Fabulating through the Spiritual: Gibran's *The Prophet* and Anand's *Bliss*

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 13:9 September 2013**

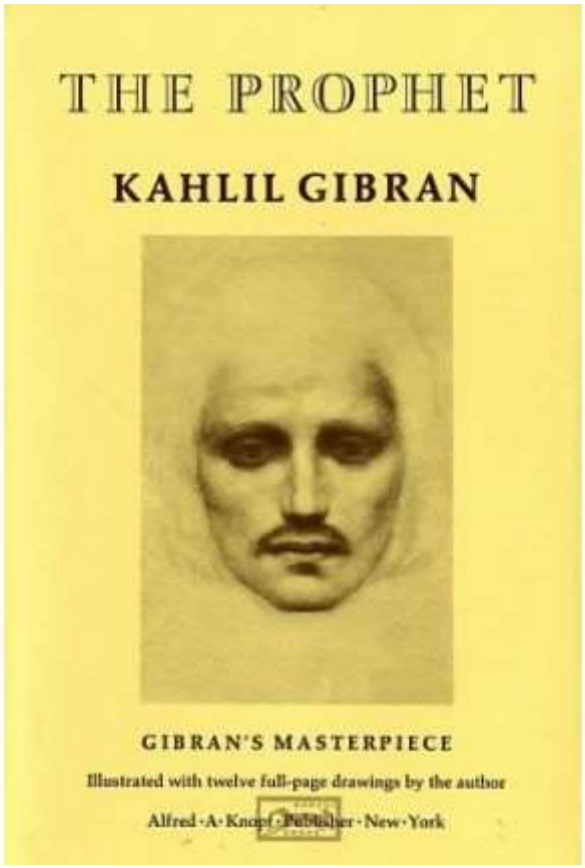
Gibran Khalil Gibran (1883-1931)

Abstract

This paper is a comparative study of Gibran Khalil Gibran's *The Prophet* (1923) and J. S. Anand's *Bliss: The Ultimate Magic* (2007). This cross-cultural comparison traces a line of development from early up to late twentieth century. While Gibran's text embodies his anxiety about modernity and its aftermaths, *Bliss* addresses the already lost generation of the postmodern era. Thematically, both works are texts of spirituality. *The Prophet* is a fictional narrative in prose-poetry, while Anand's text is a philosophical treatise hybridized with poetry and narrative. Despite this structural discrepancy, both texts emerge out of a dialogical texture. *The Prophet* develops out of the dialogue between Al-Mustafa and people of the fictional city, Orphalese. *Bliss*, in contrast, dialogizes directly with the reader. This paper takes the dialogical base as an

important shared feature which interlinks the spiritual crisis of the modern age with the urgent hail to the soul in the postmodern era. This comparative study adopts a Deleuzian lens and takes both texts as their writers' attempts to fabulate through sloganizing spirituality against a backdrop of scientific and materialistic logic. It is argued that both texts legend a better people by training them into world citizens.

Key words: Gibran, Anand, fabulation, slogan, dialogism



Introduction

Modernity and industrialization have brought about a gap between body and soul. Science with its experimental outlook has marked man's vision with a materialistic and calculative perspective. Modernism, as the cultural movement against this materialism, manifests man's mental disintegration. Yet this does not imply man's return to the spiritual. As the nausea of all traditional beliefs, modernism has ignored the spiritual dimension of man's life. As spirituality is closely linked with religion, lack of the spiritual is related to the modernist suspicion towards

religious belief. This spiritual ignorance is reinforced through Freud's psychological scrutiny and is taken to its heights in the hands of Lacan and Derrida. Therefore, from the late nineteenth century onwards, the world has been witnessing reduction of the soul to the rationalizing faculty of mind especially through its experimental analysis of man's psyche. Even when Symbolism sprang up as a revolutionary movement, "tending toward the spirituality . . . in response to the dislocations brought upon the modern individual by the industrial revolution," it did not reject outright rationalism (Sheehi 81).

