipping in the society. Without the help of metaphors, the author would not have composed this text and revitalized the culture. Indeed, *Anandalahari* was already in practice without print, only the latter half is supposed to be authored by Adi Shankaracharya; however, the prime example of ideas in metaphorical disguise has been revealed through the name of *Saundaryalahari*. In

common sense, the text is composed by Adi Shankaracharya and thus the tradition of Shakti cult has been initiated, but the same tradition could be witnessed in many puranas and contexts in Hinduism such as in *Bhagawata Gita* which predates Adi Shankaracharya. In *Bhagawata Gita*, Lord Krishna “asks Arjuna to get down from the chariot and to pray to Durga, and Arjuna does so” (Tapasyananda 11). In this sense, it could be interpreted that the author has attempted to hide, and at the same time represented the esoteric knowledge only through metaphors so that some tantric practices would not be easily available to everybody without mental gymnastics and *Dikshya* form a competent guru as the text seems unfathomable for common readers without having specific knowledge in such genre: only playing with superficial semantics is not enough to decode the essence of the text. However, other cultural dimensions such as sexuality and other quotidian rituals could have been conspicuous to the latter part of the text. In order to excavate these ideas, one should be capable to play with metaphorical concept.

When it comes to *Saundaryalahari*, as titular semantics suggests, it encompasses, and while traversing through verses, permeates abundant ontological metaphors and metaphorical concepts in almost every sloka. In terms of ontological metaphors, Lakoff and Johnson argue that by “understanding our experience in terms of objects and substances allows us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances of a uniform kind. Once we refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them— and, by this means, reason about them.” (Lakoff and Johnson 32). According to this claim, it could be interpreted that ontological metaphors serve us to understand and experience a particular thing through different entities by imputing and identifying understandable quality within them. The evidence proportional to the ontologically referring entity as metaphor

could be seen even in the first verse while qualifying devotees which articulates that “how can one who has not performed meritorious deeds be capable of saluting or praising you, who is worshipped even by Hari, Har, Virinchi and others”

(Krishnaswami 10)? As the ‘meritorious deeds’ which are identifying metaphors that make one succeed praising the goddess which serves a referring entity type of ontological metaphors in this context. Almost all hymns have such use of metaphors throughout the text; however, I will only choose the ones which contribute to revitalize the Hindu culture by representing some cultural ethos through metaphors.

The fundamental nature of Hindu culture seems to have run parallel to metaphorically ornamented rituals as portrayed in *Saundaryalahri*. The Hindu tantric practices had started rejuvenating alienated enthusiasm of people towards their lives by tantalizing them by sexual orientation, which contributed to flourish the culture of tantric sex. On the other hand, the ascetic approach of Gautama Buddha to enlightenment had hitherto permeated almost all dimensions of cultural praxis of South Asian people: the tendency of being monks avoiding worldly pleasure could still be witnessed not only in Buddhist culture but also in some cults in Hindu cultures such as *Advaita Vedanta* and other *sanyasa* tradition. Adi Shankaracharya, before composing *Saunaryalahari*, propounded tenets of Vedanta to ascetic practice by critiquing Shakti, worldly hedonism or some occult power; however, he must have ultimately realized the significance of sexuality or shakti to continue generation of human beings, and he initiated the text by emphasizing the importance of reproduction system and sexuality in the very first hymn with a substantial influence in Indian subcontinent with metaphors. For example,

Shivah saktya yukto yadi bhavati saktah prabhavitum

Na ced evam devo na khalu kusalah spanditum api;

Atas tvam aradhyam Hari-Hara-Virincadivir api

Pranantum stotum va katham akrita-punyah pravavanti. (Slok No. 1)

Swami Tapasyananda translates that “United with Shakti, Siva is endowed with the power to create the universe. Otherwise, he is incapable even of movement.

