

Demystifying Mysticism: A Comparative Study of the Poetry of William Blake and Rabindranath Tagore

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ABSTRACT

Mysticism is often accepted as a spiritual quest for the hidden truth or wisdom, the goal of which is union with the transcendent realm. Mystic experiences are said to be unique for each individual. Yet we find that there is a marked resemblance between the experiences of mystics, not merely of the same race or cult, but also of diverse social orders and religions. This paper discusses the concept and perception of mysticism in the works of the occidental poet William Blake and the oriental poet Rabindranath Tagore. Born in different lands they seemed to share a spiritual affinity. William Blake's works, though largely Biblical in its imagery, is apocalyptic in style and scope. In Indian mystical thought, Tagore offers a system in which the theism of the Bhagavad Gita, the metaphysics of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the mysticism of the Bauls and the philosophical principles of Vaishnavism and Sufism exist in synthesis. An in-depth study of their works reveals that, the poetic vision of Blake and Tagore coalesce notwithstanding the kaleidoscopic divergence by studying their poetic art, craft and oeuvre, while casting off the cultural tensions and nationalistic pretensions aside. The most prominent theme in their poetic works is that of mysticism and transcendentalism. Though their ways of depicting this is very different and diverse and their symbolism is also at variance, yet their poems bear a similar thematic purpose, which is mysticism.

Keywords: mysticism; transcendentalism; divine; romanticism; imagination.

INTRODUCTION

Mysticism is the endeavour of humans to apprehend Reality and experience the ecstasy of being in communion with God, by means of personal revelation, transcendentalism and contemplation or meditation on the Divine. It results in the freedom of the mind from the fetters of the senses and from the ordinary restrictions of social existence through the avenue of unexpected revelations. The mystic, being initiated into the mysteries of existence and the esoteric knowledge of the realities of life and death, aspires for afar, yearns for the inaccessible, and searches for the ideal heart's compassion and the desire to know the unknown (Samantaray 2011, p.39). Through the purgation of bodily desires and the purification of profaneness of heart and will power, the mystic discovers the illumination of mind, which enables him to pursue the union with the Absolute, leading to a state of ecstasy, a state of bliss. The experience, thus, is vividly joyous, finely intellectual and entirely divine. It is also distinctly personal and evidently universal at the same time, which sets in a life of reception, transformation, transfiguration and continuous living in that state of rhapsodic exaltation. The mystic shuts the doors of fleeting senses and passing passions, and remains self-evident, self-sufficient and self-luminous. The mystic is essentially a transcendentalist, who integrates all the forces of mind into a unity and reconciles himself with the community and with the totality of the experience as a spiritual system. Self transcendence is a determining feature of all mystical experience. The self is to be transcended since it is

considered to block the mystic from the divine influx, and to be a barrier to the goal of union with the Divine. Metaphorical language is also mandatory to give sensible shape to these abstract thoughts, experiences, and insights. Mysticism is not a mere pursuit of supernatural joy, rather a highly specialised and active search for the Reality, which is always an object of exploration culminating in the living union with the One and the Absolute. As Radhakamal Mukerjee says:

Mysticism posits eternal values such as Truth, Beauty and Goodness, which are all infinite, and which transcend any system of human relations, but it finds these actualized in concrete human situations and experiences. God as Truth safeguards society's pursuit of knowledge and broadens the horizon of human concepts, attitudes and affections. God as Beauty assures the promotion and conservation of values in the world of art. God as Goodness and Love guarantees man and society all that is worth maintaining and developing in social life and relations. God as the Person of Persons conserves the supreme values of personality in all men and in all human situations. Finally, God as the Transcendent Being or the Real Self stands for the conjunction of the values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Mysticism...can alone offer ways of accommodation and synthesis to an individual or community faced with the problems of tension and conflict of these ultimate values of life (1960, p.9).