Scientific Analysis of Man's Psyche

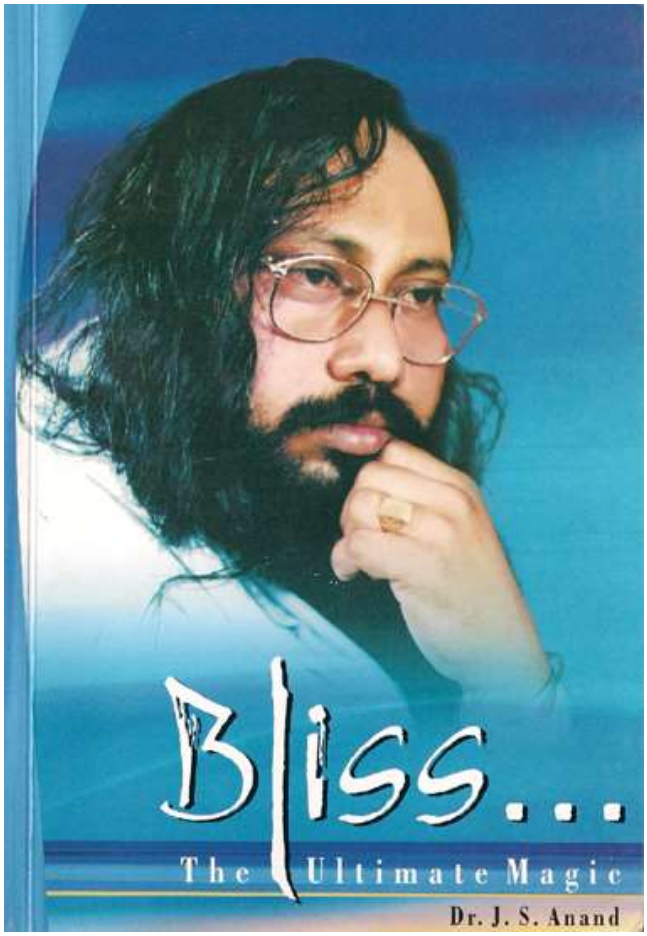
The scientific analysis of man's psyche started with Freud's instinct-oriented definition of the unconscious; and with the postmodern turn to the context it got a cultural, socio-political twist. Measured through scientific and experimental logic, mind was delinked from soul, which was taken by then as an illusion. The mind itself was defined in terms of the body, once the body as instinctual, the other time, the body as the contextual, politico-social construct. It could be said the West has bodified the mind which resulted in a radical obliteration of the soul. Attempts to rationalize about man's psyche in a calculative manner and through some clear-cut formulas have marginalized the soul. As properly viewed by the prominent critic and activist, Amin Rihani, the disjuncture between reality and experience is linked to a "loss of vision in the West" despite its claims to rationalism and efficiency; for him the Western self is alienated from the "path of vision . . . [that] bridges the darkness between the eye and the soul and without which there can be no true vision" (qtd. in Sheehi 75).

Nietzsche on Death of God

Upon Nietzsche's announcement of death of God, Heidegger tries to recapture the spiritual by invoking "god of philosophy" and thus subjects the spiritual to drastic rationalization. Writing on the metaphysical marriage of ontology and theology, Heidegger posits, "the deity can come into philosophy only insofar as philosophy, of its own accord and by its own nature, requires and determines that and how the deity enters into it" (qtd. in Westphal 213). Philosophy's rationalization aims at making the world intelligible to man. In Westphal's analysis, "This total intelligibility requires that 'Being manifests itself as thought'" (214). Accordingly, setting aside the notion of Divine God, western metaphysics becomes an absolutizing approach which, in

Heidegger's words, "reduce[s] everything down to man" (34). It would be pertinent to note that this reductionism is doubled; not only is the divine aspect of man dispensed with, but also man himself is relegated to a thinking being. This approach resembles metaphysics more to the totalizing perspective of technological, calculative thinking which imperialistically puts the self at the center of all concerns.

Challenge to Man's Rationality – Anand's *Bliss*



The occurrence of the two World Wars challenged man's rationalizing faculty. Man's distrust of his rationality comprises the thematic core of all modernist artistic movements marked with fragmentation, disintegration, and relativism. The immediate outcome of modernity is a strong sense of doubt which reaches the state of disbelief in the postwar era. Absurdity and meaninglessness dominates man's mindscape and inflicts his life with such feelings as frustration, depression, and mental fragmentation; hence neurosis. Caught up in the technology-

ridden maze, modern man turns into a helpless creature with no way out. The post-War-II generation experiences mental disintegration to the point of schizophrenia – extension of the neurotic state. A glance over the body of the twentieth century reveals the fact that the more man's indulgence in scientism and its apparent comfort, the farther he moves away from the spiritual, and the less peace and happiness he attains in life. This accounts for the urge and the need to return to the spiritual which has long been held back by the force of materialism. The outset of the century witnesses the prophetic hail of Gibran which is re-echoed nearly by the end of the century in a more forceful tone in Anand's *Bliss*.

It is of significance that these writers are easterners; Gibran is an Arab migrant who wrote in America, and Anand is the living poet and philosopher from India. Postcolonially speaking, Gibran and Anand both belong to the racially marginalized, hence subjectified as "other". As the review of literature shows, Gibran criticism still suffers from lack of critical appreciation on the part of the Westerners. Voicing Gibran's same concerns, Anand takes up a philosophical approach which best suits the West's calculative thinking. Both writers detect the reason for man's tormenting alienation in the soul which is marginalized by (post)modernity. This comparative study aims at pinpointing the role of the two writers in restoring the spiritual to man's life and thus fabulating a new people blessed with peace.

