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Sublimity and Defamiliarisation in Buddha's *the Dhammapada*

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Abstract

This article aims to explore and interpret Buddha's sayings in *the Dhammapada* from the perspective of defamiliarisation theorised by Shklovsky and sublimity postulated by Longinus. *The Dhammapada* is an assemblage of Buddha's precepts in verses. In this book, Buddha's words ignite the power and transport the readers in the realm of ecstasy. It is because of the perfect use of sublime and defamiliarisation. Every verse divulges the eternal truth in simple, but powerful words because it synthesises the sources of the sublime categorised by Longinus namely divine inspiration, vehement passion, use of rhetorical tropes, noble diction, and elevated composition. So, Buddha's words possess power, and have been captivating the readers throughout the ages. Likewise, Buddha's sayings in *the Dhammapada* have attained a pinnacle when they irradiate the eternal truth with the use of familiar words in an unfamiliar way. Even the simple words crystallise the genuine truth. In this sense, they use the dynamics of defamiliarisation projected by Shklovsky. In this way, *the Dhammapada* entralls humanity endlessly because it yokes defamiliarisation with sublimity. This article implements the exploratory method of the qualitative approach to research to achieve its objectives. Thus, this study introduces a new dimension, revisiting the great heritage of Eastern philosophy from the standpoint of western literary theories.

Keywords: Aesthetic ecstasy, defamiliarisation, eternal truth, sublimity, transport

Introduction

This article explores and interprets *the Dhammapada*, a Buddhist scripture in verse form and the main collection of Buddha's sayings, from a new perspective of Longinus' concept of sublimity and Victor Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarisation. Buddha's majestic ideas in *the Dhammapada* transport the readers from these phenomenal limitations to the realm of sublimity. His words connect his insight with the soul of the readers. It is because he provides sublime effect in them with rhetorical tropes and divine inspiration, filling them with elevated thoughts. He presents them in a strange way with vehement passion that

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defamiliarises the familiar ideas. Thus, his words engrave deep “soul-stirring music or scriptural incantation” (Nagarajan, 2006, p.24) in the deepest part of readers’ psyche. The intensity of his ideas provides ecstasy and aesthetic pleasure at the same time postulating the eternal truth. If one ponders on why and how Buddha’s words have been illuminating the readers from the dawn of civilisation to our time, one finds that every verse he delivers superbly fuses the idea of sublimity developed by Longinus (first or third century AD) and the form of defamiliarisation that Russian formalist Shklovsky (1895-1984) theorised in the twentieth century. Buddha’s commixtures of these two dimensions of artistic devices prove him flawless. The more one reads his verses, the more one delves into them. In reality, the power of language suffused with divine thoughts has established *the Dhammapada* as a portal that heads towards eternity. This article, therefore, becomes a milestone in its arena as it inaugurates a touch of novelty by exploring and interpreting this great book with the concepts of sublimity propounded by Longinus and defamiliarisation conceptualised by Shklovsky.

The Dhammapada remains as the fundamental scripture of Buddhism. The word “Dhammapada” bears many meanings. “Pada” means “footstep or path,” and “dhamma” signifies “righteousness, virtue, and religion.” Thus, it stands for the path for righteousness, virtues, and religion. Muller (2013) even goes on to add that it stands for the path of eternity because the verse twenty- one “appamadoappamatapadam” suggests us to go beyond death (pp. liii-liv). The path for immortality, enlightenment, and nirvana is the “Dhammapada.” It offers the highest bliss, and no attempt goes astray. To assign the exact date about the composition of this great book is guesswork. However, scholars like Muller, Carter, Palihawadana, and Easwaran agree that the verses of this great book were started to have been collected after the death of Buddha, who lived about the fifth to fourth centuries BC. Hamilton (2001) says he was born around 485 BCE (p. 41), but Easwaran (2015) guesses it was 563 BC (p.28). After his death, his disciples collected the verses and later on they were transferred orally to the coming generations. Carter and Palihawadana (2000) believe that text originated during the growth of Theravada Buddhism that is three or two centuries after Buddha’s death (p. xii). Because of these shreds of evidences, we can say that the book was compiled in the Pali language nearly about the Pre-Christian era. The book comprises four hundred twenty-three lofty verses divided in twenty-six *vagga* (groups). Since the time of its compilation, this great work of antiquity has been inspiring the people of every epoch to achieve the goal of self-realisation.