Therefore, who except those endowed with great merits acquired in the past can be fortunate enough to salute or praise thee, Mother Devine, who art the adored of even Hari, Har, and Virinci?” (Tapasyananda 27). This hymn has used the metaphor of “shakti” (power) by imputing its attribute to sexual union between Shiva and Shakti as a lateral meaning in the first line. Here, the power of union between and Shiva and Shakti has been compared with the power or the essence of a man (Shiva) to create the universe. Without shakti, lord Shiva cannot move even an inch. Spiritually, Shiva connotes consciousness which is useless without the Shakti which is physical existence or matter in the world. Every being is an entity of matter and consciousness. Besides, it could be the impression of the text, particularly it could be witnessed in this first verse, that in Indian and Nepalese sculpture practice, the central figures Mahesvara (Siva) and Uma (Parvati) “sit in a posture of relaxed ease on a double lotus seat, the upper edge of which is decorated with a pearl motif. On Mahesvara’s left knee is poised Uma with her left leg placed horizontally across her right thigh in the posture known as *lalitasana*” (Pal 85). Such practices seem to base in *Saundaryalahari*’s description of Shiva-Shakti’s portrayal. The opening of the text begins with the metaphorical illustration of copulation to lead the human reproduction further by making them feel that sexuality is a form of puja (worshiping). “when Shiva is enjoined with Shakti, he is empowered to create. If the lord is not thus, he is indeed unable to even move” (Krishnaswamy and Venkatraman 10). In this, the author has intended to stablish the culture of tantric sex or sex in the form of positive

dynamics to lead a healthy world and culture thorough the metaphorical concept of sexuality by comparing this as a sanctified entity. In this concern, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* argue that the “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. They govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details” (Lakoff 12). They also substantiate their claims by arguing “human thought processes are largely metaphorical. The human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined” (Lakoff 14). It is, therefore, argued that the notion of tantric or common sexuality have been metaphorically established in the mindset of Hindus: the metaphorical felicity articulated thus in the text has shaped the tantric practices of sexual worshipping in Srividya with the help of *Saundaryalahari*. Consequently, this has influenced the familial convention as flourished before the emergence of Buddhism.

Furthermore, Adi Shankaracharya introduced Tantric cult into Vedic realm in metaphorical disguise in order to revitalize Hindu culture by deluding people that *Saundaryalahari* is only a text of hymns to deity thereby making it esoteric from unqualified practitioners, people would misuse the secret of this otherwise. Interestingly, the primary ideology of the author seems, in fact, to introduce such cult to those who were alienated and infatuated to heterodox paths such as Buddhism, Christianity and so on. The Tantric practice has been attempted to pass through metaphor which is called and claimed “conduit metaphor” by Michael Reddy. Moreover, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in this matter, argue that “linguistic expressions are containers for meanings aspect of the conduit metaphor entails that words and sentences have meanings in themselves, independent of any context or speaker. The meanings are objects part of the metaphor” (Lakoff and Johnson 8). In

this sense, in order to energize the Hinduism, the writer wraps up all the faculties and goals of Tantra as unified one in it, that is to say, *Saundaryalahari* functions as comprehensive combo of all Tantric cults. To illustrate, “Pasupati desisted, having deceived all the world, with the sixty-four spiritual disciplines, which are capable of generating a result, restricted to each individually. But, importuned by you, he caused this, your spiritual discipline which independently brings together as one, all the principle objects of human life, to descend to the surface of the earth” (Krishnaswami 52). This signals that after contributing 64 faculties of tantric practices which brings only a single benefit to the practitioners, Siva introduced the master tantra through Sreevidya as a unified whole which provides the practitioner all means of human life: Dharma, Artha (prosperity), Kama (sexuality), and Moksha (liberation). Therefore, it could be concluded that by using metaphors the author has endeavored to stablish this tradition among Hindus.

