

Total Affirmation through Non-Dual Realization: Joseph Campbell's Basic Principle

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[Abstract]

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the meaning of Joseph Campbell's logically incomprehensible notions non-dual realization and total affirmation, with clues discovered in poems by T. S. Eliot and Emily Dickinson and a novel by Virginia Woolf. It examines these evidently ideal-driven views of Campbell as to whether they can serve to solve pragmatic problems, as he insinuates. The paper first considers what non-dual realization is, and points out hints found in *Four Quartets* by T. S. Eliot and *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf. Secondly, it interprets what Campbell means by total affirmation and indicates keys in the same works of literature. Finally, it describes the effects of total affirmation through non-dual realization and points out clues in a poem by Emily Dickinson in addition to the above. These poems and novels as well as Campbell's views are in appearance romantic and illogical and not products of reasoning. Their practical potential, however, should not be underestimated. They complement logical viewpoints and offer realistic and fundamental solutions for human society.

Key words Non-dualism, Total affirmation, Social problems, Internal change, Joseph Campbell

INTRODUCTION

In industrialized societies, particularly, a better life is furiously sought after. It seems, however, the harder we struggle, the more unsuccessful we become and the more we are exposed to spiritual destruction which drives us to the limit for achievement to gain a sense of security and to wipe out our uneasiness. What we now find around us is numerous social problems piled up. They are constantly causing pain to us one after another. It seems obvious that we should prioritize solving them before anything else, including individualistic pursuits.

Joseph Campbell (1904-87), however, looks at problems from different perspective:

When we talk about
settling the world's problems,

we're barking up the wrong tree.

The world is perfect. It's a mess.
It has always been a mess.

We are not going to change it.

Our job is to straighten out
our own lives. (Osbon 17)

This statement of Campbell gives us the impression that we should turn our eyes from social problems. And his writings have been of much controversy. Karen L. King argues that Campbell's attitude is indifferent to society and that he is irresponsible as a scholar (King 69, 79). Robert A. Segal writes that Campbell's goals are personal, not collective (Seagal 619), and his focus on the inner self of the human is also criticized. According to William G. Doty, Campbell sometimes seems to advise retreat from the competitive daily world into one's own private spiritual garden (Doty 6).

These scholars and Campbell are discussing problems from entirely different viewpoints. While they argue from rational points of view, there are always metaphorical aspects (Campbell, *Metaphor* 239) behind Campbell's perception of reality. At the same time, in actuality, Campbell is apparently concerned about society and the future of all of humanity. He thinks that social reform by politics and church cannot accomplish the unification of the divided segments in this world (Campbell, *Hero* viii). He advocates that internal change in humanity is the only solution to reform society. For him, the destiny of society rests on every human being (Campbell, *Hero* 391). He offers a solution, too. It is to change individualistic perceptions to the ones based on total affirmation in life through non-dual realization, as he states as below:

Negativism
to the pain and ferocity of life
is negativism to life. (Osbon 20)

We are not there
until we can say
"yea" to it all. (Osbon 20)

Here, humanity, which is common throughout the world, instead of the morality accepted in a certain society, is the issue. Things are not judged as to value with a rational mind-set. Reading between the lines with metaphorical aids such as works of literature is what is needed to understand his

principles. That is why Campbell often quotes phrases from myths and works of literature to discuss words of wisdom which are useful in human life universally. According to him, works of literature are myths (Campbell, *Power* 107). They reveal the cosmic truth beyond words and the world of solid things (Campbell, *Power* 285-86). To better understand the view of Campbell could take us to a totally different arena of ideas about human life. Those ideas offer, possibly, a way to fulfill human life in any circumstances regardless of time and place.

This paper examines the basic principles of Campbell: non-dual realization and total affirmation, through works of literature by T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Emily Dickinson, and it evaluates the validity of these views in society.

The first part of this paper considers what non-dual realization is. The second part interprets what Campbell means by total affirmation. Finally what three effects of total affirmation through non-dual realization are is described.