Literature Review

The Dhammapada never fails to attract scholars from different arenas. It has been translated, commented on, and interpreted in many languages of the world. So, Muller (2013) was right to say that many Buddhist words from Pali language adopted the local flavour and characters of the different languages of different countries in which they have been translated (p. lxi). Because of these reasons too, a new look from the perspective of language

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and meaning becomes justifiable. Easwaran (2015) praises its poetic quality and claims it as a “reference of the Buddha’s teachings condensed in haunting poetry and arranged by the theme” (p 13). If this book condenses Buddha’s whole doctrine in luring poetry, then it invites a systematic interpretation from the perspective of language and its relation with the sublimity. In this aspect too, this study fulfills the gap of how the defamiliarisation gives rise to the sublime effect in the readers’ psyche. So, Coomaraswamy (2007) rightly notes that Buddha “cannot be apprehended, what has been required is not an observation, but a vision” (p.160). The words of Buddha are to be realized as they touch the soul of the readers. In this sense too, Longinus’ idea of sublime makes justice to the study because Stone (2002) also support that Buddha’s elevated, pure and humanizing language has been hailed throughout the ages (p.81). The elevation with the profound thought loaded in simple language is one of the sources of sublimity, and this study explores that profundity. Carter and Palihawadana (2000) opine that *the Dhammapada* is full of simple advices. However, it unexpectedly carries into the profundity of Buddha’s teachings. It leads from the very simple to grand ideas (pp. xxi-xxii). If Buddha’s words transport the readers from the simple to ecstatic level, the exploration with the perspectives of sublimity and defamiliarisation would be justifiable to clarify the assumptions of these comments.

Scholars have interpreted *the Dhammapada* from different perspectives, however; they only notice, but overlook the power of language that this work employs to direct the various phases of human civilization. Therefore, the exploration and interpretation of the sublime effect with the form of defamiliarisation have provided a real tribute to this great work.

The Dhammapada transports the readers in the realm of sublimity with the perfect implication of defamiliarisation. The arrangement of words leads from the simple to profound ideas and elevate us. The readers plunge into bottomless insight and assimilate to the divine thoughts, listening to the soul-stirring voice that exposesthe eternal truth. Buddha’s power in words blends and synthesizes the concepts of sublimity and defamiliarisation. His every word enraptures the readers. Therefore, this article answers the following research questions to explore and interpret this new aspect that demands a systematic study: a) What level of power do Buddha’s words in *the Dhammapada* perform after the fusion of defamiliarisation and sublimity? How do Buddha’s precepts enthrall the readers and give blissful pride of sublimity with the perfect implication of artistic devices?

This research article, therefore, intends to show that simultaneous synthesis of divine inspiration, elevated thoughts, and artistic devices gives power to Buddha’s aphorisms in *the Dhammapada*. It also aims to crystallise the ecstasy that defamiliarisation and sublimity create when they are perfectly harmonised.

Methods and Procedures

This article applies the qualitative approach to the research. This approach best suits the nature of this paper because Kumar (2014) says the qualitative approach “follows an open, flexible and unrestrained approach to enquiry; aims to explore diversity . . . emphasises

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description and narration of feelings, perceptions and experiences” (p.379). Since this paper germinates new perceptions, it implements exploratory and interpretive strategies. The concepts of sublimity propounded by Longinus and the idea of defamiliarisation by Shklovsky have become the theoretical perspectives to make a quest on *the Dhammapada*. The verses from the book have been considered as the baseline for primary concepts. Out of four hundred twenty-three magnanimous verses, the paper has explored and interpreted the sublimity and defamiliarisation only on twenty-one selected verses. This task has become itself a challenging one. However, the selected verses have represented the whole nature of the study. The article has used three translated versions of *the Dhammapada* by Muller, Easwaran and, Carter and Palihawadana. After reading this paper, a reader can formulate a critical assumption about the sublimity and defamiliarisation along with other literary devices and their connection to the promulgation of the theme of eternal truth in the book. Related criticism, book reviews, and other online sources have been considered as the secondary sources to explore the concept of sublimity and defamiliarisation in *the Dhammapada*.