Review of Literature

Arising out of the Lebanese context which received economic, political and social ruptures at the turn of the century in a colonial condition, Gibran embodies the dialectical relation of modernity and mysticism. Gibran is at the head of the Mahjar group which denounces all Arab traditions and vouches for a revival in Arabic literature. Simultaneously, however, he tries to bring the two opposing poles of the West and East together in his spiritual works. In his oracular work, Gibran shows the prophetic figure of Al-Mustafa at grapple with the demands of modern life, for each one of which he seeks a spiritual solution. Gibran's spiritual dialogism is an attempt to confront the anxieties that modernized Arab world was experiencing. Sheehi regards Gibran's protagonist as "the consummate Oriental" who possesses the transcendental vision which unifies reality and experience as against the split nature of their Western counterparts (76).

The Prophet is Gibran's masterpiece which has widely been read but never received proper critical appreciation. Referring to the members of the Mahjar group who profoundly influenced modern Arabic literature, Ludescher rightly laments, "they [these writers] never attained the same stature in American literature . . . only Gibran is well known, though his work is widely ignored by American critics" (97). Acecolla, likewise, speaks of the critics' indifference towards Gibran. Not only is Gibran ignored by the critics, even his publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, "brushed him off" (1). None of these critics concern themselves about the reasons of literati's lack of respect. The raison d'être could be detected in two points; one of them is his being an Arab migrant in the American context. Coming from the world of the "other", Gibran oeuvre still suffers from discrimination in the academic world. The other reason is the mystical and highly paradoxical texture of the book which fails to abide by the materialistic and logical outlook of the West. The paradoxical nature of *The Prophet* could be justified in terms of the writer's ambivalent perspective with regard to modernity and civilization. In Sheehi's analysis, this ambivalence is due to "the specific predicament of the Orientalized colonial subject, especially around World War One" (86). Therefore, although *The Prophet* is the third best-selling of all time, it has never been appreciated by the elite.

Anthony Daniels is one of the critics whose views on *The Prophet* best reveal his antagonism towards this Arab writer. In his 2007 article, Daniels criticizes Gibran for relying heavily on clichés, and concludes, "He is so greatly loved because he never forces us to think" (35). Voicing the Western urge to rationalize, Daniels describes Gibran as "a feeler rather than a thinker" (35). He racistically calls Gibran "the founding father of the New Age School of charlatanry" (36). Then the critic applies his materialistic approach to Al-Mustafa's advices in order to display their irrationality and inapplicability.

Ludescher suffices to recall Gibran as the "forceful personality" in Arab culture (95). Referring to Gibran as the most spiritual member of the Mahjar group, Ludescher enumerates some of the most important themes of these writers, which also underlie *The Prophet*. Among these, one can refer to "the desperate need to escape the mundane materialism of the peddler lifestyle . . . admiration for American vitality and hatred of American materialism . . . an obsessive interest in the East/West relations; and a desire to play the role of cultural intermediary" (97). While these writers tried to adopt the Western model in socio-political and

cultural fields to reform the East, they had in their minds to "encourage a spiritual awakening in the West, based on the Eastern model" (Ludescher 98). *The Prophet* thus embodies Gibran's objective to spiritualize the West.

Scrutinizing Gibran readership, Acocella refers to his masterpiece as "the Bible of that decade" (1). Bushrui and Jenkins (1998) describe Gibran as the "burning genius" who best represents the meeting point of East and West. "In all his work," they notify, "he expressed the deep-felt desire of men and women for a kind of spiritual life that renders the material world meaningful and imbues it with dignity" (1). These writers elucidate that Gibran's popularity is unprecedented and they rank *The Prophet* after the works of T. S. Eliot and Yeats as the most highly regarded poetry of the century (2).

The postmodern counterpart of *The Prophet* is Anand's *Bliss*, first published in 2007. Anand is the living poet, philosopher, and novelist whose works have just recently attracted the attention of the literati. Among the few critics who have written on his works, Tasneem aptly detects Anand's concerns and conflicts with the postmodernism of his age. In Anand's time, "the standards of the past seem to have dissipated themselves into a permissive society of the present" (2001, back cover). A spiritual guru, Anand has aversions against the consumerism which has penetrated the unconscious of postmodern man. A voice against the global wave of marketization, Anand is at grapple with the loss of spirituality. In Romana's words, "the dominant concern of the poet is the spiritual barrenness of his worldly fellow beings" (12). Writing on his book of poetry, *Beyond Life! Beyond Death!!* Tasneem speaks of the poet's desire to "restore the age-old links of the human beings with both bird and beast" (2001, back cover). This attempt to regain the lost natural logic justifies Romana's critique that Anand's moral vision marks his poems with didacticism (11). He criticizes Anand for bearing stylistic and formal resemblances to canonized English privileged works and has thus distanced himself from the ancient or contemporary native Indian traditions (11). Contra responsive to Romana's reading, this article takes Anand's hybridization of the Western styles with Eastern vision as his strong point which, like Gibran, helps him transcend his provincial territories.

Theoretical Framework

The present article draws its comparative study on the postmodern notions of Gilles Deleuze in order to highlight the importance of the spiritual of which Gibran and Anand both speak. Unlike Frederic Jameson who approaches the postmodern era antagonistically, Deleuze rejoices in the turns of the postwar age. He is widely noted for his revolutionary ideas in philosophy, language, history, psychoanalysis, and art. Of all his theories, this paper deploys Deleuze-Guattarrian theory of language, the concept of fabulation in art, and politicization of aesthetics.