1. NON-DUAL REALIZATION

Just as one driving a chariot looks down upon the two chariot wheels, thus he looks down upon day and night, thus upon good deeds and evil deeds, and upon all the pairs of opposites. This one, devoid of good deeds, devoid of evil deeds, a knower of God, unto very God he goes. (Campbell, *Hero* 172)

The above is what Campbell quotes from the *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, 1:4, describing the hero who has reached the Brahma-world (Campbell, *Hero* 171-72), a state of awakening, that is, non-dual realization. Non-dual realization is what a hero reaches eventually in a monomyth. Campbell claims that monomyth has been told everywhere in the world in various ways. It is a hero's journey that consists of three stages. The first stage is separation or departure. The second is trials and victories of initiation, reaching non-dual realization. The third is return and reintegration with society (Campbell, *Hero* 36), with a boon which is total affirmation through non-dual realization. At this stage, in case of the Bodhisattva, one of the heroes, "having surpassed the delusions of his formerly self-assertive, self-defensive, self-concerned ego" (Campbell, *Hero* 165), the mind rests in its true states. Images and ideas of "good" and "evil," "life" and "death," and "eternity" and "time" (Campbell, *Hero* 171) have been surpassed. At that point, the hero no longer desires or fears. "All men are brothers" (Campbell, *Hero* 162):

The separateness
apparent in the world
is secondary.

Beyond that world of opposites
is an unseen, but experienced,
unity and identity in us all. (Osbon 25)

As above, Campbell writes that after realization, the hero's original self, which is different from his ego, appears. Then the world begins to look totally different. The point is that every one of humans is a hero.

The Waves was written by Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), intended to be a realistic novel with an eye for non-dualism. She does not consider that existing novels are genuinely realistic, since they are filtered by the writers' perceptions based on dualism. Gillian Beer states, "Woolf seeks to escape the narrow bounds of social realism which, she perceives, is functioning as a form of censorship (Woolf xiv). Therefore, story lines do not mean much to her: "I am writing to a rhythm and not to a plot" (Woolf xxvii). Instead, she takes a bird's-eye view of human life to portray a new realism.

One of the realities Woolf captures is that in the natural world dualistic perceptions are invalid and that humans are part of nature. In this novel, waves symbolize a group of characters, as the title of this novel is '*The Waves*.' The sense of unity between nature and humans is depicted in two different parts, interludes and episodes respectively. In every interlude, the nature scene centers on the sun and the ocean, which represent the process of development and decline in life of seven people. Each wave goes back to the same sea when it finishes the cycle, although it appears to be separated from the sea temporarily. In each episode, changes in the life of the character respond to the movements of the waves. The characters' characteristics and behaviors are depicted in a sense dispassionately, which leaves the impression that the characters are part of the nature scenes.

Another reality of life which Woolf sees is that in human life there is the process of breaking the spell of duality. In *The Waves* this process is depicted, starting with early childhood, when individuality is not clearly established. This is followed by the formation of one's identity in adolescence. This phase is indispensable for an individual person in the course of life to learn to distinguish between oneself and others: "I said, 'I am myself, not Neville', a wonderful discovery" (Woolf 201). At the same time, it is accompanied by new suffering: "We suffered terribly as we became separate bodies... 'Yet I was preserved from these excesses and survived many of my friends'" (Woolf 202). In one's later years, finally, it concludes with emancipation from the attachment to one's individuality through non-dual realization. Now middle-aged Bernard, who represents one of the waves, starts perceiving life with non-dualistic images and is freed from agony. After the second last interlude, the story reaches its climax. He starts to sum up his own life, recalling that until then, he has been intensely conscious of being an individual existence. But he confesses that he has reached a different mental state. He realizes that the boundaries between his individuality and the ones of his friends are blurred: "... what

I call 'my life', it is not one life that I look back upon; I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am—Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs" (Woolf 230). It is as if he happens to be playing the role of a man called Bernard in his life, but it could be the role of someone else. He says he can't distinguish his life from his friends'. As Campbell writes, he finds that "the separateness apparent in the world is secondary" (Osbon 25). Bernard says, "...we [Bernard and his old friends] are not here. Yet I cannot find any obstacle separating us. There is no division between me and them. As I talked I felt, 'I am you'. This difference we make so much of, this identity we so feverishly, cherish, was overcome" (Woolf 241). And as the above word 'overcome' implies, Woolf thinks that this issue of identity needs to be dealt with and controlled eventually, since for Woolf, in reality, an individual person and others are not as completely separated as one would imagine. Just as waves and the sea are inseparable, individuals and the whole are one to a broader view.