Findings and Discussion

The subsequent sections explore and interpret how the defamiliarisation and sublime flash the ecstasy, unfolding the path to eternity in the great work *the Dhammapada*.

Defamiliarisation and Sublimity: A Theoretical Inquiry

The use of language enriches its value. It leads beyond the normality of the everyday sphere, qualifying the subtlety, power, and insight. Language magnifies itself when it becomes figurative, departing from the normal usage to attain special perception and effect. Jago, Shea, Scanlon, and Aufses (2011) say that language which not only literal is not figurative, but it becomes figure of speech (p.22). Therefore, language that drives thoughts by an expansion of an idea becomes figurative. When words pierce the level of implication, they become figures of speech like simile, metaphor, personification, analogy, imagery, and so on. The figurative language strengthens the ideas expressed through it. Figures of thoughts or tropes use the words in such away that the meanings they derive become unique. Figures of speech depart from the literal usage of words in their new syntactical arrangements. Day to day usage of language does not expose to any uniqueness and expansion of the idea. Unlike this, the figurative language adds a new dimension and colours to the language. Because of these qualities, language breaks its automatisations in concrete form and becomes “defamiliar” that engages our thought process to some extent. In this way, language breaks the automation and habitualisation because the day-to-day usage makes it stale, and decreases its charm without any novelty in taste and aesthetic pleasure. In good literature (art), language gives novelty of thinking and aesthetic pleasure. Shklovsky (1992) writes:

And so life is reckoned as nothing. Habitualisation devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life. It exists to make one feel things, to make stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique

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of art is to make objects “unfamiliar,” to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. (p.754)

Shklovsky's concept of breaking familiar and making “unfamiliar” or strange is known as defamiliarisation. Jefferson (1986) rightly notes that for Shklovsky “art demiliarises things that have become habitual or automatic” (27). His process of defamiliarisation is a way of presenting the familiar idea in a new way—estrangement. Because of these dynamics, the language of literature becomes vigorous.

This discussion shades light on the inherent qualities of literature. Language provides literariness to anything that is written. Literariness, according to Jefferson (1986), grants some types of scientific systems to the analysis of literature (28). It is simply the literariness that becomes the sole object of literary studies, not the particular work by a particular author. That's why; Jakobson (1986) rightly theorises that literariness is the area of literary science, not literature (as cited in Jefferson, 1986, p.28). Literary devices and the use of figurative language provide literariness in a text. To embark the literariness is to crystallize the meaning and perception beyond the superficial level.

Breaking the normal rules, when readers are carried into the realm of aesthetic pleasure, they realize the gravity of awe, and sensitise boundless aesthetic ecstasy. They are touched and driven by the sublime effect. Unlike Kant's and Burke's ideas of sublimity, Longinus' sublimity focuses on the majestic ideas that result in the transporting of the self. Sublime “in English means *height* or *elevation*” (Daiches, 1956, p.47). It means, sublime effects move to the ecstasy from the normality. Longinus (2001) categorizes five sources of the sublimity. They are great and inspired thoughts, vehement passion and emotion, figures of speech and thoughts, noble diction, and dignified, elevated as well as perfect word arrangement (p.140). Their perfect blending and harmonious relationship lead to the sublimity. Great minds like Krishna, Buddha, and Christ have attained this power while delivering their grand thoughts.

The above discussed ideas presuppose that even after reading good literature if one is not enthralled, captivated and filled with satisfaction, awe and ecstasy, then it is not the real sublime. Longinus (1990) clarifies, “The true sublimity, by some virtue of its nature, elevate us: uplifted with a sense of proud possession, we are filled with joyful pride, as if we had ourselves produced the very thing we heard” (153). It transports and moves the readers. Longinus (1990) again clarifies that the genuine sublime provides “abundant food for thought: it is irksome, nay impossible, to resist its effect: the memory of it is stubborn and indelible. . . .you should consider that to be truly beautiful and sublime which pleases all people at all times” (p.153). In this way, elevated mind when handles the power of language in a systematic way always leads to sublimity. Longinus' sublime, Selden (1990) justifies, “shows writer's mental characteristics—their ‘greatness of soul’” (p. 150). The greatness of soul shines only with the proper use of rhetorical tropes, figurative language, noble diction, and elevated thoughts, yoking them with defamiliarisation. Buddha, the liberator to Nirvana, pours his soul with the use of these concepts in totality. His sayings in *the Dhammapada*, therefore, shine their radiance throughout the ages.