Mystic experiences are said to be unique for each individual; yet we find there is a marked resemblance between the experiences of mystics, not merely of the same race or cult but also of diverse social orders and religions. Plato, Plotinus, St. Augustine, Eckhart, Jacob Boehme, John Donne, George Herbert, William Wordsworth, W. B. Yeats and of course William Blake can rightly be termed as some of the great mystics of English literature. Similarly, some of the litterateurs of Indian English literature like Sri Aurobindo, Toru Dutt, Ramesh Chander Dutt and Rabindranath Tagore are also mystic poets. The mystic views of these poets are quite evident in their poetic works. While exploring the nuances of mysticism, we cannot, therefore, lose sight of the afore-said seers and visionaries. Blake and Tagore have not basked in instantaneous critical acclaim. The world has taken its own time to understand and appreciate their variegated poetry. Max Plowman in his work *Introduction to the Study of Blake* (1927), states that Blake is essentially the poet of the human soul – a theme that shapes all his works. S. Foster Damon's *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (1924) treats Blake's mysticism as the key to his thoughts and the 'raison d'être' (reason of existence) of what Blake wrote. The grandeur of Tagore's poetry has won over the reticent recalcitrance and, therefore, one has to wade through a formidable array of critical writings like Sisir Kumar Ghose's *The Later Poems of Tagore* (1961), Mulk Raj Anand's *The Volcano: Some Comments on the Development of Rabindranath Tagore's Aesthetic Theories and Art Practices* (1967), Amiya Chakravarty's *A Tagore Reader* (1961) to assess, evaluate and appreciate the status and stature of Tagore as a poet. The search for a supersensible existence beyond the phantasmagoria of the senses has remained the mission of these mystic poets. In this paper, the English poet William Blake and the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore are taken into consideration, for a comparative study of their poetic works related to the context of mysticism.

TRYST WITH THE UNKNOWN: MYSTICISM IN THE WORKS OF BLAKE

An intensive study of the history of English literature reveals how mysticism has permeated English poetry. Needless to reiterate that the mysticism one encounters in English poetry is

largely Christian in inspiration. In any comprehensive study of mysticism, William Blake (1757-1827), on the sheer strength of his prodigious innovativeness, has to occupy a nodal position. As we know, Blake was a born visionary. Having had the beatific vision of angels perched on a tree early in his childhood, Blake, like St. Catherine of Siena, dedicated himself to the service of the Absolute. To demystify his mystic experiences he painted the ineffable experiences, using enigmatic symbols powerful enough to make his poems at once mystical and perhaps, therefore, freighted with loads of meaning. His mystic vision is reflected in the tapestry of images systematically used in his poetical works. Blake affirms love as the essence of all religions. For him, the entire universe with its manifest contraries and contradictions is fortified with Divine Love and therefore man, loving and loved by God, can never be unparadized. In *The Lamb* (2008, p.9) Blake argues that love is the quintessential attribute of both man and the Maker:

He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb
He is meek, and He is mild
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.

A similar microcosm in the macrocosm syndrome is evident in the poem captioned *Auguries of Innocence* (Blake 2008, p.490):

To see a World in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.

The above stated lines do bear ample testimony to the poet's proven mysticism.