The Vedic and Tantric convergence by the use metaphors significantly contributed to cultural apotheosis as to consolidate the alienated Hindu society in different cults and sects by metaphorically comparing the overall purpose of tantra with Srividya. In retrospect, the Vedic and Tantric polarization divided the culture into two different sects: Vedic and Tantric. Regarding this “Tantrikas consider Vedic mantras to be almost powerless, because they regard their source, i.e. Vedic revelation, as a lower form of knowledge that cannot lead to liberation” (Jurgen 2). On the other hand, Vaidikas oppose the notion, and do not acknowledge “the Tantras as valid revelation and consequently regard Tantric mantras as impure” (Jurgen 2) because all the 64 faculties of Tantric disciplines hold the power to delude the world; for instance, “Pashupati desisted, having deceived all the world, with the sixty-four spiritual disciplines, which are capable of generating a result, restricted to each

individually” (Tapasyananda 79). Through Shree-vidya which entails *Saundaryalahari* as a constituent part, Adi Shankaracharya introduced Vedic Tantra which provides both Tantric and Vedic purposes to the practitioners: worldly pleasure and spiritual liberation. To cite a textual evidence,

Catuh-sastya tantraih sakalam atisandhay bhuvanam
Sthitas tat-tat siddhi-prasava paratantraih pasupatis;
Punas tvan-nirbandhad akhila-purusartha eka ghatana
Svatantram te tantram ksiti-talam avatitarad-idam. (Slok no. 31)

In this regard, Adi Shankaracharya popularized the practice of Srividya, which is a part of Vedic cult, wherein practitioners employ mantras from *Saundaryalahari* to “awaken the deity in the consciousness of the worshipper” (Jurgen 4). Similarly, the inclusiveness of Tantric and Vedic cults came into existence and practice through *Saundaryalahari* in Srividya although it was esoteric and quoted in metaphorical disguise in order not to make it accessible to everyone for the sake of misuse of Tantra. After all, the tantric dimension of *Saundaryalahari* transcends the ancient orthodox tantric cult, and establishes Vedic tantra per se which awakened the withering Hindu culture. It would have not been revitalized, rather would have vanished if it had not been disguised in metaphors because no tantric practice has been explicitly explained in mainstream text so far: metaphorical disguise seems the only way to do so.

Moreover, other identifying ontological metaphors could be witnessed in 27th sloka which breathes the life into Yogic and Tantrik cultures for the followers by representing some forms of worshiping in it which unprecedentedly contributed to revitalize the culture. Every quotidian action, in this sloka, is used as identifying ontological metaphor, for example, the praying devotees visualize and wish to “let the

speech be into muttered prayer, all manual tasks the symbolic arrangement of fingers in worship, let gait be the circumbulation of the deity, let food etc. be the offering of oblations, let sleep be the salutations” (Tapasyananda 74).

Japo jalpah silpam sakalam api mudra-viracana

Gatih pradaksinya-kramanam asanady-ahuti-vidhih;

Pranamah samvesah sukham akilam atmarpana-drise

Saparya-paryayas tava bhavatu yan me vilasitam. (Slok no. 27)

Here, all forms of speech, manual tasks, common movements, acts of having foods and sleeping have been respectively identified as muttered mantra, mudra, *pradakshina*, *ahuti*, salutation respectively as ontological metaphors. To illustrate, everything we do is metaphor of cultural and religious rituals according to this verse. Additionally, the worshipping rituals have been represented in the text, and people are inspired to follow them during worshipping; consequently, these rituals and methods are still in use significantly. To illustrate, the sloka takes the reference of some different Tantrik and Vedic procedures of worshipping which are utilized in different rituals such as *Japa*, *mudra*, *pradakshinya*, *ahuti*, *pranama* and so forth. Particularly in everyday Sandhyopashana which is an everyday ritualistic part of any Hindu, the practitioners perform *Mudra* (manual articulation) before meditating Gayatri Mantra. The practitioners “chant verses about 24 names of the mudras and express the activities of fingers” (Timilsina 75). Similarly, in ritual science in Hinduism, the worshippers circumnavigate the alter by the end as a part of worshipping. Another customary idiosyncrasy among Hindus is saluting by joining both the hands and often by sleeping in front of adorable persons or deity which could be the legacy of the text *Saundaryalahari*. The Hindus have the practice of performing *yagya* in which edible items are offered to fired alter that has been articulated in the text as everything that

are eaten is *ahuti* which is a metaphor used in the text. After all, everything that is performed everyday is imposed to identifying metaphor as worshipping to Durga because they are compared to worshipping. In this sense, it could be concluded that by the use of these ontological metaphors the writer has attempted to contemporize the above-mentioned rituals and culture by revealing them through the metaphorical portrayal so that Hindus unconsciously follow such culture.