Deconstructing the communicational and informational view of language, Deleuze and Guattarri detect in language "the power, vitality, or capacity . . . to intervene directly in the social and political field" (Porter 1). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they argue *immanent* ordering or imperativeness governs, and is maneuvered by, language. "The elementary unit of language – the statement – is", in their words, "the order-word. . . we must define it as an abominable faculty consisting in emitting, receiving and transmitting order-words" (qtd. in Porter 7). Attributing a central significance to order-words, which they call "slogans", these theorists define language in terms of its primary function with a claim to authority. A slogan or statement is a singularly useful intervention in the social body that changes things (Porter 14). Accordingly, they sloganize, "language is not made to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience" (qtd. in Porter 7). Deleuze and Guattarri view language as inherently ideological as it exerts "power of forgetting"; this power paves the way for welcoming new slogans by forgetting the slogans one has followed, hence certain movement or change in things.

For Deleuze and Guattarri, language operates its power through indirect discourse, or hearsay. In this regard, Porter elucidates, "Language moves autonomously from saying to saying, subject to subject, person to person. Language can move quite independently from 'we' language users" (9). The notion of the language's independence from its users denotes the impersonal feature of indirect discourse, hence the idea of collective assemblages. Arguing that "There is no individual enunciation," these thinkers state, "The social character of enunciation is intrinsically founded only if one succeeds in demonstrating how enunciation in itself implies *collective assemblages*. It then becomes clear that the statement is individuated, and enunciation subjectified, only to the extent that an impersonal collective assemblage requires it and determines it to be so" (Deleuze and Guattarri 1994, 79-80). In Porter's explanation, "'A

collective assemblage of enunciation' implies or implicates itself in language as a series of order-words; of already regulated or patterned actions . . . or as the social institutional environment . . . in which statements assume force as meaning, or meaning *as* force" (12). In other words, a collective assemblage works through slogan/statement which exerts its power of forgetting via signification or meaning-production. This accounts for the ideological power of language.

Deleuze and Guattarri opine that ideology is not some universal, fixed notion; instead it is "the power or the potential which internally and pragmatically differentiates itself in accordance with the conjunctures/bodies to which it is connected . . . the power of language so as many 'experiments' on a world . . . a reality, that it always sets in motion" (Porter 17). Applying the notion of experiments to art, Deleuze and Guattarri introduce the politics of deterritorialization which is the writer's experiments on the real. Such experimentations result in the formation of a new political subjectivity or "a new people". Deleuze and Guattarri call this political formation as fabulation and attribute it to arts. The capacity of the artwork is to invoke new forms of political subjectivity. Fabulation is an active political philosophy, "what Deleuze and Guattarri call the 'utopian' gesture of calling 'for a new earth' as well as 'a new people'" (Porter 71). Deleuze deploys this utopian vision from Nietzsche's contention that the philosopher should be a "cultural physician". Referring to this point, Ronald Bogue observes, "As cultural physician, the philosopher is also an artist, who creates new possibilities for life, and a legislator, who creatively revalues all values" (5). The Deleuze-Guattarrian theory of fabulation relies on affectations or what they call "becoming".

Initially, Deleuze adopted the notion of fabulation from Bergson. Bergson's treatment of fabulation is largely negative; in Deleuze's description, Bergson regards it as "a visionary faculty". Deleuze, however, finds a positive force in fabulation as it fashions "effective presences" (Deleuze and Guattarri 230). Arguing that creative fabulation has nothing to do with memory or fantasy, these theorists describe the artist as a "seer . . . a becomer" (Deleuze and Guattarri 1994, 171). This Deleuzian description reminds us of Mikhail Naimy's argument who articulates the Romantic principles of the Mahjar group; this Arab poet and novelist likewise votes for the role of a writer as "a prophet and a philosopher . . . endowed with a special capacity for discovering the truth" (Ludescher 96). This view somehow displays the Mahjar's being inspired by Nietzschean definition of a philosopher.

In acting as a seer or becomer, the artist performs the task that Nietzsche ascribes to the philosopher-artist, since the artist evokes and preserves "a block of sensation, a compound of percepts and affects" (Deleuze and Guattarri 1994, 169). In this light, Bogue explains, "Affects are becomings – becoming-other" (16). Becoming-other is what happens in the process of deterrotorialization of the self. Transcending the territories of self's being, becoming opens up new horizons on the self so that the allegedly strict borders of the self are melted down and the self becomes the other, hence becoming-animal; becoming-woman; becoming-child; becoming-molecular. The artist has the creative power to experiment on the territories of the self and thus fabulates, that is, creates a new people by working on "effective presences". This capacity accords the artist's creative fabulation a curative power, hence a healer, a physician. The aim of art is, in Deleuze-Guattarri's words, "to wrest the percepts from perceptions of objects and the sates of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affects from affections as the transition from one state to another, to extract a bloc of sensations" (Deleuze and Guattarri 167). Drawing on all these theories, it is argued that Gibran's and Anand's texts are fabulating attempts to form new political subjectivities by invoking the spiritual dimension of man's life and hailing to a drastic re-evaluation of values. Accordingly, this comparative study takes Gibran and Anand as spiritual physicians who attend to the long ignored demands of the soul in an attempt to fabulate a world citizen.

