

## Gary Snyder: Reverencing the Body

**Sarangadhar Baral<sup>1</sup>**, Professor of English, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

**Sourav Upadhyaya<sup>2</sup>**, Ph. D. scholar, Department of English, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

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### Abstract

Snyder's conception of the body, especially of the female body, is radical and reverential. He left Japan in 1967-68, and after a decade long absence, he returned to USA, where the second wave of feminism was brewing. But its radical social appeal to Snyder seemed a non-event, because he has had a clear conviction of what real freedom means, and more so, what the female body in essence is. To him, the body male and female is the gateway to great consciousness, a path to the nirvana, as the Zen Buddhist would understand. Snyder, an American Beat, has drifted off the fleshy hook of the body, and learnt the knowledge the Zen way, of course, a hard way. The study of Zen empowers him with the radical knowledge of esoteric ideas. Nonetheless, he learns that study of books and intellectual labors are a minimal part of the knowledge, while faithful practice of the Zen Way enables one to reach the unattainable. Moreover, Snyder has emphasized the sacred importance of the female body. In this, one can see a unification of Western and Eastern traditions. But his pluralist vision of the body goes further than a mere harmonization of odd perspectives or radical feminism per se. His conviction travels toward a deeper source of the human life, which Lawrence would sensualist or visualize and Zen celebrate with the most

authentic no-mind passion. Thus, this paper is an attempt to examine and assess a range of fascinating aspects in Snyder's poetry involving the body metaphor.

**Keywords:** feminine, radical, body, Zen, agaric, consciousness

Gary Snyder: "Let reverence for life and reverence for the feminine mean also a reverence for other species."  
("Plain Talk", T1, 93)

### Introduction:

Snyder's conception of the body, especially of the female body, is radical and reverential. He left Japan in 1967-68, and after a decade long absence, he arrived in America, where the second wave of feminism and its radical social appeal to Snyder seemed a non-event, because he has had a clear conviction of what real freedom means, and more so, what the female body in essence is. To him, the body male and female is the gateway to great consciousness, a path to the nirvana, as the Zen Buddhist would understand. Snyder, an American Beat, has drifted off the fleshy hook of the body, and learnt the knowledge the Zen way, of course, a hard way, because the body is a beautiful fact, a way to attain

liberation beyond material and socio-historical imperatives. The study of Zen empowers him with the radical knowledge of esoteric ideas. Nonetheless, he learns that study of books and intellectual labors are a minimal part of the knowledge, while faithful practice of the Zen way enables one to reach the unattainable.

Moreover, Snyder has emphasized the sacred importance of the female body. In this, one can see a unification of Western and Eastern concepts. But his pluralist vision of the body goes further than a mere harmonization of odd perspectives or radical feminism per se. His conviction travels toward a deeper source of the human life, which D. H. Lawrence would sensualize or visualize, and Zen would celebrate with the most authentic no-mind passion. Thus, this paper intends to examine and assess a range of fascinating dimensions in Snyder's poetry involving the body metaphor. To Snyder, the body is the natural mode of the symbols being materialized; it is a symbol-conscious process.

## II. Love the Body:

Many of the poems present the poet's moments of encounter with the body. Especially the female body as poetically projected ranges from the young to the old. Not only this. His poetry indicates the subject of enhancing consciousness in meeting with the body, and thus, the body has been associated with the hill and water bodies, the mythical and holy bodies, with the mode of vision and the experience of mysteries. The body is androgynous ethereally and void metaphysically. And

further, it is endless as well as empty in Zen terms. Snyder muses: "Depth is the body." Whether it is "internal physical states – yoga systems", or "soil conservation/ reforestation/ birth control / (all) spelling reform": 'love the body' (EHH, 40). The Zen sensibility above stresses that without the body, no system holds; without depth, the body is bound to the superficialities of the flesh, to the Wheel of births and deaths. The urgent sense of the body in Snyder becomes apparent obviously in interactions with the female, which points to his youth. This sense evolves gradually in experiential encounters, the value and symbol of which owe much to his Zen practice in Japan and America.