In *Four Quartets*, by T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), the idea of non-dual realization is also detected. He depicts the process of total affirmation through non-dual realization in the journey for the timeless moment in one of the poems, "The Little Gidding," in *Four Quartets*, while the hero's journey of Campbell symbolizes the quest for the same inner essence of humanity. Eliot writes about the destination: "Where is the summer, the unimaginable / Zero summer?" (19-20) "The unimaginable zero summer" is the condition which is free from dualism and not affected by particular times, places, senses, or conceptions:

If you came this way,
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,
At any time or at any season,
It would always be the same: you would have to put off
Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
Or carry report. You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid. (39-46)

Being absorbed in prayer creates a condition where the traveler's consciousness is released from his ego, a product of dualism. A. David Moody writes as follows about the non-dualistic aspects in *Four Quartets*: "But this much is sure, that the eternal note of desire that will not be content, and which equates rest and motion, silence and utterance, fulfillment and annihilation, has been heard in our time in a new form" (Moody 180-81). And just as Campbell was looking at all people, Eliot writes *Four Quartets* for the sake of the relief of all humanity. John Xiros Cooper states, "Recent criticism of Eliot has ignored the public dimension of his life and work.... He aimed to reinforced established social structures during a period of painful political transition" (Cooper Preface).

Let us first consider the opposite pair of the beginning and the end. In the fifth stanza of “Little Gidding,” Eliot sees the two as one and the same thing: “What we call the beginning is often the end / And to make an end is to make a beginning. / The end is where we start from (1-3). The above hints at circulation from death to life and from life to death. Death accompanies “the dying,” which means life. And life accompanies “the dead,” which means death:

We die with the dying:
See, they depart, and we go with them.
We are born with the dead:
See, they return, and bring us with them. (15-18)

There is life behind death, and there is death behind life. Some are born and others die. As a whole, life continues. Therefore, to discriminate between life and death is a mistake. Eliot claims equality between life and death, as follows: “The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree / Are of equal duration (19-20). He means that on the surface, life and death, the rose and the yew tree, contrast but actually are equivalent, complementary, and indispensable to each other.

The non-dual realization we consider next is in the pair of past and future found in *Four Quartets*. As follows, in the fifth stanza of “The Dry Salvages,” Incarnation brings the union of opposing existences, as one of the Campbell’s heroes brings back a boon from the journey:

Here the impossible union
Of spheres of existence is actual,
Here the past and future
Are conquered, and reconciled, (33-36)

Being free from the concept of past and future is the mental attitude desirable for living: “And right action is freedom / From past and future also” (37-42).

In the third stanza of “The Dry Salvages,” another example of non-dual realization between past and future is found. The Hindu hero Krishna appears here. He admonishes his disciple, Arjuna, to face this crisis without being distressed by the fear of fighting against his own kinsmen:

Fare forward, travelers! Not escaping from the past
Into different lives, or into any future; (14-15)
.....
You shall not think ‘the past is finished’
Or ‘the future is before us’ (21-22)

Here, Krishna encourages Arjuna to be absorbed in what he is confronting at this very moment, without caring about the outcome. In order to demonstrate one’s ability the fullest, even in a critical situation like a war, the most desirable state of mind is non-dual realization, that is, to forget the pairs

of the future and the past, success and failure, action and inaction, and life and death:

While time is withdrawn, consider the future
And the past with an equal mind.
At the moment which is not of action or inaction
You can receive this: “on whatever sphere of being
The mind of a man may be intent
At the time of death” – that is the one action
(And the time of death is every moment)
Which shall fructify in the lives of others:
And do not think of the fruit of action.
Fare forward.