Analysis

Gibran's *The Prophet* consists of twenty six prose-poems delivered as sermons by Al-Mustafa. The narrative starts abruptly with the arrival of a ship with which the prophet is to be taken back to his homeland after twelve years of exile in Orphalese. Upon his departure, people gather around him and ask different questions. This dialogical structure which accords authority to the all-knowing figure of Al-Mustafa is a play of power in the asymmetrical relation between him and the people; utilizing this privilege, Al-Mustafa sloganizes the spirituality which he finds missing among people. This thematic concern links *The Prophet* to Anand's *Bliss*, in which the speaker seeks the same objective through his thirty-two-part sermon addressed to the reader. Like Gibran's work, it has a dialogical framework. Writing from his postcolonial-postmodern context, Anand voices the same spiritual demands but in a more direct and abrupt way. Unlike the fictional text of Gibran, *Bliss* weaves its theme out of a philosophical dialogue with the

reader which is at times flavored by poems and short narratives. While Al-Mustafa is politically and culturally delinked from Gibran's context, the speaker in *Bliss* shows full awareness of the local and global status quo. This discrepancy could be justified through the different trends which have not left the writers impervious to their demands. Gibran wrote *The Prophet* during World War One and got it published in 1923. That time was the peak of modernism under the spell of which Gibran brought a renaissance in Arabic literature. Modernism is widely known as the apolitical and ahistorical movement, foregrounding universal and universalizing ethos. This purely cultural trend has shaped the fictional figure of Al-Mustafa preaching to some people at some unspecified time. Most of the characters are known by their professions. Rendering the characters nameless is the writer's strategy to transcend the spatio-temporal borders – a typical impulse for modernists.

By contrast, Anand preaches in the highly politicized and politicizing age of the post-War-II with its stress on the provincial. Moreover, provincialism is itself a resisting strategy against the homogenizing policies of the West, hence postcolonialism. This accounts for the Indian color that *Bliss* is marked with. At times, Anand Indianizes his philosophical treatise by bringing Indian names, figures, and terms, like guru, karma, Dharma. Unlike Gibran who takes up the fictional persona of Al-Mustafa to shed his critical lights on the modern age, Anand philosophizes critically on the postmodern ethos. This logical gesture on the part of the Indian writer is the reification of Gibran's spiritual slogans, but in a gesture which best suits the West's skeptical and calculative mind.

Envisaged through a Deleuzian lens, *The Prophet* and *Bliss* both sloganize against (post)modern man's value-system. In his philosophic speculations, Anand laments, "Alas Buddha is absolutely alien to this generation. Man who has been conceived as a meeting point of the ephemeral and the eternal, the earth and the sky, is a dream turned sour, an opportunity lost" (25). Like Gibran, the Indian philosopher locates solutions in a revival of the spiritual. This thematic resemblance interlinks the two texts cross-culturally. Significantly enough, Gibran starts with the issue of love, whereas Anand speaks of peace and harmony. The ambivalent force of love, as poeticized by Al-Mustafa, deprives man of his peace of mind and heart. Thus he starts: "When love beckons to you, follow him/Though his ways are hard and steep/. . ./For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. . ./Even as he ascends to your height and caress your

tenderest branches that quiver in the sun/ So shall he descend to your roots and shake them in their clinging to the earth" (7). *Bliss*, however, starts with the statement: "The greatest question before man is how to attain peace" (9). Speaking as a man in possession of his reason, Anand prefers disengagement and thus sloganizes: "Let not life involve you in frivolous pursuits. . . . Let not life dictate you always to remain in attendance of physical and material needs. . . . Let not life become a confused web of passions" (11). Then beckoning the reader to learn to disengage, the speaker in a calculative manner advises: "We must develop an understanding of what is what and how much of that what that is needed. Unless we know the proportions, we are not going to get much out of this life" (12).

The other shared theme is that of giving. Al-Mustafa replies to the rich man, "You give but little when you give of your possessions/ It is when you give of yourself that you truly give" (11). Classifying people to three groups of those who give with joy, those who give with pain, and those who give like nature, Al-Mustafa praises the last over the first two groups and implies this is the way to immortality. Similarly, Anand argues, "if you can live for others, think for others, die for others, if instead of getting, taking, grabbing and absorbing, you can give and let go, you are leading a life on the inverse scale. . . . This is the way which leads to immortality" (15).