There is a set of songs in the "Regarding Wave-II" (RW), which too recalls, plays, or recaptures nuances of such experiences but in fresh images that point to the esoteric traditions of the East only. In the context of body-bursting consciousness, a poem "Song of the Tangle" recalls a raw experience built on thighs folded and 'drinking top class *sake* that was left for the god' and lovers enjoying 'cicada singing' which is but a 'swirling in the tangle.' Similarly, "Song of the Slip" is a 'serpent-sleep dream,' a clear reference to the Tantric (Vajrayana) ritual practice of lovers in a *mandala* group. Besides its public dismissal in the East, it is respected in esoteric cults for raising higher consciousness. The ancient tradition reminds of Vatsyana of the sixth century BCE (approx.) of India, when other civilizations were not awakened to theorize love-arts or erotic aestheticism. The poem reinforces a vision of 'making home in the whole.' A celebration of the

female organ and its power and place in what is called the coitus meditation as played in the “Song of the View,” and the eating of each other’s living seeds and roots including in the process of love making as in the “Song of the Taste” are a few remarkable knocks of consciousness-enhancing praxis. The distinct mode of presentation in all these songs is without rhetorical flourish, without narrative graduation; the mode is kept sensitive to momentous awareness of the body and flesh engendering that particular feel. The style reinforces this as the ‘excellent emptiness’ in the female flesh or in the roots underground, ‘the clustered points of light spun out of space’ such as in the poem.

Snyder’s transformed vision about the woman is not got without a price of sorts. His “unholy loves” at Cartegena, when he was “eighteen” years old are said to bring him tears as he recalls:

“Cartegena swamp of unholy loves!”

And wept for the Indian whores  
who were younger than me, and I  
was eighteen

(“Cartegena”, RCMP)

In such an unholy love that he messed with, genuine respect for the feminine is lost; perhaps it is a lesson never learnt early. The memory of thoughtless action at the edgy sensual joy brings guilt and tears now. The love with Robin during school days and his marital happiness with Joanne Kyger and Masa Uehara are endearingly remembered and celebrated. Even when ‘a girl’ left him at “nineteen” and did not meet

him, again; the poet in his unfulfilled self, images the woman as “a giving stream” and thus imagines his beloved to be “a Hindu Deva-Girl,”<sup>1</sup> who, according to the tradition, offers her love to gods and remains pure. Snyder’s poetic economy fails to render proper sense of this human-divine tie of love. This sensibility is amply available in the Indian bhakti traditions, in Mirābāi and Mahādeviyākka. A brief example is cited of Mahadeviyakka (South India) here: “Like a silkworm weaving/ her house with love/ from her marrow, / and dying/ in her body’s threads /winding tight, round / and round, / I bring/ desiring what the heart desires” (Ramanujan 98). What is radical in this love is a transformation of both body and desire that characterizes the human-to-divine desire rather than the human-to-human tie.

Snyder celebrates old age, old bodies, and older women (reminiscent of Amerindian symbols) along with young women with softer breasts. The breast is both a biological and sensuous metaphor for a higher apprehension, to Snyder: “The nipples darker, / Eyes clear and warm. / Naked” (NN, 364). And again, he celebrates the breast as a door to knowledge in his poem “Breasts” which likens the breasts to ‘philosophers’ “Who hold back the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gary Snyder, “For a Far- out friend”, RCMP. The term ‘Hindu Deva-girl’ stands for “Deva-Dassi”. The poet has possibly got this idea from his reading of H. Zimmer’s *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (1946). In ancient India there was a tradition of ‘Devadassi’ or Girls dedicated for life and in service to gods and temples. The girls lived celibate dancing before gods and were regarded as married to gods only.

bitter in mind/ To let the more tasty/  
Wisdom slip through / for the little  
ones, / who cannot take the poison so  
young.” (AH, 103-4). In Snyder, there is  
no intent evident to fantasize elegant  
women, fashionable radicals or new  
avatars in modern times.