Blake is held in high regard by the critics for his expressiveness and creativity and for the philosophical undercurrents in his works. He lived during a time of intense social change – a period of aggressive British Colonialism, revolutionary changes in America and Europe, as well as the beginning of Industrial Revolution. He obtained most of his education through his readings of the Bible, Milton, and Greek and Latin classics. His poetry shows the influence of the German mystic Jakob Boehme and the thinker Emanuel Swedenborg. Boehme's "*De Signatura Rerum*" (Divine signatures in nature) and Paracelsus's theory of "*le principe de la medicine est l'amour*" (Love is the medicine) perhaps influenced Blake to develop his conception of absolute one-ness between humans and God through the agency of love. Obviously, Paracelsus, by advocating the theory of the gracious, amiable, blessed, friendly and joyful love, inspired Blake to search and consecrate Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love in animated world, where he was able to decipher the divine signatures. Blake who had "spent his life unveiling the face of Truth in his poetry and his art displaying a power and beauty beyond the stream of thought" (Nanavutty 1968, p.105) was also influenced by Hindu mythology. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* shows how he has been influenced by "the Hindu conception of *Samsara* (mundane existence), which consists of discordant elements in opposition to one another" (Nanavutty 1968, p.171). Blake's *The Four Zoas*, namely Tharmas-the Body, Luvah-Emotions, Urizen-Intellect, and Los-Urrhona-the Imagination and Spirit behave exactly as the four persons produced from Brahma's breath, namely Sinnoc-the Body, Sinnunda-Life, Sonnatin-Permanency, and Sonnin Kunar-Intellectual Existence. Though Blake's Zoas are morphological derivatives from the Zoas, or Living Creatures of

Ezekiel's Vision, Blake's exposure to Alexander Dow's *History of Hindostan* should not be overlooked.

Poetry and art, according to Blake, were the avenues to social reform. Romantic-period writing in general is often characterized by an increased interest in the natural world, thus making the period popular for critics with environmentalist agendas. In *The Echoing Green* (2007, p.11) Blake uses Nature to illustrate its direct correlation to both man and the Creator:

The sun does arise,
And make happy the skies.
The merry bells ring
To welcome the spring.
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around,
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the echoing green.

The sparks of romanticism and imagination are intensely reflected in Blake's poetry. To him art was the expression and language of the Divine and the path in which one could attain salvation. Blake believed that imagination was eternal and Divine and hence superior to the finite material world. He declared to have seen visions from quite a young age:

The first of these visions may have occurred as early as the age of four when, according to one anecdote, the young artist "saw God" when God "put his head to the window", causing Blake to break into screaming. At the age of eight or ten in Peckham Rye, London, Blake claimed to have seen "a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars." According to Blake's Victorian biographer Gilchrist, he returned home and reported this vision, and he only escaped being thrashed by his father for telling a lie through the intervention of his mother. Though all evidence suggests that his parents were largely supportive, his mother seems to have been especially so, and several of Blake's early drawings and poems decorated the walls of her chamber. On another occasion, Blake watched haymakers at work, and thought he saw angelic figures walking among them (Bentley 1996, pp.36-37).

The visions that he saw in his childhood (which he kept seeing throughout his life) were a product of his numinous imagination. According to him, human imagination was not only the reflection of the Divine vision but also its fruition. Blake, the visionary, has looked beyond time and space. He identified God with Man in order to show that all human beings have a divine element within themselves. He praises both God and man while asserting an identity between the two:

For Mercy Pity Peace and Love,
Is God our father dear
.....
Where Mercy, Love and Pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too (*The Divine Image* 2008, pp.12-13).

The four virtues that Blake assigns alternately to man and God are the ones conventionally associated with Jesus. Christ was both God and man, hence the vehicle for Blake's mediation between the two.

Everything Blake created - his poems, his engravings, his illuminated books - were for the purpose of revealing to people the Higher Reality. In *Jerusalem* (5.17.26) he writes:

I rest not from my great task!
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination
O Saviour pour upon me thy Spirit of meekness and love!
Annihilate the Self hood in me: be thou all my life!
Guide thou my hand, which trembles exceedingly upon the rock of ages,
While I write of the building of Golgonooza... (2008 p.147).

He saw all temporal things as a form of eternity, having a transcendental nature. Though writing nearly half a century later even after Blake, his eastern counterpart - Rabindranath Tagore was strikingly enough echoing similar mystical experiences transcending temporal and spatial limitations bordering on the occult.