In the relationship between human being and nature, both writers refer to man's destructive force; Gibran's approach is idealistic; this idealism is best manifested in man's reliance on nature for the sole survival urge. Al-Mustafa admonishes his people to regard the act of satisfying one's thirst at the cost of robbing the new born from its mother's milk, as "an act of worship" (13); or when man eats an apple, he should say, "Your seeds shall live in my body" (13). Anand, however, sees more realistically the harms that man has done to nature in order to satisfy his ambitions; he talks of industrialization and the damages civilization has brought about to nature. He argues that while plants and animals do their level best to restore harmony to nature, man inadvertently rushes the wheels of his industry. While Gibran speaks of man's thirst and hunger as natural physical demands, for Anand, it is the thirst and hunger for wealth, power, and luxury which have disharmonized nature; thus he complains, "Senseless pursuit of industrialization, insensitive denudation of the earth, noise-pollution due to motor vehicles and the violation of the sphere of peace eroded by numerous channels all through the day – all these

factors put together create a bedlam on the earth whose central figure is none but man himself" (26-27). He sees man as being responsible for all natural disasters that happen on the earth:

> a restless soul, wreaks havoc on the animal and the vegetation world. . . . All the confusion, all the disturbance that is taking place on our planet is the outcome of human failure to come to terms with reality, and the seeds of natural disasters can be seen in the human desire to transcend time and space and create an empire of plastic luxury in the heart of natural phenomenon. (27)

An "empire of plastic luxury" reminds us of Gibran's warnings against comfort which he describes as "that stealthy thing that enters the house a guest, and then becomes a host, and then a master . . . / Ay, and it becomes a tamer, and with hook and scourge makes puppets of your larger desires" (20).

Regarding man a dangerous agent for harmony, Anand's realistic view of man's labor is far removed from the pastoral portrait that Gibran provides. When asked about work, Al-Mustafa replies, "You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth/. . ./And in keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving life,/And to love life through labour is to be intimate with life's inmost secret" (15). Then Al-Mustafa advises people to work with love, taking the others as one's own beloveds. This egalitarian perspective which deterritorializes the demarcations between self and other is highly recommended and praised by Anand; yet, Anand's age which is more than half a century after Gibran has proved man to have behaved otherwise. In his postmodern era, Anand sees self-centered men "For whom life is a tale of miseries. Not only their own, they turn the lives of those they deal with into nothing less than hell" (54). Like Gibran, Anand wants his people to care for the others who are deprived and thus arouses the question of ethics, which he finds missing in the educational system. He argues, "he [the student] must also be told that he has a society which has helped in his upbringing. There are so many who are denied of basic necessities. Rather than gathering money, it is his duty also to take care of them" (p. 57).

Gibran invites the people in the market to invoke "the master spirit of the earth, to come into your midst and sanctify the scales and the reckoning that weighs value against value" (22). In Anand's age, however, it is the master spirit of the market that dominates all aspects of man's

life. Therefore, Anand sloganizes against marketization which has devastated man's spirituality through a drastic devaluation of human values. Targeting the educational system, Anand laments this system being governed by the market, since the system trains students for getting jobs; Anand views this as the morbid symptom of modernity, "aiming only at jobs would be reducing the thought content from the head and turning it all over to the arms. Turning men, not into thinkers, but into do-ers. Into workers only. Restless timeless sleepless workers" (53). Elsewhere, he writes of the loss of faith in the schools, "Teaching is a commercial activity and teachers behave like property dealers" (58). The same force of commercialism is in charge of marblization of temples, "Marblization of temples is only symptomatic of the inner dreariness of the place" (58).

Freedom is the two writers' other common point. Al-Mustafa deconstructs the notion of freedom, "In truth that you call freedom is the strongest of these chains, though its links glitter in the sun and dazzle your eyes/. . ./Thus your freedom when it loses its fetters becomes itself the fetter of a greater freedom" (29). For Anand freedom lies in disengagement; like Gibran, he is aware that freedom is not achievable, but he insists on procuring a relative sense of freedom, "But with our present agenda, can we hope to be free even in the coming hundred years? I wonder. We must choose. We must know. What to aspire for and where to say 'No'" (12).

Between reason and passion, Gibran admonishes to keep balance; talking of the conflicts between these two, Al-Mustafa tells his people, "you too should rest in reason and move in passion" (32). Keeping balance between contradictory aspects of man's life is what Anand also talks about. Here comes the question of polarities about which Anand has his own resentments. He rejects reasoning on human life in terms of polarities, like life versus death, mind versus heart. Instead, he votes for a shift of focus from the polarizing logic of "either/or" or "versus" to the unifying logic of "both/and". Therefore, he defines man in terms of mind and heart, body and soul. He compares these paradoxes to the seemingly opposing eyes, "Two eyes cannot be placed in either/or situation. They are 'both' together. Vision completes when we look with both the eyes which also indicates that we must look at things from all sides although it is not easy to see a thing in all its perspectives" (68). Anand rightly distinguishes between human logic and natural logic and argues since man's logic is based on either/or logic it does not give a complete perspective; he goes so far as to comment that human logic is "violative of natural logic: "what