### III. Feminine Principle Across Cultures:

Further, his quest for an apprehension of that mystique or pure beauty through her body may be one of the reasons why his important volumes begin with the subject of the feminine. The *Myths & Texts* begins with Io (this Greek goddess, identified with Egyptian Isis) and the May Queen (goddess of nature and summer flowers, later coinciding with veneration of Mother Mary), and also the *Turtle Island* with ‘Anasazi’ (of the ancient Pueblo culture) growing “fields of corn and beans” while sinking deep in earth up to her “hips in gods.” Further, *The Back Country* begins with an Amerindian subject of Blackbear “married to a woman.” His *Regarding Wave* celebrates woman more sophisticatedly in elemental terms as ‘wyf, veiled and vibrating.’ In all this, one is aware that the body, the woman, the earth and the goddess are interconnected in a whole ecosystem.

In the poem, “Old Woman Nature” (her significant presence in Amerindian folklore) the poet realizes a deep correspondence between nature and “the old woman” for both nourish human life. Snyder’s thought and feelings for the feminine are expressed in his characteristic candor on an unanticipated line in another poem:

The oldest and nakedest women  
more the sweet,  
And saw their first old withered  
breasts  
Without an inward wail of sorrow  
and dismay  
Because impermanence and  
destructiveness of time  
In truth means only, lovely women  
age –

(“A stone Garden”, RCMP)

In the same poem, the poet also bemoans that the “Muse” whose loving spirit “dances through jewelled trees and lotus crowns” and through the mulching ‘cow’, but has “gone astray” in these days. Aspects of ageing, destructive time and impermanence of the ‘lovely’ body are reconciled in a calm awareness.

Snyder’s faith in the body comes close to the Easterner’s and the Amerindian’s in its varied connect with the idea of Mother Earth. The earth as mother is pervasive in primary cultures of the world, as is worshipped in Mediterranean cultures as the mother of all life, as Terra Mater or Tellus Mater (Eliade 156), and among the Zuni Indians she is the primordial mother of the Four Directions (Busland 120). In the Navajo language, the earth is called Naestsan, literally meaning the “horizontal” or “recumbent” woman (Eliade 157). One of the most popular Amerindian feminine symbols concerning the spiritual bond between woman and the earth is Old Spider Woman or Grandmother Spider in pan-Pueblo traditions. She is “the creator of the world through the agency of language,” and she “originates the ‘sun wise’ cycle” (Swan:

1988, 230-31). Such Amerindian beliefs on language and the mother figure for its genesis are distinct from the known theological conceptions of the Christian world, but essentially more akin to the Easterner's belief.

Not to overstress, the earth has always been considered mother who not only gives life, but also shelters all those lives that depart from this world. Rig Veda (X. 18.10) says that one has to go back to the Mother Earth: "Creep back to the earth thy mother." Similarly, for Snyder who has interiorized the values of the Amerindian culture and practiced the Taoist and Buddhist Way of life and thought, it is natural to regard the Earth as Mother and as a living and fecund power. He has noted the Pueblo Indians' respect for "ancient mother mountain" (Turtle Island, 42). Following the Hindu-Buddhist traditions, he called the Yuba River "Yuba Ma" and regarded its central place as "Her Womb – Realm Mandala Centre" (TI, 112). Snyder expresses this almost sounding the Amerindian way: "Earth is our Mother and a man or woman goes directly to her, needing no intermediary" (TI, 113). Moreover, his vision of the Creative Feminine convinces him of the significance that the Easterners attach to nonliving objects, viz, a "conch shell" which is in the Tantra traditions "an ancient symbol of the sense of hearing, and the female; the vulva and the fruitful womb." (EHH, 125)

To Snyder, the woman is unjustly associated with hell, and her body is misconstrued for natural menstrual cycle as impure. In light of the Indian and Tibetan

deities like Kālī and Vāk who are revered as feminine divinities, he takes humanity to task for man's conventional mistreatment of woman even in today's society, especially in India. The poet makes a dig too at our making Mother Eve "lugged off to hell":

Sick women

Dreaming of long-legged dancing  
in light

No, our Mother Eve: slung on a  
shoulder

Lugged off to hell. kali/ shakti

Where's hell then? In the moon.