EXPRESSING THE INEXPRESSIBLE: MYSTICAL FLIGHTS IN THE POETRY OF TAGORE

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) - the Nobel laureate poet and philosopher was the ambassador of Indian culture to the rest of the world. He has assessed the truth of his beatific visions by his own observation and has found them capable of leading him to the brink of a transcendental realisation of the Supreme Reality. It is a commonplace of criticism that Tagore was greatly influenced by the spirit of Bauls – the wandering saints who sing in the praise of the eternal One. In religion his inspiration was derived from the Vedas and the Upanishads. He was deeply under the spell of the spirit of the Vaishnava literature. Tagore also viewed the personality of Jesus with highest reverence. He was a product of the nineteenth century, when mostly learned people were exposed to western culture, education and religion. It is therefore expected that he has read the teachings of Christ. Traces of Christian theism are also distinctly manifest in Tagore's poems. He mentions in *My Reminiscences* that he sees in Christianity a message of the friendly unification between God and man. In his poetry, Tagore tried to harmonise the spiritualism of ancient India with the humane spirit of the West into respective emotional and intellectual contact. Expressing his vision of a global society, in a letter to Charles Andrews Tagore affirmed that he believed in the true meeting of the East and the West.

Being pre-eminently a religious poet, Tagore was the heir to and vivifier of the ancient Hindu tradition. He had a creative view of life. In him the poetic, philosophic and religious sentiments got moulded into one, to occasion, what G. Ignatius calls, 'the mystic lyrics of the *Bhakti* tradition of India' (1961, p.216). Inevitably, he has come out to be one of the leading mystic thinkers of the East in modern times; his mysticism flows into poetry; his poetry bathes in mysticism. For him love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us, but essentially God-love it is. In *The Gardener* (poem no. 50), he appeals in the following words: 'where is this hope for union except in thee, my God?' (2007, p. 85). In *Gitanjali* (2011, p.20) the expression is quite vivid and inspiring:

The morning light has flooded my eyes – this is thy message
to my heart. Thy face is bent from above, thy eyes look

down on my eyes, and my heart has touched thy feet.
(*Gitanjali*: No.59)

Further,

The great pageant of thee and me has overspread the sky.
With the tune of thee and me all the air is vibrant, and all
ages pass with the hiding and seeking of thee and me.
(*Gitanjali*: No.71, p.71)

Eventually after all, Tagore was also a man of firm faith in the basic spiritual values of life. He tried ceaselessly to express the infinite, the Supreme Soul or the spirit of the universe. For him love leads to joy, which is, in a sense, “the realisation of the truth of oneness, the oneness of our soul with the world and of the world-soul with the supreme lover” (1915, p.116). He observed that “the fundamental unity of creation was not simply a piece of philosophical speculation for India; it was her life-object to realise this great harmony in feeling and in action” (1915, p.16).

Tagore also felt that God gives himself in the beauty of Nature to captivate his heart:

The joy ran from all the world to build my body.
The lights of the skies kissed and kissed her till she woke.
Flowers of hurrying summer sighed in her breath and
voices of winds and water sang in her movements.
The passion of the tide of colours in clouds and
in forests flowed into her life, and the music of all things
caressed her limbs into shape.
She is my bride, - she has lighted her lamp in my house.
(*Fruit Gathering* No.72, 2007, p.185)

He founded Visva Bharati, an international university where educational pattern was reformed to create a union involving knowledge and nature, and where the whole world has become a single nest: *yatra visvam bhavati eka nidam*. What Tagore sought is the perfect union where and when “heaven and earth, time and space, pleasure and pain, death and life merged together in an unbearable ecstasy” (*Chitra* 2007, p.40). Therefore, the yearning: ‘I want Thee, only Thee’ (*Gitanjali*: No), which led time and again to flashes of the mystical height:

You have come, Radiant One, You have broken upon the door
May Victory be yours ...
Victorious Hero, with the dawn of a new day ...
Let my bondage break,
Victory be yours.