O voyagers, O seamen,
You who come to port, and you whose bodies
Will suffer the trial and judgment of the sea,
Or whatever event, this is your real destination,
So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna
On the field of battle.

Not fare well,
But fare forward, voyagers. (30-47)

Dualism is the greatest distraction when concentration is required. Therefore, until dualism is overcome and anticipation of success is set aside, the best result cannot be expected. So, “Fare forward” (39), to get absorbed in the immediate task anyway, since “whatever event, this is your real destination,” (43). Then, “The mind of a man” (35) comes to face the task with as much concentration as being “at the time of [his] death.” That state of mind is totally free from dualism. And it is accompanied by total affirmation.

2. TOTAL AFFIRMATION

We are not there
until we can say
“yea” to it all. (Osbon 20)

Life is supposed to consist of contrasting elements, such as evil and good, pain and pleasure, and barbarous acts and good deeds. Campbell sees that the world is a mess, and at the same time, that it is perfect as it is (Osbon 17). “Negativism to the pain and ferocity of life is negativism to life” (Osbon

20). This is the affirmation of all things, transcending dualism. According to Campbell, in the hero's journey found in various myths from all over the world, tearing the coverings away is brought by breaking through personal limitations based on dualistic perceptions (Campbell, *Hero* 190). The agony of spiritual growth leads him to a psychological transformation, which is total affirmation in daily life. The hero now accepts everything in life as it is, including death, not as contrary to life but as an aspect of it (Campbell, *Power* 188). When he comes to terms with death, he overcomes the fear of death, and he comes to take a positive attitude toward life.

As for Eliot, an unconditional affirmation of life is at the core of his philosophy in *Four Quartets*. In the last quartet, "Little Gidding," he cites the same lines of Juliana of Norwich (1343-1443) twice in the third and fifth stanzas. They are words inspired by Jesus' response to her question why God, that is supposed to be infinite goodness, doesn't stop human sins. Jesus answers, "Sin is Behovely, but / All shall be well, and / All manner of thing shall be well" (17-19). Things happen regardless of the dualistic judgment of humans. It seems that virtue is not necessarily rewarded and vice often thrives. In the end, however, everything settles down in place. Based on this philosophy, Eliot thinks that for the journey to the timeless moment, even the sinfulness of humanity, which is symbolized by the scene of the air raid in London (28) in the second stanza of "Little Gidding," is useful and necessary. "the dark dove with the flickering tongue," (28) in the second stanza, once, symbolizing the sin and error of humans, changes into the dove declaring renunciation of opposing elements (3-4) in the fourth stanza. Following is a description of that condition, where the tongues of sinful flames eventually form the refining fire of victory: "When the tongues of flames are in-folded / Into the crowned knot of fire" (44-45). Here the impossible is happening. Two conflicting elements come together. Eliot sums it up in the following sentence: "And the fire and the rose are one" (46). The refining fire originating in the timeless moment and the rose symbolizing worldly life are finally united. That implies the possibility of experiencing eternity in earthly everyday life through total affirmation.

3. EFFECTS OF TOTAL AFFIRMAITON

Total affirmation leads to unexpected effects. These three effects are reaching compassion, enhanced mental power, and the rapture of being alive. Let us examine these effects to evaluate the legitimacy of Campbell's emphasis on internal changes in humanity over the structural reforms of society.

The first effect that we discuss is reaching compassion. It is derived from selflessness. Going beyond dualism brings compassion towards others. At this point, it is realized that telling oneself from others is insignificant, and clinging to the egoistic self is vain. Now the hero's concern is not limited

only to his personal fate any more, but also to the fate of mankind, or life as a whole:

The purpose of the journey
is compassion.

