

Abstract No 30

**A Comparative Study on *Identity Theme* and
*Ahamkāra***

L.B.J.Wageeshani

B.A. (Hons) Kelaniya
Junior Fellow, Department of Sinhala, University of Kelaniya
wageeshanilbj@gmail.com

Identity Theme is a concept which is developed by Norman Holland (1927-) to analyze the reader's responses towards a literary text. As mentioned by Holland, every individual has a unique unchanging core that guides all his dealings with the world. This core consists of strategies with which the individual tries to gain maximum pleasure and ward off anxiety caused by conflicts between desires and the demands of reality. He also introduces a model of 'literary transaction' - *DEFT* (defences, expectations, fantasies and transformations) - to describe the way we interact with texts through our identity themes. Some aspects of the theory of *Rasa* explained by Bhojadeva (11th century) in Sanskrit Literary Criticism - what he explains as *Ahamkāra* - could be compared with the above mentioned concept of Identity Theme. According to P. V. Kane, Bhojadeva has explained *Ahamkāra* as the ultimate inner reality of the sublimated Ego in human personality. Bhojadeva also calls it as *Sringara* par excellence and he describes it as the root from which all further blossoming of the feelings of a sensitive and cultivated person takes place. Therefore the aim of this research is to examine these two concepts (*Identity Theme* and *Ahamkāra*) in order to investigate the view of Western literary critics and Sanskrit literary critics towards the reader's responses in literary communication.

Key words: *Ahamkāra, Bhojadeva, Identity theme, Literary Criticism, Norman Holland*