In addition to that, the yoga in Hinduism contributes to one of the fundamental philosophical strands, both practically and theoretically, has been culturally strengthened through many verses, and among them the verse 100 serves a lucid explanation with some metaphors of yoga. The yoga literally refers to union to the source of own kind. The primary source of heat is the sun, and Hindus offer the heat to the sun, water to the moon and so on which signifies yoga (union) to their source. The attribute of yoga has been imputed to the offering the heat to the sun, and water to the moon, therefore, such comparison functions as metaphors. Similarly, as everything ultimately originates from Shakti, the word used to pray in this sloka is also offered to Shakti as yoga which is another example of metaphor. For example:

Pradipa-jwalavir divasa-kara-nirajana-vidhih

Sudha-sutes candropala-jala-lavair arghya racana;

Svakiyair-ambhodhih salila-nidhi-sauhitya-karanam

Tvadiyabhir bagbhis tava Janani vacam stutir-iyam. (Slok no.100)

Regarding yoga, Maharshi Patanjali in Patatanjali *Yogasutra* which is the authentic text for yoga states that “yoga is to still the patterning consciousness” (Chip Hartranft 4) and “then pure awareness can abide in its very nature” (Chip Hartranft 4). By this it is understood that only if we can still the mind and its tendency to think, we go back to our own very nature, and it is called yoga wherein the *aatma* (individual self or

identity) unites with the cosmic energy which is called *paramatma*. Regarding this notion, if we surrender ourselves and our every action wholeheartedly to Shakti, we unite with her which has been metaphorically represented by imputing and surrendering most of the daily actions of the practitioner into *Shakti* which is cosmic energy per se, and thus this becomes yoga. To exemplify metaphorical (referring) concept that is everything we do is of *Shakti* which stands as ontological metaphors, Swami Tapasyananda translates that “O source of all learning, this hymn addressed to thee composed of words that are already thine, just as doing *nirajana* (light waving ceremony) to the sun is only the offering his own light to him” (Swami Tapasyananda 160). Consequently, the whole Hindu culture follows the path of positive surrender to the very nature of everything as a form of yoga which has significantly psychologized to the mind of practitioners to orient them towards yoga through metaphors.

Turning to the revitalization of definitive cultural beauty of the women body that has been metaphorically illustrated in verse 79 is slim waist and weighty bosom. The bosom is personified as it has made goddess’ body turned downwards: the bosom has seemed to pull down her body like a tree in the riverbank turning towards river. Regarding personification what Lakoff claims is that “the physical object is further specified as being a person” (Lakoff, 7) and thus bosom is imputed as human being which pulls down the body of goddess and this functions as personification. For an instance,

Nisarga-ksinasya stana-tata-bharena klama-juso

Naman-murter nari-tilaka sanakais trutyata iva;

Ciram te madhyasya trutita-tatini-tira taruna

Samavastha-sthemno bhavatu kusalam saila- tanaye. (Slok no. 79)

Swami Tapasyananda translates that “O daughter of the mountain! O ornament of womankind! May safety be assured for thy waist, which, being slender, is laboring under the weight of thy breasts and therefore stooping, threatening to break under that weight, and whose precarious firmness is like that of a tree on a cracking river bank”. (Tapasyananda 141)

In this verse the waist of goddess mother is “naturally slim waist suffering fatigue by the weight of the bosom, curved in shape, and is as if breaking, with the stability similar to the state of a tree in the breached river bank” (Uma Krishnaswami 117). By this what we can understand in terms of perfect body of women is like goddess’ slim body with mighty and colossal bosom. Provided that Lakoff writes that “personification is a general category that covers a very wide range of metaphors, each picking out different aspect of a person or ways of looking at a person” (George 40). This claim is interpreted and proven by the comparison of bosom with a person in the verse. Therefore, it is concluded and culturally established that naturally slim waist and weighty bosom are the intrinsic qualities of a beautiful woman in Hindu culture; therefore, any female deity in Hinduism is portrayed in this way in temples.