From Sublimity to Eternal Truth: A Pathway of the Dhammapada

This quality of Buddha's precepts has the sublime effect on the readers as defined by Longinus. His words defamiliarise the familiarity and give aesthetic awe that leads to ecstasy. They drive the readers to the transcendent reality that *SuttaNipata* (2010) infers to move "beyond the power of words"(as cited in Benedict,2010, p.175). In this regard, *the Dhammapada* perfectly exploits the five sources of sublimity propounded by Longinus. Every verse of this book genuinely reflects these sources of the sublimity. That's why; Buddha's preaching always becomes eloquent and gives a drive to transport the mind and soul of readers.

The Dhammapada proposes a grand project to lead beyond the zenith to provide the ecstasy and the eternal truth. For a moment, if we put aside its spiritual significance and concern only in the use of language, it is flawless. The language is used in such a way that it becomes the epitome of oration. The opening lines bring unique taste when they apply Shklovsky's defamiliarisation and Longinus' concept of sublimity:

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him (Muller, 2013, pp. 3-4).

Buddha preaches in such a way that the fundamental features of aesthetic pleasure embark in simplicity, yet the vigour of words mars the day-to-day pattern of usage. Breaking the normal use of language, these verses present estrangement. Why do these verses become powerful and still attractive? It is because of the way they present the novelty of ideas as they prolong the perception, which is the major aspect of Shklovsky's concept to give the aesthetic pleasure. Thus, Buddha's words still mesmerize the whole world. The relation between our life and thought has been explained, revealing the integrated relationship between the two. The first verse proposes that the moment we pollute our thought or speech, the series of pain starts. The use of simile "as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage" clarifies the essence of pain (*dukkha*) that is to prevail in our life if our thought and speech become impure. It shows that we pull the pain in our life. The striking parallel between the wheel of carriage drawn by oxen and the pain makes this verse loaded with a metaphysical conceit that startles the readers. That's why, Coomaraswamy's (2007) idea that figures of speech are figures of thoughts (p.10) perfectly reflects the nature of Buddha's sayings. This is the quality of defamiliarisation and aesthetic pleasure.

The second verse uses the same motifs of the first verse, but very beautifully justifies the nature of happiness (*sukkah*) with the use of a beautiful simile "like a shadow that never leaves." All at once, the second verse contrasts with the first one though it uses the similar structure of the first one. Only the difference in simile changes the whole meaning that contrasts with the meaning of the first. That's why, the meaning shines with its radiance.

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This is the quality of Buddha's aphorisms. The development in the forms by employing figurative language gives rise to the elevated thoughts that bring the sublimity as Longinus has proposed. As a result, a reader is transported because of defamiliarisation with the blending of figurative language and elevated thoughts. Both the concepts of Longinus and Shklovsky meet here that lead to sublimation. These words from Atkins (1934) better justifies the nature of sublimity in Buddha's verses:

Nowadays the supreme qualities of the work are no longer in question. Ranking in antiquity with the greatest critical achievements, it 'remains towering among all other works of its class', and for sheer originality and power it has not been surpassed. . . .

There are things in its pages that can never grow old; while its freshness and light will continue to charm all ages. (p.253)

These words justify the nature of sublimity and prove how the great work of antiquity like *the Dhammapada* adds a unique flavour in the various crossroads in the development of human civilization. So is the reason it posits the remedies for the problems of people from every epoch. The lofty ideas hide in lucid words. This is possible with artistic devices.