When you have come past
the pairs of opposites,
you have reached compassion. (Osbon 24)

The hero's mind becomes totally open and free from the limitations of egoistic judgment. That is "effecting a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will" (Campbell, *Hero* 238). Campbell writes, "Finally, the mind breaks the bounding sphere of the cosmos to a realization transcending all experiences of form—all symbolizations, all divinities: a realization of the ineluctable void" (Campbell, *Hero* 190). With the realization of the ineluctable void, the egoistic self vanishes. That is beyond description and human perception, but at the same time it is something known from the beginning somehow. Campbell quotes lines from the *Kena Upanishad*, 1:3: "There goes neither the eye, nor speech, nor the mind: we know It not; nor do we see how to teach one about It. Different It is from all that are known, and It is beyond the unknown as well" (Campbell, *Hero* 191).

Eliot writes about the nullification of the traveler's self-centered self through the realization of total affirmation in the timeless moment. In the fourth stanza of "Little Gidding," *Four Quartets*, the traveler learns to extinguish his burning fire of ego in the course of his journey accompanied by ordeals, where all he can do is to abandon himself to it by going on living, while he is being consumed by either the fire of his ego or the refining fire. Here, arrogance derived from the ego is gone:

Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire (emphasis added). (8-14)

That is the death of egotism. It derives from the intuition that the subject and the object are inseparable. The distinction between two things is just for the sake of dualistic convenience. That idea leads to compassion to others, since at this point, for him, others are considered to be part of him. In the fifth stanza of "The Dry Salvages," *Four Quartets*, Eliot explains that what is found at the end of the journey is "a lifetime's death in love, ardour and selflessness and self-surrender," which represents compassion created by parting from his egoistic self:

... But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint –
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender (emphasis added). (17-22)

Second, let us discuss the next effect, empowered mental power. Total affirmation through non-dual realization lifts an unnecessary weight from the hero, and his life force becomes empowered. It materializes an absolutely affirmative attitude toward daily life. Now he neither worries about the future nor regrets the past. He goes back to the starting point of the journey, and starts facing this very moment right here in the earthly world: “Eternity isn’t some later time. Eternity isn’t even a long time. Eternity has nothing to do with time. Eternity is that dimension of here and now that all thinking in temporal terms cuts off. And if you don’t get it here, you won’t get it anywhere” (Campbell, *Power* 84). This realization empowers the hero’s life force, and enhances his mental power. He now tackles the hardest situation in life with the greatest courage: “The warrior’s approach / is to say “yes” to life / “yea” to it all” (Osbon 17). He can concentrate on fulfilling his life anywhere, anytime, here and now with a controlled passion. That image is brave and dignified. Campbell describes that condition as follows:

The goal is to live
with godlike composure
on the full rush of energy,
like Dionysus riding the leopard,
without being torn to pieces. (Osbon 26)

Now he lives his life the fullest under any conditions, even a war. This is usual in the natural world. Campbell describes this state, referring to growing grass:

That is the condition of a warrior going into battle with perfect courage. That is life in movement. That is the essence of the mysticism of war as well as of a plant growing. I think of grass—you know, every two weeks a chap comes out with a lawnmower and cuts it down. Suppose the grass were to say, “Well, for Pete’s sake, what’s the use if you keep getting cut down this way?” Instead, it keeps on growing. That’s the sense of the energy of the center. That’s the meaning of the image of the Grail, of the inexhaustible fountain, of the source.... That’s what all these myths are concerned to tell you. (Campbell, *Power* 274)

In *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf, after he feels, “I am you” (Woolf 241), the protagonist, Bernard describes his psychological transformation as follows: “The shock of the falling wave which has

sounded all my life, which woke me so that I saw the gold loop on the cupboard, no longer makes quiver what I hold” (Woolf 243). His surroundings do not affect him as much as they used to, because he does not need any objects to measure the certainty of his being. Now he is not easily perturbed. He says, “ ‘Let me now raise my song of glory. Heaven be praised for solitude. Let me be alone. Let me cast and throw away this veil of being, this cloud that changes with the least breath, night and day, and all night and all day.... Now I look at their changing no more” (Woolf 245).