In the change of the moon

("Praise for Sick Women", RCMP)

#### IV. Cults and Denigrations

Snyder is critical of the male-dominated cultures, particularly of the Christian faith which condemned Eve as the accomplice in origination of sin. 'Mother Eve' is restored to some respectability as Snyder glosses over her stigmatized status. Nevertheless, she falls short of satisfying a minimum comparative measure vis-a-vis the Kali/ Shakti principle, because the Eastern principle spells, traditionally and metaphysically, a plural symbol unifying power, terror, and kindness without division in her value complex. Further, being next to none in creation, Kali signifies destruction of anything including the entire creation in order to restore the laws of dharma. Contextually, P.D. Murphy observes that it is the feminine who like nature "grows" the male, "solidifies him", but in return gets "wounded" by the same male mind. He aptly comments that "in patriarchy, women suffered despite their being our mothers" (47-8).



Further, the poet rejects the image of the woman viewed stereotypically for procreation. A poem "To Hell with Your Fertility Cult" ("Kali," TBC) bears the cry of a female persona's anger and frustrations, which undoubtedly radiate Snyder's own conviction about woman's value: "To hell with your Fertility Cult, I/ never did want to be fertile, / you think this world is just a goddamn oversize cunt, don't you? Everything/ crowding in and out of it like a railway terminal and isn't that nice?" In the poem, she threw the egg with 'half-formed chick' right in the male's face. However, in this subversive attitude Snyder does not appear to be a feminist voice in the contemporary socio-literary sense, the reasons being the female value to him is higher in older Eastern traditions. These traditions are primarily of spiritual roots, and unfortunately, Western feminism has no spiritual foundation except by its disrepute or absence.

Snyder is equally critical of the virginity ideal either championed by women or thrust on them. He will not like Marvell's coy mistress types who would rather carry their virginity into the graveyard than get consummated in the lover's arms. Snyder refers to the Artemis myth (Graves 121) and expresses disapproval of the virginity idea:

Artemis,  
Artemis,  
so I saw you naked –well GO and  
get your goddamn virginity back  
me, me,  
I've got to feed my hounds  
(Artemis,"TBC)

In some of his poems, Snyder sounds close somewhat to Lawrence. D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* defends the body and natural sex, but would deprecate the lurid representation of woman, at the same time. To Lawrence as to Whitman, the flesh is holy and self-fulfilling, which has been rejected theologically as sinful. Like Lawrence, Snyder explores the feminine mystique only to realize that the feminine is mysteriously good; and that through the body the unbodied eternity is realized. In a poem "The Manichaeans" ('Kali', TBC) the poet considers this unnamable good as 'flame', 'stream of light' or 'radiating warmth.' More significantly, what is stressed is the primacy of the physical, that is the body at the level of which the 'fire' of 'the milky way,' the 'laughter' of the earthquake, and the 'heat' of the loving arms, i.e., the forces terrestrial, physical and the celestial are realized simultaneously. The images signify that the body is a materializing process of symbols metaphysical. The poet probes the arms in love enfolding as 'blankets like rock-strata.' Snyder connects the symbolism of Shiva and Shakti in embrace dreaming undisturbed for the next new creation. Without exoticizing the female body, he finds the unimaginable 'shakti' in the female potential, but marginalized across different cultures in our time. The poet recognizes like Lawrence the contending forces of love and importance of the flesh:

Your far-off laughter  
Is an earthquake in your thigh.  
Coiled like Ourabouros  
We are the Naga king

This bed is Eternal  
Chaos  
—and wake in a stream of  
light.