(*A Tagore Testament*: 1984, p.67)

Tagore’s spiritual vision is embodied in all his works – novels, plays and paintings – but especially in his poetry. As a poet of the Indian Renaissance, he has noted that man has a feeling that he is truly represented in something which exceeds him. His poetry in English is as much Indian as it is universal. In Indian mystical thought, Tagore offers a system in which the theism of the Bhagavad Gita, the metaphysics of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the mysticism of the Bauls and the philosophical principles of Vaishnavism and Sufism exist in synthesis. Tagore was also influenced by the English Romantics. Although he received inspiration from different sources, he never belonged to any religion. His concept of religion is apparent in the following lines:

My religion is essentially poet's religion. Its touch comes to me through the same unseen and trackless channels as does the inspiration of my music. My religious life has followed the same mysterious line of growth as has my poetical life (Tagore 1952, p.25).

Like all mystics, Rabindranath was a firm believer in the essential unity of humans and Nature. He seeks union with God through union with his fellowmen. This is the unique feature of his mysticism. He explains in his poetry that the real purpose of human life is to attain the kinship of the Almighty. He believes that God lives amongst us, not in tombs and temples. The poet wishes to unite with the Almighty and want to attain oneness with Him. Tagore believes that our quest for God's love is not one-sided, rather God also find accomplishment in us. According to him God looks up to man for true love and realisation. We can find a perfect blend of God-love and nature-love in poetry of Tagore:

If thou speakest not I will fill my heart with thy silence and endure it. I will keep still and wait like the night with starry vigil and its head bent low with patience. The morning will surely come, the darkness will vanish, and thy voice pours down in golden streams breaking through the sky. Then thy words will take wing in songs from every one of my birds' nests, and thy melodies will break forth in flowers in all my forest groves (*Gitanjali*: No.19).

In his poetry, Tagore has emphasised on spiritual love rather than physical. The literary device by means of which Tagore communicated his religious and philosophical views was that of bridal mysticism - a devotional mode in which the seeker of the Divine becomes a friend of God with a complete submission to the Divine. The soul of the devotee is the bride and God is the Bridegroom and their union is recognized as the spiritual marriage.

The works of Tagore act as a bridge between the Oriental and Occidental, mysticism and romanticism, the mortal and the immortal. He opines God cannot be grasped by reason and logic. This implies not only that the Divine is immanent in creation but also that the creation itself is a manifestation of the Divine. Tagore sees a harmonious relationship among God, human beings and nature. For Tagore, the world order may be compared to music. He feels that the Infinite manifests Himself through finite forms through a silent music. There pulsates all through a rhythm of *prana*, deep within the universe, and music is its resultant emotion felt within one's heart. The sun, the moon, the stars and planets, trees and plants – each and every part supplements its own unique note to the cosmic song.

BLAKE AND TAGORE: MYSTICS WITH A DIFFERENCE

It is evident that the mystical has something in common with romanticism. Their sense of immanent as well as a sense of beyond brings them close to each other. The mystic's visions pass like flashes of lightning. The mystics and transcendentalists are concerned with self-exploration and their inwardness was not quite conducive to the projection of reality outside of their own selves. In other words, it is a commonplace of criticism that the Romantic poets do not show sufficient grip on actuality; and it is also a truism that a poet, however romantic he may be, cannot afford to be indifferent to the currents and cross currents of the real world events and cannot fail to project the self into multiple selves. We find the English Romantic poet William Blake and the Bengali Romantic poet Rabindranath Tagore, show evidence of this depersonalisation and of the power to reconcile and correlate the two worlds – the inner

world of thought and the external world of action. The Romantic poets thought that their task was to explore the nature of reality that lies behind the world of appearances. This they tried to do through imagination, insight, metaphysical visions and some other poetic sensibilities. Poetry was to them just another means to arrive at an end – a human destiny where one will discover some transcendental order or ultimate reality, which holds the universe. That is why they trusted not in reason as many modern poets do, but in affection and holiness of heart, not in the impersonal objectivity, but in personal self projection. This can only be projected, they thought, either through some central figures or with symbols and allegories or myths which will be their spokesperson. Symbols and images are considered to be the products of a poet's psychic process. Blake as well as Tagore believed that art should aim to capture more absolute truths that could only be accessed by indirect methods.

