



Philosophy And Metaphysics: The Body & Soul with The Armour of Ethics and Aesthetics

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ABSTRACT

Life carries the essence of eternity while nature has the trait of existentialism, and they both carry a unique connection in the ethical functioning of the human body and soul. The relation of the soul inside the human body with cosmic energy has always ignited and motivated the philosophical belief and understanding of the people. For centuries man has spent life discovering new options of comfort living and developed life but amidst all these scientific and materialistic developments he has always remained a failure to establish a spiritual alignment with the physical world of reasons, nationalism and materialism. It is quite intriguing that in spite of attaining all the achievements which had once sounded as impossible, men have yet remained unsatiated, and argumentative in terms of philosophy and ethics. The paper will take a deeper look into the works of the literary age when people through their literary works had tried to make the society aware of the undetached metaphysical relation with the surreal and sublimity. During the nineteenth and twentieth century when the human world was distorted by wars, revolutions, and discriminated understanding of religion the painters and poets through the movements like surrealism, Pre-Raphaelites, Metaphysical poetry brought a halt to the loud, bold and impulsive expression. The paper will discuss in detail how the aesthetics and ethics were brought to revival through different literary works.

Keywords: -philosophy, metaphysical poetry, ethics, spiritual alignment, aesthetics

1. INTRODUCTION

Life and literature are soulmates; they complement each other to provide a complete, conclusive meaning to human existence. Be it life contributing to literature or literature guiding the course of life, human beings have developed their philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics for the greater good through both. Since ancient times, philosophy has created the path through which humanity has not only received surviving elixirs of ideology but also guiding frameworks for living. Human civilization has always relied on documentation, as recorded texts act as guides, mentors, and pioneers for moral decision-making. Literature prior to and during the twelfth century focused heavily on shaping philosophies that served as pioneers for human values and social norms.

Since human beings first emerged, civilization and its associated norms have evolved significantly. As humanity developed the skills of reasoning and questioning, strictly confined philosophies began to weaken. The physical proof of an idea became more valuable than the sublime preciousness of an unproven concept. The causes of this shift are manifold, depending on the perspective and analysis of the observer. However, viewed through the lens of literature, eons of colonialism emerge as a primary driver. A culture that equated being right with being in power transformed traditional philosophy into metaphysics.

Consequently, a clash between human desire and the laws of nature was inevitable—a clash where humanity holds endless queries while nature maintains a deeply rooted, firm stand. Such clashes do not end in winning or losing; instead, they generate new avenues of learning for future generations. From this friction between human expectation and natural order emerged the formalization of Metaphysics.

Neither the term nor the concept of metaphysics was entirely new to humanity. Aristotle famously explored it under the terms "First Philosophy" or "Theology", a foundational framework later detailed in foundational commentaries such as Cohen and Reeve's (2000) analysis of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Aristotle pursued this understanding in the 4th century BCE, developing the doctrine of "First Philosophy" to demonstrate how mathematical objects and the cosmos constitute the conditions that make life possible. This deep connection between life, cosmos, and literature underscores how neither domain could fully exist in the absence of the other.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The drive to accumulate knowledge alongside the impulse to govern began cropping up globally around the 14th century (and in India by the 15th century), initiating a breakdown of regional boundaries in terms of ruling, exploring, observing, and analyzing. As natural law dictates, the advent of the unknown creates a state of confusion. With early scientific revelations—such as the Earth revolving around the Sun—confronting long-established, subjective scientific traditions, Western colonizers found it difficult to grasp and synthesize the complex civilizations they encountered during the expansion of the British Empire.

Ironically, the lack of a broader rational viewpoint among Westerners, combined with the absence of balanced Oriental discourse, led directly to the exploitation of native populations under colonial rule. Humanity was divided into two main groups: the dominants and the dominees, both holding fast to their respective ideals and beliefs to remain hopeful. When these beliefs touch upon the core reason for existence, it becomes irrelevant whether the underlying philosophy has empirical backing.

For centuries during the colonial period, philosophy remained in this state until the 17th century, when the literary critic Dr. Samuel Johnson brought a broader view of metaphysical philosophy into mainstream critical discourse (Ackermann, 1933). What Aristotle had articulated centuries prior was now being re-examined by the world through a new critical vocabulary. Ideas and beliefs that had long served as the shoulders of human community were suddenly called to stand behind the bars of empirical proof and logic.

Human nature leans toward finding concrete proof for everything in its environment, especially those structures that dictate rules and ethics. While philosophy satisfies soulful yearning and psychological hunger, it cannot be uniformly imposed upon everyone with equal intensity. As human civilization grew, materialistic developments marked their significance in daily life. Naturally, human curiosity, inquisitiveness, and the thirst for creation expanded.

While socio-political history documents clear triggers for global revolutions, basic human inquisitiveness plays an undeniable role. Industrial revolutions would not have been possible had Paleolithic humans not learned to fashion primitive tools. The knowledge of making and utilizing tools ultimately brought modern industry into existence. Until a need or curiosity arises, knowledge wanders aimlessly in a dark forest. The moment that wandering knowledge meets the light of intellect, it transforms into actionable wisdom.

Philosophy exists inherently within everyone, though its shape varies. Combined with intellect, philosophy takes the form of metaphysics—turning personalized, abstract concepts into structured ideologies with deep contextual impact. This is why metaphysical poets expressed profound ideas regarding love, religion, and morality. These three domains form the soul, armor, and aesthetic capacity of human life. As demonstrated in his body of work, poets like John Donne used metaphysical framing to give readers deep insight into the everyday details of human existence (Donne, 2002).

3. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Love is both the soul and armor of human life—the primary reason for existence and the joy of yearning. Subtle and delicate like a soul, love possesses an invincible strength that protects individual and societal ethics. In personal relationships, love introduces initial realizations of answerability and accountability. At the societal level, love rises above mere accountability to set examples and guide future generations. While an individual explores love for peace and pleasure, society often attempts to confine love within set norms.

John Donne's celebrated poem, "The Sun Rising", provides a clear depiction of love so profound that the speaker loses any identity outside of being his beloved's lover (Donne, 2002). His dedication reaches a state of overwhelming devotion where he commands the sun to fulfill its universal duties simply by shining upon their bed:

"To warm the world, that's done in warming us. / Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere; / This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere."

Metaphysical understanding provides the conviction that true devotion—whether to a lover, the Almighty, nature, or the inner self—offers freedom of expression while cleansing internal vices and confusion. While Donne asserts his love by obliging the sun to center its cosmic duties on his bed, other metaphysical poets like George Herbert depict the frustration of struggling under societal pressures to lead an idealized, strictly controlled life. Yet, as Herbert rants, an internal voice calling him "Child" brings immediate peace, demonstrating how metaphysical reflection restores inner tranquility.

Human civilization functions like a perennial river, pushing forward regardless of obstacles. The presence of philosophy and metaphysics serves as its backbone. While Donne's passionate love might sound extreme to those unacquainted with deep intimacy, few can deny the universal disturbance caused by chaotic, materialistic living. Amidst this chaos, the inner soul seeks quietude—whether through W.B. Yeats' memory of the lake isle of Innisfree or Alexander Pope's reflections on the peace of living close to nature.

During the social crisis of 17th-century England, trust in both the Crown and Parliament eroded. As England focused its political energy outward on colonial expansion, internal balance was compromised, prompting literature to turn toward philosophy and metaphysics to preserve human ethics and aesthetics. By the Victorian era, broader pressures emerged through industrialization, social transformations, and shifting economic struggles. Whenever humanity becomes trapped in the basic struggle for livelihood, the immediate philosophy of earning bread often overrides abstract spiritual reflections.

Faith, however, remains a connection between human life and its core beliefs. Conceptual expressions in art and literature consistently find ways to reconnect with the inner soul. Whenever traditional structures fall short of imparting ethics, art catches the strain. The fine arts follow this same trajectory, notably seen in the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

During periods of financial crisis, war, colonialism, and Orientalist scrutiny, the Pre-Raphaelites introduced an artistic focus on moral sincerity, nature, medieval legends, and social issues through detailed, romanticized precision (Rossetti, 1898). The works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti reflect these principles. His poem "The Blessed Damozel" presents the simple, comforting idea of a celestial figure watching over humanity from the golden bar of Heaven, serving as a confidant for human prayers (Rossetti, 1898):

"The blessed damozel leaned out

From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven."

Rossetti's imagery links individual human emotion directly with the cosmos, bridging physical reality with metaphysical comfort.

Nature frequently acts as a provider, mentor, and confidant. This candid relationship with nature appears across diverse literary traditions, from Andrew Marvell's metaphysical reflections in "Thoughts in a Garden" (Marvell, 1962) to Lewis Carroll's surrealist exploration of the subconscious mind in *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll, 2024). Carroll's work demonstrated how dreams and subconscious logic could serve as narrative devices to question rigid, everyday realities (Carroll, 2024).

When societies face socio-political confusion, surrealism and dream-logic provide a creative refuge. Works like Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* or Roald Dahl's *The BFG* (Dahl, 2007) engage younger audiences while offering mature minds an opportunity to re-examine lost ethics away from materialistic pursuits. Dahl's portrayal of dreams as tangible, preserved items highlights how abstract thoughts shape real-world comfort and moral understanding (Dahl, 2007).

4. CONCLUSION

Philosophy is the soul of human thought, brought into tangible focus through metaphysics. This dynamic relationship develops ethics and aesthetics, fostering a sense of duty toward society and the natural world. The strength of philosophy lies in its abstract nature; even when metaphysics grounds these ideas in reality, abstraction remains central.

This abstract quality allows individuals to shape principles according to their personal context, though it can also lead to deviations from righteousness. Surrealist philosophies addressed this by juxtaposing contrasting ideas and rejecting rigid rationality to highlight the power of the subconscious mind (Breton et al., 1936). As historical challenges grew more complex through world wars and societal shifts, surrealism evolved further (Bigsby, 2017).

With the continued growth of industrialization, surrealism transformed into Dadaism, an artistic movement asserting that if art encompasses values and romanticism, it must also make space for irrationality, non-sense, and the rejection of elite conventions (Bigsby, 2017). This transition allowed literature to directly reflect the cultural deformities of the early 20th century, setting the stage for modern literature.

Philosophy (Abstract Soul) —► Metaphysics (Grounded Realities) —► Surrealism / Dadaism —► Modern Individualism

The modern age is defined by individualism. Individuals carry the personal responsibility of balancing basic human desires with ethical principles. The physical body experiences immediate, material demands, which can weigh heavily on the psyche. Literature often illustrates how small, simple moments of aesthetic clarity relieve this burden—much like the speaker in Robert Frost's poem who finds renewed purpose after a dusting of snow falls from a hemlock tree, realizing he has "miles to go before I sleep." Similarly, John Donne asserts the ultimate triumph of the spirit over physical mortality in his sonnet "Death, Be Not Proud" (Donne, 2002).

In today's post-colonial, post-modern era—where technology and artificial intelligence frequently shape communication, values, and global standards like the Sustainable Development Goals (Sharma, 2023)—the aesthetics of human expression remain vital. Much like the body requires a soul, human civilization

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