we see with both our eyes and what we can't see even with both the eyes must be put together so that we could have a proper vision of reality" (68). Anand's view that a complete perspective includes not only the observable but also the invisible reminds us of Deleuzian distinction between the virtual and the actual. Deleuze speaks of the virtual as "an impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field, which does not resemble the corresponding individual field, and which nevertheless is not confused with an undifferentiated depth" (Deleuze and Guattarri 1994, 102). The virtual is immanent within the actual and contains all empirical, individual entities. Viewed in this light, when Anand refers to "we see with both eyes", he is speaking of the actual, and "what we can't even see with both eyes" denotes the virtual, that is, the many possibilities that might be actualized, and of which we are not aware. Similarly, when Anand argues that encountering artworks might lead to an "explosion of ideas", he is actually philosophizing in a Deleuzian key note on the notion of multiplicity. Multiplicity is implied in Al-Mustafa's admonishment: "Say not, 'I have found the truth,' but rather, I have found a truth/Say not, 'I have found the path of the soul.' Say rather, 'I have met the soul walking upon my path/ For the soul walks upon all paths" (34). Anand, similarly, defines human life as "***a reality, not the reality***" (70).

Avoiding to speak of polarities resembles Anand's stand to that of Gibran, eradicating demarcations between joy and sorrow, life and death; Al-Mustafa opines, "Your joy is your sorrow unmasked/. . ./The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain" (18). Likewise, Anand defines, "joys are sorrows unrecognized" (46). Elsewhere, he explains, "It is difficult to draw a dividing line between the two. They overlap each other in such amazing ways that one wonders sometimes, the same emotion causes joy and despair at the same time" (67-68). One way to attain peace, for Anand, is keeping balance between the opposing elements of one's nature.

Similarly, Gibran views life as complementary to death, "But how shall you find it [the secret of death] unless you seek it in the heart of life?/. . ./For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one" (51). Anand also denounces this dichotomy, "Instead of Destroying, death completes human life. Death is a frame in which a small life appears to be complete" (21).

Teaching is their other shared concern. Al-Msutafa utters, "If he [the teacher] is wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather he leads you to the threshold of your own mind./. . ./For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man" (35). In the part entitled "The Followers", Anand challenges the basis of following gurus. He criticizes, "The Gurus who want you to follow, want you to close your mind, close your eyes and then grope in the dark and they will carry you through. I don't think this is a viable solution. . . . My point is rather than saying I will tell you, the Guru must try to make the seeker capable of seeing through the things with his own eyes, with his own light" (121). Anand argues, "The idea is not to lend light, or to light a lamp in the consciousness of the seeker, but to throw away, rub off the dust which has gathered around his glassy consciousness which is already aglow and whose glimmer is dimmed by the dust raised out of philosophies which claim to spread the divine message" (121). This view reminds us of Al-Mustafa's when he says, "No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge" (35).

Gibran's optimistic definition of good and evil emanates from his romanticized view of man; so when he is asked about good and evil, he evades explaining evil, "Of the good in you I can speak, but not of the evil/. . ./You are good in countless ways, and you are not evil when you are not good" (40-41). By contrast, Anand's critical eye locates evil in human being both towards himself and his ecosystem. He takes modernity and civilization in charge of this evil. When he diagnoses humanity for detecting reasons for man's suffering, he comes upon the breakage in human bonds and relates it to modernity,

> Is this increasing breaking apart of human bonds a healthy sign? Human bonds are falling apart under the pressure of modernity. Career-consciousness has landed in the heart of human Endeavour. The goals have changed. Man was in the pursuit of happiness. But today, he is after wealth. He wants a career and a dream life after that. In this ambitious dream, neither parents, nor wife, nor even children matter. (106)

Anand speaks of the harm industrialization has done to nature, "Earth's supplies of water and vegetation have started defaulting because the kidneys of nature have started malfunctioning due to increasing denaturization of processes. Man has lost his common sense because he has turned

an enemy to the grass below his feet, the plants beside him, the animals under him and the sky above him" (101).

When a priestess asks Al-Mustafa about prayer, he clarifies, "what is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living ether?" (42). Then he advises people how to enter the temple for praying and how to pray there. Anand, however, does not approve of visiting temples. Besides criticizing the marbled temples which reiterates the monopoly of the capitalist over common people, Anand puts under question visiting temples; thus he says, "we who manage his shrines, we who believe he lives in these bricks, we who consider him to be living within these walls or those, how mistaken we are! Can winds be imprisoned? . . . That is what we are trying. Finding him where he is not. Describing him the way he is not. Fearing him for nothing and following others to reach him" (123). Then he invites people to turn inward to see God, "all the noise of paths, journeys, voyages, is futile clamor of bodies which lack the soulful flight. . . . The flight is INSIDE. Within your blood. Within your mind. Within these bones. This flesh. This blood. . . . Turn your gaze within. This is the holy shrine" (123-124). On the role of temples, he states: "Temples and Mosques only help to turn your gaze within. If you return a better man, it is simply because there you find yourself in touch with your SELF" (124).