(‘Kali’ section, TBC)

To understand from the given images, the vision of ‘Ouraboros’ here is more than Lawrencium in meaning; its basic Greek idea of a snake devouring its own tail (often scripted as the ‘infinity symbol’) is a threat to neatly designed and ordered systems like our moral and mathematical universe. Its ‘chaos’ norm corresponds to the Taoistic interplay of yin and yang and the Tibetan yab-yum. Snyder also combines the esoteric tenets of Tantra and the dharmic traditions for attaining the supreme delight of liberation imaged by ‘waking in a stream of light.’

## V. Love and Flesh: Traditions

Snyder is not also segregated from an American tradition of love that awakens complex territories of the flesh and holiness. Walt Whitman, eminently the major poet of love’s loveliness and body’s holiness, seems to be an important source of influence. Whitman declares forcefully, “The man’s body is sacred, and the woman’s body is sacred, / No matter who it is, it is sacred” in the “I Sing the Body Electric” (82). His song of the body lilts with his conviction that the body and the soul are equal partners and interdependent. The body with all its parts works out “the exquisite realization of health,” which Whitman says, but says it the un-Christian way (85):

O, I say, these are not the parts and  
poems of the body only, but of  
the soul,

O I say now these are the soul!

The second line more emphatically sets aside the established notion of the soul demeaning the body. In “I Sing the Body Electric,” he looks at “the female form” which attracts with “fierce undeniable attraction,” and he feels that “a divine, nimbus exhales from it from head to foot” (80). Of the female he further says: “You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of the soul” (81). Whitman’s long lyrical line is not to be the Snyderian line, for the latter is critically shaped with Zen sensibility. As Irwin remarks rightly, in Whitman, the woman is the living symbol of “womanhood, divine, mistress and source of all”, from which “life and love and aught that comes of life and love” (qtd in Irwin 25). Despite striking similarities between Whitman’s egocentrism and Indian Tantra body-mysticism, as Chari has noted why the common Americans, alleging a Christian’s insanity, express disgust at Whitman’s egocentric eroticism. However, this is in contrast to the ordinary Indian who could intellectually appropriate the poet’s body mystique (Chari 387). In the context of their body consciousness and love, including the female body and sexual content, some perspectives of D.H. Lawrence and of Gary Snyder can be admitted to fall in the tradition of Whitman.

Nevertheless, Joanne Diehl has categorically critiqued the great American visionaries vi-a-vis Eve. Emerson held, “the omnipotence of Eve is in humility” (Diehl 7). Diehl has sensibly pointed out that in Emerson’s analogy of “the agaric” (mushroom) for creative consciousness; the world of creativity is “de-feminised”. Thoreau, the ascetic American wanted something like celibate domesticity of the woman. His metaphor of “the fungus,” according to Diehl, signals “a way to abrogate the feminine” (7). But it is Whitman (himself celibate) in whose eloquent imagination, the image of the eternal feminine is held aloft and alive (Irwin 25). However, his poetic homoeroticism soliciting freedom from gender stereotypes seems problematic equally. Snyder’s reverencing of woman works in a much larger framework.

Snyder's quintessential idea of the woman is a verity drawn on the greatest womb of creation. She remains beyond, vague and veiled like the Tao, vague and nebulous. Whitman’s radicalism lies in conceiving the woman “as good as God.” In contrast, Snyder’s feminine Muse is the “Absence of Absolute,” for she is unoriginated, indefinitely the One Emptiness, whose images to imagine are not born even. She can be alternately what Hindus and Buddhists call Mahāyoni or Mahāvākya (maha-vāk-ya), Brahman, the Great Voice, Saraswati second to none.

Snyder’s conviction of the eternal feminine even touches that bottomless depth, akin to a supra-rational yogic state of consciousness. This attitude can be found

from the poem “Word Basket Woman” (*No Nature*). The poem relates Snyder’s visit to the grave-yard of his great grandmother, Harriet Callicotte, in Kansas. When he went down on his knees to offer his homage, it became a moment of weird awareness for him:

Where I found it in rain drenched  
grass  
on my knees, closed my eyes and  
swooped under the earth  
To that loam dark, holding her  
emptiness  
And placed one cool kiss  
On the arch of her white  
Pubic bone.