In addition to that, the universe in Hindu culture is maintained by three distinct actions: creation, nurturing, and destruction. These actions are performed by the trinity gods who are Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwora, and such myth is again revitalized in this verse:

Taniyamsum pamsum tava carana-pankeruha-bhavam

Virinci samcinvam viracayati lokan avikalam;

Vahaty enam saurih katham api sahasrena sirasam

Harah samsudy ainam bhajati bhasito dhulana-vidhim. (Slok no. 2)

“Gathering a minute particle of dust from Thy lotus feet, Brahma the creator brings into being this universe (limitless and mysterious) without any imperfection. The sustainer Visnu as Adisesa somehow supports this universe (made out of that dust) with His thousand hoods. And Hara, the destroyer, crushing it into power, rubs the ashes all over His body (at the time of dissolution)”. (Tapasyananda 30)

In this verse, the author has again deployed ontological metaphor for the dust of goddess’ feet— the metaphor ‘the dust of goddess’ foot’ to create the universe. Such a particle of the dust has been imputed as an ‘identifying cause’ as a source of creation of the universe; viewing subtle dust of goddess’ feet “as an entity (which) allows us to refer to it, quantify it, identify a particular aspect of it, see it as a cause, act with respect to it, and perhaps even believe that we understand it” (Lakoff 33). The dust has been identified as an ontological metaphor to establish an aspect of culture for the way of cosmic creation. In this sloka, “the dust of Shakti’s feet is the universe” (Uma Krishnaswamy 16) which is gathered by Virinchi to create the universe which is believed to be carried by Vishnu with thousand heads, and when the opportune time comes, Hara turns this into holy ashes and rubs it in his body as a yogic and religious rites and rituals. Such a myth from the ancient Hindu scriptures has immensely rejuvenated the concept of trinity among the practitioners of Hinduism as a holy belief. The belief thus understood has a great influence among devotee for the worshipping of trinity god Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwora as major gods which could be witnessed and worshipped everywhere in Hindu temples and shrines.

Similarly, the notion is also explained in verse 25 by comparing the worshipping to the feet of goddess with the worshipping of three gods. For instance:

Trayanam devanam tri-guna-janitanam tava sive

Bhavet puja puja tava caranayor ya viracitah;

Tatha hi twat-pado' dvahama-mani-pithasya nimate

Sthita hy'ete sasvan mukulita-karottamsa-makutah. (Slok no. 25)

Swami Tapasyananda translates that “the worship done at thy feet, O consort of Siva, is also the worship of all the three deities Brahma, Visnu and Siva, who have origin in thy three *gunas* (rajas, sattva and tamas). They require no special worship, because they are ever waiting with their joined palms held above their diademed heads in salutation to thee by the side of the foot-stool of diamonds that bear thy feet.” (Tapasyananda 72)

The metaphor here has become Shakti as an identifying source for all three leading gods in Hinduism because her worshiping is compared with worshipping of them. For example, Uma Krishnaswami translates that the “homage made to your feet becomes homage to the three gods born of your three properties” (Tapasyananda 72). This could be interpreted that these three gods have been the same identity as that of goddess Shakti as they have been referred which is a metaphor used in this verse. Hence, this kind of metaphorical usage has contributed the prevalence of three gods as major gods in Hindu culture. This has directly revitalized the Hindu concept of creation which has established some of the cultural dimensions along with the practice of worshipping these gods as major gods.