The above verses become so persuasive because they use rhetorical tropes like amplification and anaphora. Longinus (1992) defines amplification as a figure when an "elevated expressions follow, one after the other, in an unbroken succession and ascending order" (p.83). In simple words, it is a way of processing ideas and thoughts in a sequential order in an unbroken form. The verses put the idea chronologically even by repeating similar structures and patterns. The word "happiness" replaces "pain" in the simile of second verse, but the significant difference in meaning is so lovely and grandeur. This creates a sublimity and awe in the readers' mind when they are transported because the automation itself breaks here.

We can find the use of another rhetorical trope anaphora in the above discussed verses. Anaphora is the way of repeating some words, phrases, and clauses from the earlier sentences in the forthcoming sentences. The second verse follows and repeats the sentence structure, some words, phrases and even the clause of the first one. The way Buddha handles rhetorical tropes makes him drive the readers perennially. These following verses from *the Dhammapada* deautomatise the automation by perfectly using the rhetorical tropes that dawn the sublimity by pouring out the echoes of "greatness of soul" (Selden, 1990, p. 151):

Though a thousand be the statements,
With words of no avail,
Better is a single word of welfare,
Having heard which, one is pacified.

Though a thousand be the verses,
With words of no avail,
Better is a single line of verse,
Having heard which, one is pacified.

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And should one recite a hundred verses,
With words of no avail,
Better is one dhamma word,
Having heard which, one is pacified.

He, truly, is supreme in battle,
Who would conquer himself alone,
Rather than he who would conquer in battle
A thousand, thousand men.

Better, indeed, oneself conquered
[Rather than] these other folk.
Of a person who has won himself,
Who is constantly living in self-control. (Carter & Palihawadana, 2000, p, 20)

Only the genius mind with elevated thought can express such powerful thoughts. This leads to genuine sublimity because the thoughts expressed are natural and pure. The sources of sublimity that Longinus categorizes above find their perfect amalgamation with the concepts of defamiliarisation and estrangement of Shklovsky. So, these thoughts grow lofty and magnanimous. The use of refrains, *amplification* and *anaphora* makes Buddha's words persuasive and highly argumentative. Every claim he makes becomes justifiable. Booth et al (2016) view that claim is backed up by reasons. Evidence supports the reasons (p.110). Buddha here becomes the exemplary one in this aspect too as he applies the sequence of claim, reasons, shreds of evidences in the perfect way to touch the deepest part of readers' and audiences' consciousness. That's why, his words bear power and carry beyond the realm of transcendent. His words exist perennially because they are to be realized.

Buddha's elevated thoughts transforms the reader's attitude because his expressions reflect his soul. Habib (2008) opines that for Longinus the voice of the soul is the natural genius that cannot be acquired, but becomes the primary source of sublimity (p120). The elevated thought gives rise to the great style. The style of *the Dhammapada*, its structures, the use of rhetorical tropes, the noble diction with archaic flavour, and the grandeur of composition are the outcome of that inspired natural genius and passion. Thus, Longinus (2008) opines that lofty thoughts generate a grand style and a person with this style creates sublime sayings (as cited in Habib, 2008, p. 120). The above quoted first and second verses exactly use similar constructions and even words except for two phrases "a word of welfare" and "a line of verse." The rest is the same. But the third verse comes as the conclusion of the first two propositions. Huxley (2006) views this train of logic as syllogism which has parts of major premise, minor premise and conclusion (p.66). And by the train of further reasoning and with the exhibition of further syllogisms, the final determined point is developed. The fourth verse adds further reasoning by making a final gist that realising yourself is the way to nirvana—the enlightenment. This is a focal point that how from a simple issue of speaking little words of welfare opens the path of beatitude, the enlightenment or the nirvana.

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Reaching from a small point to the grandeur one determines the quality of a great orator. This oratory skill is the systematic arrangements of words too because Longinus (2008) says that the beautiful composition is “a kind of melody in words—words which are parts of man’s nature and reach not his ears only but his very soul” (as cited in Habib, 2008, p, 134). In this way, Buddha’s emotions transform into the heart of the readers ceaselessly.