The ordinarily provocative image of ‘kiss on her white pubic bone’ is here beyond sensuous awareness, more of an inarticulate state of consciousness what the image of “moon breast Parvati” elsewhere would invoke. The state of consciousness or Snyder’s conviction goes past the Lawrentian or Freudian fixation as well as the Whitman an limits; Snyder wishes to reach the Tao of love, which is the ultimate primordial consciousness and knocks down all our pretty notions of love, beauty, wisdom or godliness. In short, it is toward an all-transformative vision, certainly beyond the body-and-sex awareness.

It is further fascinating to see Snyder seeking the Earth Mother’s blessings on his wedding with Masa on a crater island at a new moon night. The images in the poem of prayer are superposed, the crater of ‘Earth Mother’ with ‘cobra-hood sleeping.’ One is amazed at the range of encounters that Snyder invites in order to know what



indeed the body is and what essentially its meaning holds. As a Zen believer, Snyder needs blessings from material bodies like tides, capes, currents and flows of pool, because the material things are also “spirals” of invisible “powers”.

As to the animal, the Buddhist believes in likely reincarnation of the Bodhisattvas in animal forms; and additionally, the Sanatana Hindu is beholden to his gods and deities in the inalienable company of animals. Snyder sees an “old sow in the mud” and reiterates the unconscious mind of ancient India thus: “those who keep her/ or eat her/ are cast out.” Then as she turns “her small eye” to “look up” at Snyder the visitor, he becomes weirdly aware of some gracious presence. It is through her eye, the poet visualizes (Kali, 83):<sup>2</sup>

Mother of the Buddhas, Queen of  
Heaven,  
Mother of the Sun; Marici,  
Goddess of the Dawn  
(The Back Country)

This illustrates that Snyder is earth-bound, and that earthly things are not devoid of divine grace for him.

## VI. Divinity and Liberation: All Radical

The feminine is thus adored as the fundamental principle of creativity, the source of all wisdom and liberation. In a poem “for Ramprasad Sen” (“Kali,” TBC,

106), Ramaprasad is found praying to the Mother Goddess Kali in order to escape next births “through worlds” via “womb after womb.” In contrast, Snyder’s Zen response comes to be “forever born again”:

you bear me, nurse me  
I meet you, always love you,  
you dance  
on my chest and thigh  
Forever born again.

Look at the body as the stable hold for divine play. The wish for “forever born” is steeped in the Bodhisattva vow, and indicates here not only the visionary’s inner calm and fortitude, but also a state of mind most akin to the enlightened Yogin and the Zen monk, who accepts that samsara itself is nirvana, apart from the fact that it is the unenlightened mind in samsara that needs most help from the one who is liberated. In this sense, the mind-state of “forever born” is not afraid of birth cycles, for the experience of liberated dance is here in the flesh, the body.

Another fascinating dimension of the body consciousness in Snyder is found in the poem “Toji” (RCMP) which alludes to an androgynous Bodhisattva or Avalokita. His emphatic “cool” exudes the Bodhisattva principle enjoying both male and female values within himself. His image of ambivalent wholeness would also echo Snyder’s idea of *planetary* coexistence, an ecologically conscient life. He says: “Let reverence for life and reverence for the feminine mean also a reverence for other species” (“Plain Talk”, TI, 93). He celebrates an essentially interconnectedness of all living and non-

<sup>2</sup> The poem, in the section “KALI” of *The Back Country* of Gary Snyder, is dedicated to Bhikku Ghosanda. The idea contained herein is typically Oriental encompassing Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu sentiments.

living beings constituting this universe. This gets authenticated by Snyder's own criticism of life's present patterns:

At the root of the problem where our civilization goes wrong is the mistaken belief that nature is something less than authentic, that nature is not as alive as man is, or as intelligent, that in a sense it is dead, and that animals are of so low an order of intelligence and feeling, we need not take their feelings in to account. ("The Wilderness", TI, 107)

Recognizably, all ancient philosophies labored insightfully to make life healthy and worked out correspondent processes and practices. Having their sane wisdom not to be quickly dismissed as unscientific nonsense, let us pause and muse over why all our science-driven growth and free-mind individualism have produced so much pollution and life-threatening effluents around our living ecosystem despite our tall talk of advancement. Is it not time we rather adequately discipline our ethical behavior to rhyme with the earth's natural cycles and control our limitless greed and fantasies?