Another Hindu culture revolves around the concept of incarnation of every creature in universe throughout the ancient Hindu scriptures which is again given the breath through the third verse using identifying ontological metaphors. Every line of this verse entails metaphors. To illustrate, Goddess Shakti is identified as savior for those who are “immersed in the ocean of births” (Uma Krishnaswami 13). In this line,

savior and Shakti are metaphorically compared. Apart from that goddess Shakti is identified and compared metaphorically as “the island city of the sun” (Krishnaswami 13) for spiritually ignorant people for the spiritually ignorant people this way:

Avidyanam antas-timira-mihira-dvipa-nagari

Jadanam caitanya-stabaka-makaranda-sruti-jhari;

Daridranam cinta-mani-gunanika janma-jalaghau

Nimagnanam damstra mura-ripu-varahasya bhavati. (Slok no. 3)

Similarly, Shakti (Durga) in this hymn is metaphorically identified as “the necklace of the Cintamani (Jewelry), for the impoverished” (Uma Krishnaswami 13). Moreover, it is more clearly and explicitly translated by Swami Tapasyananda this way for a detailed analysis:

“The dust of Thy feet is the Island City, wherefrom takes place the luminous sun-rise of illumination driving away the over-casting darkness of ignorance in the hearts of devotees. It forms the cluster flower buds, from which gushes forth the nectar of intelligence, enlivening the dull-witted. It is a veritable neckless of wish-yielding gems for the poverty-stricken. And, for those immersed in the ocean of Samsara, it becomes their uplifter like the Tusk of Visnu (which raised the earth from submergence in Pralaya waters when he incarnated as the Cosmic Boar”. (Tapasyananda 31)

This verse could be interpreted as one of the popularizing concepts of incarnation by the last lined metaphors Baraha as a cosmic Boar as the third incarnation of lord Visnu, or ‘before and after-live’ in common parlance among the devotees. The orthodox Hindu notion of continuation and transformation of energy body based on the karma (action) establishes the overall philosophy which is the Veda all about. Regarding this it is believed and argued that until and unless we liberate ourselves from the karmic circle,

every creature is destined to take another form of live after the present one. The other school of thought within Hinduism challenge this notion that is ‘Charvak’. This notion was challenged even by Buddha by postulating the iconoclast attitude. Buddha opposed the notion of incarnation. Interestingly, in Hindu culture even Buddha was documented as 9th incarnation of Vishnu through this sloka:

Matsya-kurmo-varahasca nara-simhasca vamana,

Rama-ramasca-krisnasca Buddha-kalki tathaivaca.

The verse claims that the first incarnation of Vishnu is fish species, the second one is turtle which can survive as both aquatic and earthbound lifestyle— more powerful than previous one, the third one was ‘Varah’(boar), the another one is regarded as half lion and half man following the dwarf man or like monkey species which is the inception of human life on earth even through the eyes of modern philosopher Charles Darwin in *The Origin of Species*. On the same way, another incarnated body is Rama and then Parashurama and Krishna. Krishna was regarded more powerful in comparison to the previous ones, the textual evidence quotes in Mahavarata “Krisnastu Vagawan Swayam” which means Krishna is a real god because he had all the qualities that a perfect man has to have such as adept at music, dance, singing, acting, attitude, apologizing, loving, playing with friends—making none unhappy; unfortunately, no evidence I found for meditating Krishna except talking about it rarely— probably Buddha taught to follow such culture to be quiet and mindfulness. Buddha is considered as the 9th incarnation and it is believed and claimed that the 10th incarnation would be Kalki, which will have all the qualities that the previous life forms had, with more powerful destructive quality to maintain the equilibrium for the continuation of the generation. Every incarnation is complementary of the lacking quality of previous lives— more powerfully shouldering the ethos of present time.

If this needs to be more detailed for the recent ones in hierarchy, before Krishna, Ram incarnated and lacked the quality of getting pleasure from women and giving respect to the women which is completely fulfilled by Krishna by playing, satisfying and revering many feminine entities. After that, Buddha was incarnated being the marital status with the quality of full meditateness which was partly lacked by Krishna which is meditateness. Now, the ethos of time has demanded the quality of fighting and struggling with the all evil-witted spirits which look impossible only through meditation. The ill-witted spirit should definitely be punished as well, and the equilibrium would be maintained among creatures on earth. In this sense, the challenge of Buddha of not believing incarnation or “pre-after-life concept” has been supplanted with the re-establishment of the notion of after-life in Hinduism.