Buddha’s words touch the deepest part of the readers’ soul because of the elevated and proper arrangement of words and sentence structures. At the first glance, they hear to be simple, but the underlying meaning is so powerful that it prolongs the readers’ thinking. The above verses operate this quality systematically. Longinus names these systematic arrangements as hyperbaton. It is a rhetorical device which according to Longinus (2001) “is an arrangement of words or thoughts which differs from the normal sequence . . . It is a very real mark of urgent emotion” (p147). If hyperbaton elicits emotions going beyond normal sequence, then it serves the purpose of Shklovsky’s defamiliarisation. In this aspect, the above verses exemplify the use of defamiliarisation and sublimity. The following verses beautifully employ amplification, anaphora, and hyperbaton:

If a man commits a sin, let him not do it again; let him not delight in sin: the accumulation of evil is painful.

If a man does what is good, let him do it again; let him delight in it: the accumulation of good is delightful. (Muller trans, 2013, p. 34)

The first and second verses repeat similar structures, with only slight changes in words. But the meaning they bear is quite opposite. Even the second verse contrasts with the first one to crystallize the good itself. The dichotomy between “good” and “evil” is beautifully exposed with the use of very simple words. How does the power of words shine? It is because of deviation. The deviation in words presents the familiar things in an unfamiliar way. This increases the duration of the perception and thinking process, the process of defamiliarisation. It arouses the sublime effect. The power of good deeds shines as it contrasts with the pains derived from sin. This leads to estrangement and aesthetic ecstasy because Wimsatt and Brooks (1957) opine that great poetry always and in all ways pleases the readers (p.107)). One aspect of the theme gets power because of the other. While reading *the Dhammapada*, the readers are in astonishment as they feel the perfect blending of aesthetic devices in each verse. A unique experience blazes out in every word and the construction of the verse in this great creation of human civilization. This inspires to see the literariness of the writing as well that transports the readers into sublimity.

The Radiance of Aesthetic Ecstasy in the Dhammapada

The more one reflects, the more one gets intensified from Buddha’s aphorisms. The aphorisms in verses fulfill the good quality of poetry. Selden et al. (2005) opine “Poetry exercises a controlled violence upon the practical language” (p 32). As a well-written poetry, the verses from *the Dhammapada* compel us to view their structure and the meaning derive from them. The form of the book is so well constructed, that the aesthetic beauty

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it delivers blazes because of the perfect harmony between them. The form and content perfectly harmonize, and thus gives the gurgling effect. These verses better move the readers' consciousness and transport the readers' mind, leading to the sublimity:

Even an evil-doer sees happiness so long as his evil deed does not ripen; but when his evil deed ripens, then does the evil-doer see evil.

Even a good man sees evil days so long as his good deed does not ripen; but when his good deed ripens, then does the good man see good things. (Muller trans, 2013, p.34)

The divine aspect of Buddha's precepts is grandeur thoughts are expressed in elevated structure and language. It is not the verbosity that gives the sublime effect, rather a simple expression delivered in defamiliarised way makes the effect different. In the above quoted verses, the perfect blending of the refrain with rhetorical tropes establishes the genuine truth about the evildoer and good man. Buddha not just only applies rhetorical techniques, but also combines natural genius with genuine thoughts. Therefore, he provides sublimity because Leitch (2001) writes that sublimity instigates the readers' spirit. It also fills them with unexpected sensation, awe and pride, and stimulates noble thoughts (p.135). In this regard, the purpose of sublimity has a pragmatic purpose. Buddha becomes a pragmatist as his aphorismsignite the noble thoughts, expressing the genuine truth for the whole humankind. We see the simultaneous application of Shklovsky's defamiliarization and the Longinus' concept of sublimity in his adages. This is the reason, his voice enchants humanity.

The power of expressions with the implications of literary devices touches the inner vibrations. The literary devices add forms to the expressions that make the poetic expression a "*formed speech*" (Jefferson, 1986, p. 28), and it defamiliarises the familiar ones. Shklovsky (1986) confirms, "defamiliarisation is found almost everywhere form is found" (as cited in Jefferson, 1986, p. 28). If it is so, then the verses from *the Dhammapada* reflect the optimum level of defamiliarisation. These verses in totality bear the artistic devices to display one of the enduring truths of Buddha's philosophy:

Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled; the fool becomes fun of evil, even if he gather it little by little.

Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled; the wise man becomes full of good, even if he gathers it little by little.

Let a man avoid evil deeds, as a merchant, if he has few companions and carries much wealth, avoids a dangerous road; as a man who loves life avoids poison.

He who has no wound on his hand, may touch poison with his hand; poison does not affect one who has no wound; nor is there evil for one who does not commit evil.(Muller trans, 2013, pp. 34-35)

These verses radiate the facet of poetry. Besides the use of amplification, anaphora, and hyperbaton that have been discussed in the context of earlier verses, these verses use other forms of poetic device and rhetorical tropes like *phantasia*, similes and metaphors.

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Phantasia, according to Longinus (2001), is visualization that produces grandeur and magnificent effects. It is an image production (p. 144). In the above citation, the first and second verses use the image of “falling of water-drops a water pot is filled.” The use of this image posits a graphic picture of presenting reality in a visual way to the audience. The image invokes the process of being contagious to the evil in the first verse just like the water drops fills the water pot little by little. In a similar way, one gets blessed by the surmise of goodness just like filling the water pot by little drops of water. Both of these verses make an oratory amplification that little deeds ultimately give a cumulative result whether it may be good or bad. This is the gravity of magnificent truth Buddha wants to expose in the first and second verses.

Likewise, the word like “nigh” adds the archaic pattern that is another way of defamiliarisation. Besides, there is the deliberate rupture of the syntax in the phrase “even if he gather it little by little.” This rupture along with the use of rhetorical devices, figurative language is a quality beyond explanation that makes the verse mesmerizing and sonorous. This is a kind of development of defamiliarisation into “foregrounding” that the Russian formalist Mukarovsky (2005) defines as “aesthetically intentional distortion of the linguistic components” (as cited in Selden et al., 2005, p. 36). This quality of foregrounding is the ecstasy of Buddha's verses. So, they are appealing and growing agelessly.

The above third and fourth verses use similes like “as a merchant, if he has few companions and carries much wealth, avoids a dangerous road; as a man who loves life avoids poison.” The truth “Let a man avoid evil deeds” is clarified by the simile that follows it. Even more, the second simile “as a man who loves life avoids poison” nurtures the claim in such a way that no one can counter-argue it. The fourth verse even provides the solid ground for the thesis statement with the use of the analogy of wound and poison. Because of this magnanimity in the use of language, an audience changes into a devotee. That is the power in the use of language. Besides, the use of rhythm is beyond explanation. That's why, Jefferson (1986) clarifies that poetic speech differs from our day-to-day language not only in the use of unique constructions and vocabulary, but the use of formal devices like rhyme and rhythm and others help to renew and refresh our perceptions (p. 28). The conceptual qualities of all these theories and concepts find their revelation in *the Dhammapada*. No single word is spoken in vain. Even in a verse of a few words, readers see the hedging of ideas and concepts. Buddha says, “As an archer aims an arrow, the wise aim their restless thoughts, hard to aim, hard to restrain” (Easwaran trans, 2015, p. 115). The lofty concept of one-pointedness has been well expressed with the analogy of archer and arrow. The restless thoughts are hard to aim and hard to restrain, but possible to tame with concentration and trained meditation. In this way, almost in every verse, the readers find the assimilation of the five sources of sublimity postulated by Longinus and Shklovsky's notion of defamiliarisation.

Longinus' theory of sublimity and Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarisation have some kindred connections with other theories like New Criticism. Nagarajan (2006) views that Longinus concept of sublimity and the transport theory can be interpreted with “the

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concept of 'synaesthesia' or an equilibrium or organization of impulses suggested by I. A. Richards" (p. 26). For Richards (1990), poetry makes a pseudo statement. In his essay, "Science and poetry", he opines that it "is justified entirely by its effect in releasing or organizing our impulses and attitudes" (p. 183). A pseudo statement expresses a special kind of truth. Then a poetic statement finds its value in the equilibrium of the mental state it arouses in the readers. How much it helps to organize the impulses, attitudes, and feelings determines its value. Each verse from *the Dhammapada* carries the readers to a stage of equilibrium. These verses are some of them:

Look on the world as a bubble; look on it as a mirage. Then the King of Death cannot even see you.