After that, the consciousness of Bernard comes back to the daily world. It is a hero’s return to where he departed from. Now he sees himself as a part of “the eternal renewal” (Woolf 247) of the whole, and at the same time, as the whole itself. He confronts whatever he is facing, without thinking of the outcome. As Campbell states, “The warrior’s approach is to say ‘yes’ to life: ‘yea’ to it all” (Osbon 17), even though his next enemy is the most powerful one, death:

‘Again I see before me the usual street....There is a sense of the break of day. I will not call it dawn....Yes, this is the eternal renewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again.

‘And in me too the wave rises.... What enemy do we now perceive advancing against us,.. It is death. Death is the enemy....I strike spurs into my horse. Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death!’ (Woolf 247-48)

And the last interlude is followed by no episode. This is the end of the individualistic existence of the characters including Bernard. The very last line is, “*The waves broke on the shore*” (Woolf 248). But it is not the final end. It is part of “the eternal renewal” (Woolf 247), and implies the next beginning.

Finally, the third effect we ought to discuss is the rapture of being alive which the hero acquires through total affirmation. The transformed mind-set is now within the hero. This enlargement of vision empowers him, and he “discovers himself enhanced, enriched, supported and magnified” (Campbell, *Hero* 383). Campbell states that this state is to “participate joyfully in the sorrows of the world” (Osbon 17), and “working with the realization, the whole world is then radiant of life and joy” (Osbon 131). According to Campbell, the image of life is as follows: “Spiritual life is the bouquet, the perfume, the flowering and fulfillment of a human life, not a supernatural virtue imposed upon it” (Campbell, *Power* 245). Here, perfect contentment and absolute freedom are found.

In the following poem (Johnson, *Poems* 224) of Emily Dickinson (1830-86), Campbell’s image of bliss originated from this transformed inward condition is found:

’Tis little I – could care for Pearls –
Who own the ample sea –
Or Brooches – when the Emperor –
With Rubies – pelteth me –

Or Gold – who am the Prince of Mines –
Or Diamonds – when have I
A Diadem to fit a Dome –
Continual upon me –

In this poem, Dickinson expresses a sense of fulfillment inside herself. She lives in contentment, so even a variety of treasures from a ruler in the highest position fails to attract her. She is another hero who has returned from a journey. She is uncompromising in terms of her internal well-being. She does not give in to what her inner essence does not accept, no matter how much religious pressure her environment exerts on her. She finds and possesses her own inner sanctuary, which is “the ample sea.” In her ordinary position, she might want to bow to fine “Pearls,” “Brooches With Rubies,” “Gold” or “Diamonds” pelted down by the “Emperor,” but actually she isn’t interested in them, because she is “the Prince of Mines,” who is capable of producing abundant jewelry all by herself, her mental nourishment for herself. She is crowned with “A Diadem to fit” her perfectly, praising her mental self-sufficiency and freedom.

Her sense of fulfillment, in her ordinary life, deriving from her living from her faith, can be found in the following, as reportedly she said, “I find ecstasy in living – the mere sense of living is joy enough” (Johnson, *Letters* 209). This is one of the comments Higginson, whom Dickinson sought out as her literary mentor, cited as what Dickinson said to him on his visit in 1870. On his second and last visit, Higginson recorded her remarks, “there is always one thing to be grateful for – that one is one’s self and not somebody else” (Leiter 322-23). If “our job is to straighten out our own lives” (Osbon 17) as Campbell says, Dickinson is certainly one of the experts in it.

In *The Waves*, Woolf writes about the rapture the protagonist Bernard attains. He starts doubting his view of his individuality and the differences from his friends. That is the moment for him to notice the non-dualistic aspects in his life (Woolf 236-37). He realizes that he has been driven by his illusions of duality (Woolf 383, 242). He lets them go, and experiences an unfamiliar psychological condition. He attains a state of mind of total affirmation. The load of dualism is taken off his back. It is just like “the hero’s return, seeing the radiance everywhere” (Osbon 25). Bernard is now able to recognize the true beauty of life even in the most trifling objects:

When I look down from this transcendency, how beautiful are even the crumbled relics of bread! ... I could worship my hand even,...its infinite sensibility. ‘Immeasurably receptive, holding everything, trembling with fullness, yet clear, contained—so my being seems, now that desire urges it no more out and away; now that curiosity no longer dyes it a thousand colours. It lies deep, tideless, immune, now that he is dead, the man I called “Bernard”, (Woolf 242-43)

He starts appreciating everything in life as it is, feeling fullness in the state of simply being. That is the condition of embracing the delight of being alive.