Therefore, as claimed by Lakoff and Johnson regarding cultural bearer, the text has become a prime representative and cultural bearer of the above-mentioned notion through the metaphorical concept. In such belief, Hindus believe every form of incarnation as god, worship them by different cults commonly who gave their best at their times. The culture has thus been revitalized at the time of the author.

The rivers had been revered and worshiped from the ancient time in Hinduism. The culture of prioritizing rivers in many rituals has been regenerated and consolidated in *Saundaryalahari* by hymn 54 by metaphorically comparing them with Shakti.

Pavitrikartum nah Pasupati-paradhina-hridaye

Daya-mitrair netrair Aruna-dhavala-syama-ruchivih;

Nadah sono-ganga tapana-tanaye'ti dhruvam amum

Trayanam-tirthanam upanayasi sambhedam anagham. (Slok no. 54)

Swami Tapasyananda translates that “O mother who art ever devoted to Siva! It seems certain that with thy kindly eyes having the three colors of red, white and black, thou presentest to us the confluence of the holy rivers of Sona, Ganga, and Yamuna to sanctify ourselves (be getting immersed in them)” (Swami Tapasyananda 118). In this hymn, “the confluence of white water in Ganga and the blue waters of Yamuna at Prayaga (Allahabad)” (Tapasyananda 118), and red colour of Sona river have been compared metaphorically with Shakti— the color of Shakti’s eyes resembles that of three rivers to sanctify the devotee which also signifies the meditation in the middle of eyes where the major nerve system goes up-to the cerebrum. The metaphorical comparison to the attribute of Shakti has oriented Hindus to worship and revere such rivers because this is associated with their belief.

Furthermore, according to the verse, “Shakti is confluence of the holy rivers” so that the Hindus or the followers of Saktism are believed to benefit themselves of such holy rivers by worshipping and praying Shakti. This has psychologized the Hindus to be aware of, and revere rivers by worshiping or giving paramount importance to them. This could be witnessed as an evidence in many other texts in Hinduism before and after the composition of *Saundaryalahari* because of that many Hindus, if possible, go to perform any funeral rituals in the beach of rivers. The bank of Bagmati river, for an instance, has many religious and cultural conducts in special occasions. Even Hindus go to the bank of such river to cremate the deceased body once someone passes away in their family and society because rivers are portrayed holy places in such text, and it is believed that the *Atma* will reach the spiritual domain or liberate if they are cremated in such holy bank of the river. Everyday in the bank of Bagmati river one can experience the live cremation rituals every day. Even most of the Hindu temples and shrines situate on the bank of such rivers. In addition to that in some auspicious

days such as *Ekadasi* and festivals like *Chhath*, many Hindus go for the bathing for the purification purposes and other religious values. Every *Yagya* procedure in Hindu culture, the holy water from holy rivers is required to purify the surrounding at the inception of any kind of religious happenings. Before the creation of the text, Mahadeva is portrayed with the river in his head and the importance of the river and water of such holy sources could also be witnessed as an abode of god Visnu who resides in the midst of ocean according to the Hindu Scriptures. To come to an end, the culture of worshiping and venerating rivers or using rivers as holy entities has been revived by Adi Shankaracharya in his composition *Saundaryalahari* by comparing metaphorically to Shakti.

The culture of chastity in Hinduism has a great importance for a successful marital flourishing and maintaining an ethical life unlike unethical animals. While defining this concept, Matt Fradd articulates that “chastity is not a momentary feeling, but a habit of the will that gives us the power to say ‘no’ – to sex outside of the relationship of marriage, and to sex inside the relationship of marriage when it does not further the unity of the spouses. It also encourages us to say ‘yes’ to sex that expresses and nurtures the unifying married love (Matt Fradd 36)”. The sex only between own husband and wife functions as a way of great and blissful life from Matt’s point of view and the same notion is believed by Hindus. The word *sati*(chaste) is used in Sanskrit language to title this concept which literally refers to ‘pure’. How a woman becomes pure has been stated this way by Chanakya:

Suddham Bhumigatam toyam shuddha nari patibrata,

Shuchih kshemakaro raja santosho brahmanah shuchih.