Pleasure is the other topic of concern for people of Orphalese. Al-Mustafa wants people to seek pleasure in the act of giving and receiving like bees and flowers (46). In Anand's age, however, the base and quality of pleasure has changed due to civilization; hence the more man seeks his pleasures in fulfilling his selfish desires, the more destructive he proves to be for himself and his environment; this sort of pleasure imbued on man by modernity is nullified by Anand. He comments man "contravenes nature when he tries to reach beyond his reach and ultimately overreaches himself. This is what human race has done to itself. It has overreached itself. It has defied the principle of balance" (117).

To a priest, Al-Mustafa tells of religion; his idea is like Anand's deconstructive. Gibran does away with formalities of religion when he has his prophet say, "Is not religion all deeds and all reflections?/…/Your daily life is your temple and your religion" (49). Anand gives deeds significance in some other way; for him, fate is nothing other than one's deeds. Although his Indian philosophy raises the issue of reincarnation and thus gives his notion of fate a local color,

his view of fate is a universal one which is implicitly the core of all religions. He thus explicates, "Fate is intrinsic to man. Fate issues forth out of his 'actions' and these actions piled up layer upon layer become his 'fate'" (34). Being bound up to the reverberations of one's actions, Anand believes that "Even our religious deeds don't liberate us" (34). Elsewhere, he abruptly says, "What finally matters is what you have done" (109); therefore, "Destiny is individualized" (113).

In contrast to Gibran, Anand blames religion for enslaving man, "Society draws a wall around your being. Religion supplies the bricks. You are rooted and cemented at a place. Disempowered to grow" (94). Elsewhere, he accuses religion for deluding man, "Religion loses him on the oozy waters of illusion" (28). When Al-Mustafa invites people to see God playing with their children, walking in the cloud, descending in rain, and smiling in flowers (50), he is, like Anand, bringing God down to earth. Through a brief narrative, Anand tells of God being on the earth, busy with people's everyday problems (122). Therefore, he expresses his wonder, "I am surprised to see a rare peace on the faces of these people who believe visiting a temple will clear them off their sins and cleanse their minds" (98).

Conclusion

The tone of both texts is imperative; hence they stand for the writers' slogans. While Gibran sloganizes against the modernity of his own age, Anand seeks the same objectives in his dialogue with the reader. The imperative tone of the texts accords the writers the position of authority from which they scrutinize and criticize the status quo which has deprived man of his spiritual self. As spiritual leaders, one in the role of a prophet, and the other, a philosopher, they both express their dread of man being lost in the realm of the body–in Anand's terminology. However, there is a difference between the two cases. While Gibran expresses his anxiety about modernized man, for Anand, after more than half a century, postmodern man is already lost. This is quite clear in the urgency that his direct address to the reader denotes. Referring to a history of scientific achievements, Anand laments man has ended up in misery (24). Man, by Anand's time, is already a "disturbed soul", "a lake of dirty water" (27) in urgent need of cleansing; postmodern world is "a world of self-delusions" in which charity is nothing other than cheating (31). Reminding the reader of the lost purpose of living, Anand calls this life "madness" (39); "a dying by inches" (40); "a mockery of the idea of living" (42); hence, "Man has lost his paradise.

His nature" (51). Stating that heaven and hell rest on our choices, Anand disapprovingly concludes, "modern man has chosen nothing but rubbish, a self drenched in the darkness of hell" (55). It is this fate that Gibran dreaded and for which Anand is providing solutions to drag man out of this ethical quagmire.

Gibran's and Anand's slogans aim at training man into "a world citizen" through becoming-other. Becoming-other initiates new political subjectivities, which is the core of fabulation. Al-Mustafa is a figure in whom Gibran hybridizes Christ and Muhammad and thus unifies Christianity with Islam. All through his dialogues, the prophet does not propagate any religion other than that of humanity, hence deterritorialization of all religious biases. Similarly, *Bliss* calls identities as illusions and contends souls do not bear such nomenclatures (38). The structure of *The Prophet* with its nameless characters, its unknown time and place universalizes Gibran's slogan. *Bliss*, however, explicitly tries to train postmodern man for the role of a world citizen. Anand beckons to the realm of the soul in order to fabulate, or legend a new, better people. He thus describes this realm as a state of purely being,

> The realm where sexes don't matter. Where nationalities melt. Where religions cease to operate. The realm where men turn into SOUL-SISTERS. Where world is left behind. . . .This is the other continent, of soul, of peace, of eternity which unfolds only . . . when we turn back into human beings, and then beings and then being alone. When all . . . [i]dentities are given away. When we are face to face only with the self planted in the endless space of a selfless self which extends to farthest limits. That is where we really belong. (41-42)

Defined by Anand, "a world citizen" is a man who is in complete harmony with mankind and his environment (59). Like Gibran, he fabulates a new, better man by defying all divisions and looking at humanity as a whole (114) and developing the sense of belonging to a larger family (120).

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