Both the poets were great symbolists. Blake has followed four of his own theories while inventing his symbols. The principle of contrastive analysis (based on the theorem: "without contraries there is no progression"); the process of effecting mystic wholeness (Restoration of Unity through Diversity from Unity); the postulate that defines Imagination as "the Divine body in Everyman" ("God is man and exists in us and we in him"); and the principle and practice of the transcendent "illuminated printing" have enabled him to create his own system. Making use of his own myth, his symbology and his system, he has symbolised Creator, Imagination, Eden, Hell, Reason, discipline, rule, order, abstinence, asceticism, self, separation from the Unity. So in the apocalyptic works of Blake, we find various quaint figures, such as Urizen, Orc, Los, Enitharmon, Lavah, Theotormon, Oothoon, Elohim, Clytia, Beulah, Zoa and Albion. Hence in the mythic world of Blake, the poet is the God, who, with the help of Spiritual Freedom (Orc), Poetry (Los), Love (Enitharmon), Passion (Luvah) and England (Albion), triumphs over Evil (Urizen) and his abettors. The victory of the poet with Urizen spells victory of love (and hence also of Imagination, Poetry and Art) over the egoistic selfhood. So in Blake's symbol sprangled poetic world: "Perfect love casteth out fear" (*Europe, a Prophecy*, p.299). That is why, the soul that loves and integrates itself with mankind, Nature, society and God mounts the ladder of Heaven and ascends to the heavens of heavens.

Tagore's language of mystic poetry is symbolic too. In the poem *Ahalya Prati* (which occurs in the book of verse, '*Manasi*', published in 1891), the transformation of Ahalya from stone to a woman is a symbolic expression of the emergence of life out of matter. Science tells us that in the primitive stage of earth, there was no life on it. The molten rocks and stones, required centuries to cool down. Thus, the earth had to wait for a very long time before its atmosphere became congenial for the growth of life. Rabindranath, however, does not accept any fundamental difference between life and matter. He feels the whole universe to be endowed with life and consciousness. Tagore considered imagination as the supreme and creative faculty of the mind. For Blake, the imagination was the primal creative power of the human psyche, and when it was working at its highest intensity he called it 'the Divine Vision'. Through it he believed that man has access to infinity and eternity, a reality beyond the appearances of the material world (Mishra 1990, p.198).

Blake is a prophet of unitive love and considers love as the integrative force. It is one of the Blakean dicta that is least controvertible:

That Man subsists by Brotherhood & Universal Love
Not for ourselves but for the Eternal family we live
Man liveth not be Self alone, but in his brother's face
Man shall behold the Eternal Father, and love and joy abound (*Jerusalem* V.21).

Within the frame of Romantic love, the Blakean love encompasses all modes of human attraction. Beulah promotes love. Blake's Beulah poems, namely *Songs of Innocence*, *The Book of Thel*, *The Crystal Cabinet* and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* irradiate his theory of unitive love. Love, for Tagore is a means of transcendence from body to soul. He believes love to be the key to the door of the spiritual and moral feelings and is another name of the joy from which all creatures are born, by which they are sustained. Tagore feels love alone is the meeting point of the finite and the Infinite:

God kisses the finite in His love
and man the Infinite. (*Stray Birds*, No.302, p.50)

Love emanates from Brahman and it splits up into different parts as the ray of sun while passing through a prism splits into component colour parts. Truth, Beauty and Goodness are the component parts of love. In the introduction to *Creative Unity*, Tagore writes:

In love we find a joy which is ultimate because it is the ultimate truth. Therefore it is said in the Upanishads that the *advaitam* is *anantam* - 'the One is Infinite': that the *advaitam* is *anandam* – the One is Love' (2007, p.551).