Come look at this world! Is it not like a painted royal chariot? The wise see through it, but not the immature. (Easwaran trans, 2015, p. 161)

How powerfully these two verses move the readers to a state of mental equilibrium! The simile compares the world as a bubble, which exposes the real truth when it has been supported by a powerful metaphor in a rhetorical question. What a perfect combination! This creates an emotional stream and provides relief to the readers. It opens Buddha's one of the noble truths that the world and its creations are transitory, and always assigns to *dukkha* (sufferings). That's why, Buddha's words have a healing effect, synaesthesia because powerful "poetry organises our mind, gives it certain order, renders us happy, and makes our mind healthy" (Nagarajan, 2006, p. 116). The verses composed in grandeur poetry in *the Dhammapada* lift us to the realm of new perceptions and fill us with bliss.

The Dhammapada transports the readers beyond the dialects of this world. The moment one reads the verses, they bring the harmonious relationship between the fragmented experiences, feelings, emotions, and other sentiments when one is illumined with the "soul-stirring music or scriptural incantation" (Nagarajan, 2006, p. 25). Then where do these verses carry us? Let's just imagine, and be illumined with ecstasy:

That fetter wise people call strong which drags down, yields, but is difficult to undo; after having cut this at last, people leave the world free from cares, and leaving the pleasures of love behind.

Those who are slaves to passions, run down the stream (of desires), as a spider runs down the web which he has made himself; when they have cut this, at last, wise people go onwards, free from cares, leaving all pain behind.

Give up what is before, give up what is behind, give up what is between, when thou goest to the other shore of existence; if thy mind is altogether free, thou wilt not again enter into birth and decay. (Muller trans, 2013, p. 83)

Of course, these mighty words carry us to eternity. Therefore, they are to be perceived, felt, meditated, and realized. They lead us beyond the zenith of life and death, where every duality merges. That is the ultimate reality. The archaic words like "goest, thy, thou, wilt" bring the deviation from automation. The image of the spider and the trapping in its web unravels the starkest truth that Buddha bestows for humanity. The use of pronoun "he" personifies the spider by attributing the human qualities to it. It is the perfect use of

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personification. In this sense, the situation of spider and its web symbolizes the human's situation in this world. It is the quality of vehement arrangements of words. Richards (1990), in his work *Principles of literary criticism* (1924) opines such arrangement bring attitudes, and "they operate like a music" (p. 185). The entire words musically play the truth. That is the power of Buddha's words that arouse equilibrium. Breaking the bondage, one goes to another domain of existence, beyond birth and decay. That is the stage of eternity, which is Buddha's nirvana.

Conclusion

The Dhammapada projects the eternal truth. Every word that Buddha speaks radiates the power. It is because there is the perfect fusion of Longinus' concepts of sublimity and Shklovsky's defamiliarisation. Both of these ideas conceptualise that language is power. If one perceives each word from *the Dhammapada*, one realizes that the power in Buddha's words is the drive of divine inspiration, vehement passion, the perfect use of rhetorical tropes, noble diction, and the perfect and systematic arrangements of words. Longinus categorizes them as the sources of the sublimity. When all these parents of sublimity come together in a perfect way from Buddha's words, then the surest way is to advance towards eternity. More than that, every word delivered in the Pali language is so simple, but defamiliarised in such a way that it gives jubilant effects. The sublimity when combined with aesthetic ecstasy transport the readers from this world to the domain of bliss. Both Longinus's sublimity and Shklovsky's defamiliarisation have been reconciled in *the Dhammapada* that enables the readers to sensitize every verse as the fundamentals to solve the problems that they face in this phenomenal world. Thus, Buddha's words are not for the readers of a fixed time and space. One may wonder how the words could be so powerful and even magical. It is possible for the divine words of Buddha when they harmonize the sublimity and defamiliarisation to open the path for eternity. In this regard, *the Dhammapada* exemplifies sublimity and estrangement. Longinus and Shklovsky might have jumped in joy had they ever read this great book. This article meets its aims and opens new arenas for curious researchers in the days to come. One should feel prideful joy when one finds chances to submerge in the divine verses from *the Dhammapada*.

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