Miles Davis translates that “Water sweeping into the earth is pure; and a devoted wife to her husband is pure; the king who is the benefactor of his people is pure; and pure

is the brahmana who is contented” (Miles Davis 32). In this aphorism, he states that the woman who is faithful and loyal and does not have adultery is pure woman. Such purity plays a vital role in Hindu culture. In *Saundaryalahari*, the author addresses Shakti (mother goddess) by the word *Sati* which is a metaphor. In the eyes of the author goddess mother is pure who is only devoted to Siva, she has been compared as purity as an identifying ontological metaphor in this verse:

Virincih pancatvam vrajati harir apnoti viratim

Vinas am kinaso bhajati dhanado yati nidhanam;

Vitanri mahendri vitatir api sammilita-drsa

Maha-samhare’smin viharati sati tvat-patir asau. (Slok no. 26)

Tapasyananda translates that “Virinci (Brahma) is reduced into elements: Hari (Visnu) retires into passivity: Kinasa (Yama the god of death) himself dies; Kubera the god of wealth meets with his end: and Indra with all his followers closes his eyes in destruction. When such, O sati (chaste consort of Siva), is the state of all beings at the time of the total dissolution (mahasamhara) of the universe, thy husband Sadasiva alone is sporting. (Tapasyananda 73)

By the use of ontological metaphor ‘Sati’ to address mother goddess, the author has diplomatically psychologized the *Saundaryalahari*’s readers to be *sati* (chaste). The text also signifies the power of being chaste by explaining her to be “the state of all beings at the time of the total dissolution of the universe” (Tapasyananda 73) and because of her chastity her husband is all powerful and sports alone even in such a horrifying situation in which everything else goes to an end; needless to say, even the god of death dies in such situation. The readers of this text unconsciously embrace the notion of being chaste. In this sense, the author has revitalized the culture of being chaste in own marital life by the use of ontological metaphor.

To conclude, the text *Saundaryalahari* authored by Adi Shankaracharya incorporates numerous metaphors and metaphorical concepts of cultural revitalization. Some verses have shouldered Hindu's culture embodied within metaphorical comparison which have psychologized the minds and ideology of Hindu people across the Hindu society in the time when Buddhism was flourished which dominated Hindu culture tremendously; as a result, most of the Hindus were proselytized into Buddhists. He became to reform Hindu culture by the diplomatic use of metaphors, otherwise even today, Hindus do not seem to talk about Tantra and sexuality publicly, or they intentionally do to prefer to talk about it. Adi Shankaracharya revitalized the culture by defeating Buddhism and other communities by logical argumentation and stablishing the Vedic and Tantric conversance, sexuality as worshipping, day-to-day rituals, yoga, notion of beauty of women body, the rituals of worshipping three gods as major leading gods, before and after life or the concept of incarnation, revering rivers, and chastity. Therefore, *Suandaryalahari* has revitalized the weakened and encroached Hindu culture through the diplomatic use of metaphors in *Saundaryalahari*.

In order to express any thought and ideology, metaphors serve an agency for euphemistic and connotative expression for any subject matter. The author has used a range of metaphors to foreground some cultural and sacramental rituals; otherwise, he would not have been able to expose such a secret of Tantra and *Vij* (seed) mantras, as well as such an erotic and esoteric art if he had not used metaphors. Not only metaphors have helped to articulate such subjects, but also have been grounded culturally in the text. In this sense, metaphors as cultural bearers have played a role to demystify the Tantra and sexuality along with other daily worshipping. Thus, the metaphors in *Saundaryalahari* helped revitalize the Hindu culture.

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