Both Blake and Tagore were votaries of humanism and painters of rural landscapes. William Blake, while being aware of Nature's beauty and harmony, thought of Nature to be a part of the earthly world. According to him it is through Nature that humans could reach the awareness of their place in the universe. He uses Nature as a framework for his verses. The scenes and images Nature evokes create a symbology which allows the poet to communicate his thoughts and ideas. "Green wood", laughing "with the voice of joy" and "Mount of Olives" on which one can find "The footsteps of the Lamb of God" suggest happy and hopeful growth, foliage and blissful state of the human soul in this world. Blake visualises Angels and Gods amongst the trees and Tagore discovers the Love of Lord in the lap of Nature. Human beings, Tagore believes, are dependent on Nature, not just for their biological needs, but for the full realisation of their own spirituality. The feeling of self-effacement and of complete identity with Nature is the distinctive characteristic of Rabindranath as a poet of Nature. The Darwinian theory of evolution has been coloured with poetic vision in the poem *The Fugitive*:

How often great Earth, have I felt my being yearn to flow over you...
I feel as if I had belonged to you ages before I was born (Tagore 2004,
p.125).

The poet feels that he was one with Nature in the beginning of creation. The joy and wonder of that unity still cling to his memory. He appeals to mother Earth to take him back to the innermost source of life and joy, a transcendental appeal nonetheless. Hence, Nature is a vehicle that drives Tagore to the realm of Mysticism.

The representation of innocence through the figure of the child is used by both poets. Though their way of depicting this is very different and diverse and their symbolism is also at variance, yet their poems bear a similar thematic purpose. It is never preposterous to say that child is the eponym of Blake's *Songs*. For him, a child is a flower, a lamb and a bundle of "sweet joy". He sees no difference between the "little lamb" and "the meek and mild child". In *The Child Angel* Tagore's imagery is really heart touching:

They clamour and fight, they doubt and despair,
they know no end to their wranglings.
Let your life come amongst them like a flame of light, my child,
unflickering and pure, and delight them into silence...
Let them see your face, my child, and thus know the meaning of all things;
let them love you and thus love each other (*The Crescent Moon* 2007, p. 79).

Both, like Walter De la Mare, conceive of the child as having a privileged mystical sensitivity.

CONCLUSION

The relation between the Absolute, infinite, self-existent and immutable and the finite human individual who is enmeshed in the temporal order is unimaginably intimate though difficult to define and explain. An in-depth study of the works of William Blake and Rabindranath Tagore reveals that their poetic vision coalesce notwithstanding the kaleidoscopic divergence by studying their poetic art, craft and oeuvre, while casting off the cultural tensions and nationalistic pretensions aside. The most prominent theme in their poetic works is that of mysticism and transcendentalism. Blake's works, though largely biblical in its imagery, is apocalyptic in style and scope. Since Blake's true home is in vision, through visible things he has shown the invisible, formless and immutable. Tagore's mysticism is in keeping with the hoary tradition of the great saints and seers of India. Even though born in different lands, they seemed to share a spiritual affinity. Thus, it can be said that both of them are great mystical poets who share the essence albeit they differ greatly in the application of the mediums and its expression. Blake super-ordinates Christian values to Churchianity and eludes the trap of narrow fundamentalism much like the Indian poet Tagore who discards all the 'narrow domestic walls' and prays for mankind to be bestowed with an environment "where the mind is without fear and the head is held high" (Tagore 2007, p.53). The two great romantic poets dreamt of an intuition of the Divinity, of a direct contemplation of the Supernatural. They considered the world and the human soul as an emanation of the Divinity. In fact, their poetry can be called an incantation which invokes the soul of silence incarnate in human language – the silence of the absolute meaning beyond the relative contingency of verbal events (Samantaray 2010, p.132)

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