This new joy is something calm and deep. In the very last stanza of *Four Quartets*, Eliot depicts this psychological state with stillness as follows: “Quick now, here, now, always — / A condition of complete simplicity / (Costing not less than everything)” (39-41). “A condition of complete simplicity” means transparency coming from unawareness based on total affirmation. No judgment is involved at this point. That seems to be childlike innocence, but it is not. The returned traveler is fully aware of the dualistic aspects of life, but is not controlled by them any more. He now deals with them with ease. As below, in that moment, there sounds music from the bottom of his being, but he does not hear it because he is the music itself:

The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. (26-29)

We have discussed three effects of total affirmation through non-dual realization. Let us consider a statement of Campbell: “When we talk about settling the world’s problems, we’re barking up the wrong tree....Our job is to straighten out our own lives” (Osbon 17). As in this message, he has a high opinion of inner aspect of humans to change society. Considering the above mentioned effects of total affirmation, this view of Campbell is worthy of note. The first effect of compassion derived from selflessness can help to overcome tribalism. It can remove boundaries between two parties in confrontation, among nations, races, and so on, which should bring many deadlocked negotiations, such as environmental and territorial issues, to peaceful settlements. The second effect of the empowered life force should produce an untiring driving force for putting plans into practice. The third effect of the rapture of being alive should drive away anger and the fears of an individual, and many disputes and wars can be dispelled. Eventually, the wide spread of these effects in each individual should revolutionize society.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper attempts to explore Joseph Campbell’s notions of non-dual realization and total affirmation by approaching them through works of literature by T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Emily Dickinson. It analyzes the effects and evaluates, whether, as Campbell insinuates, “human mutual understanding” (Campbell, *Hero* viii) by these inner quests can outweigh focusing on reform in social institutions.

In the first chapter, non-dual realization was discussed. Before acquiring this realization, relativity is the guideline for judgment. After acquiring non-dual realization, dualistic perceptions disappear and it is realized that dualism is delusion. In *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf, the process of breaking the spell of duality is found. In *Four Quartets* by T. S. Eliot, the idea of non-dual realization in death and life is found. Non-dual realization is accompanied by total affirmation. With total affirmation, everything in life is received as it is. As for Eliot, an unconditional affirmation of life is at the core of his philosophy in *Four Quartets*. Total affirmation has effects. They are reaching compassion derived from selflessness, enhanced mental power with empowered life force, and the rapture of being alive. Eliot deals with the death of egotism in “The Dry Salvages,” *Four Quartets*. In *The Waves*, Woolf depicts, after his realization of total affirmation, how the protagonist becomes to confront death. The essence of the third effect, the rapture of being alive, is found in a poem by Dickinson, as well as in *The Waves* and *Four Quartets*. These effects of inner transformation can prove a breakthrough in the solution of social problems, Campbell hints.

Today, in order to seek the best solution of a social problem, most of the energy is used in reforming the social system. Taking the case of nuclear disarmament, even if all the efforts are rewarded and it is finally realized, still, permanent world peace is not to be expected, because soon or later, alternative fatal weapons will replace nuclear weapons. For permanent measures, the motive for armament needs to be inspected. This paper has indicated that the shift of an individual’s view of life has the potentiality of having an impact on society. Society consists of individuals, and their change leads to social change. In Japan, over the decades, acquiring knowledge and technological innovation has been overemphasized, and the cultivation of the mind has been rather neglected. As a result, the people are starving and burning out inwardly. Nowadays the pollution of lifelessness is widespread in society. In order to make for betterment of the current situation, it is necessary now, as Campbell says, to “straighten out our own lives” (Osbon 17) before anything else.

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