Therefore, arguing for a "total transformation" of society and civilization, Snyder wants that humanity should explore values other than "power and property-seeking" and encourage to know "all other ways of authentic being-in-the world" that would justly include and make "women totally free and equal" (TI, 100). His radical vision of a new civilization is an address evidently to American people and to the industrialized world at large. He

provocatively proposes "polyandrous marriage" and "group marriage" (TI, 93) to bring up a new kind of "responsible" family adopting matrilineal traditions. This consciousness has much in common with the primitive consciousness with which the non-literates of organic cultures used to play and pass directly into earth. The 'great sub-cultures' like the Bengal Tantrics, Taoists of China, and Tibetan Vajrayanists, and Zen Buddhist sects are invisibly minority groups, by any account, in contemporary societies; but to Snyder, these inhabit the planetary rhythm of life. This idea of a new, more educated and illumined self can be imagined as possible and as a viable alternative to anthropocentric structures. Such neo-tribes will have to adopt the goddess principle of earth at the center of their samsaric existence.

Keeping these dimensions in view, Snyder offers three types of homage to the Goddess, which are subversive of the conventional paradigms and would fundamentally exhibit the mind transformation:

[...] the Bhikku or scetic: "I have shaved my head and be your servant if you'll save me."

Zen: "We will be equals, and I will ignore you."

Tantrism: "I'll give you all my loving."

(EHH, p. 133)

No Western feminist social radicalism, no intellectual masculinist thought-revolution would ever equal the above

insight, which is anciently all Eastern. Nevertheless, Snyder's worldview is not squeezed into some horrid homo-uniformity; but his advocacy for diversity is informed by an endearing human identification with the earth consciousness. Briefly, each individual or tribe is never to be exclusive of other's being, with other beings never as intolerant of the other's value, which is fundamentally a planetary complementarity. The sense of service (including servitude) towards the Divine Feminine, of equality with her and, radically more, of "loving" for her signifies an enlightened mind. Not for nothing, therefore, Snyder says, the Buddha has been conceived as "son and lover" of the Goddess Maya ("Dharma queries", EHH,132):

The Goddess "Maya" (measure/illusion) and "Gone beyond Wisdom" (Prajnaparamita, Mother of the Buddhas) are one. In her and holding her (dhr-uphold> dharma) is the Adi-Buddha Dharmakaya/Vajradhara /Vairocana; thus come. (EHH, 133)

One has already realized this paradigmatic difference from the Christian code of Lord Christ being the Son of God alone. A couple of facts appear through this discourse: (A) One's body is born out of another body, a larger compassionate ecosystem; hence birth is a matter of sympathy and gift. No one in particular can take the whole credit for this body. (B) Secondly, the body is unfolded out of the mother emptiness. We remember Zen's 'jewel net'. So, why imagine any contest

begin between the two? (C) Any discourse in a contestatory paradigm would yield intellectually engaging games of sorts; but the Zen discourse laughs over such discourses with its own mind-staggering koans and gunshots, and looks away cool inward into the body. (D) More, Zen psychology knocks the foolery out of our radical postmodern psychology; it smiles at our paradigmatic body-mind constabularies as new-fangled mathematics of linguistic signs. In contrast, the mother figure in Buddhism rules over three transcendental and potent realms of the body, mind and speech. Humanity will have to walk miles (to walk miles, to repeat) for centuries to possess Zen's rainbow body, 'the unconceivable' as never being reached or seized by our mathematics and sciences.

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