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ALLAMAPRABHU AND WILLIAM BLAKE: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY



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ABSTRACT:

One are the days when literary poems are studied in terms of Sonnet, Ballad, Epic, Lyric, etc. Today literary poems are studied from different perspectives which literary critics could not think of in past. The present study makes an attempt to analyze Allamaprabhu and William Blake, from comparative perspective.

KEY WORDS:

William Blake, literary poems, literary critics

INTRODUCTION:

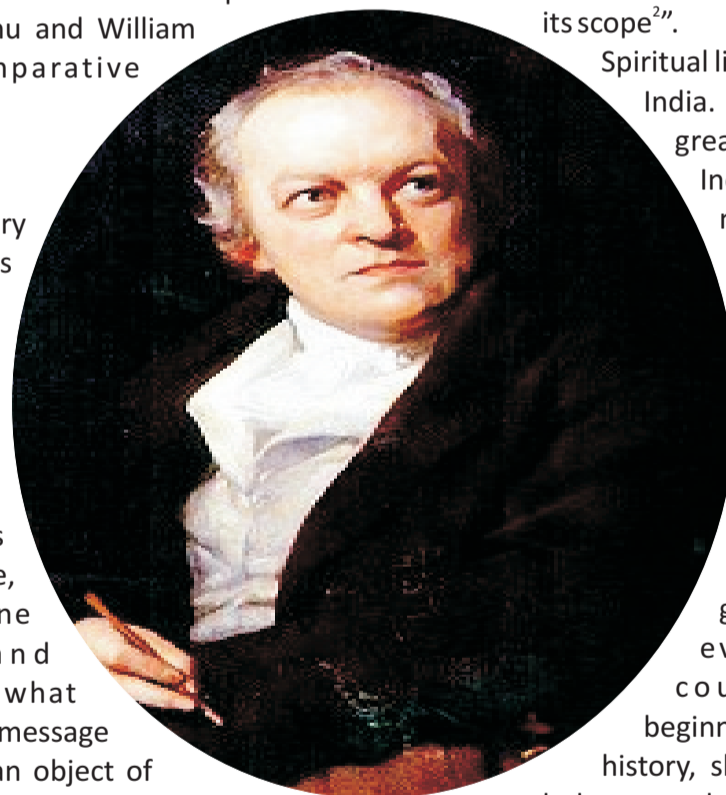
What is comparative?

We are compelled to ask some questions in this context like, how do we define comparative and comparativeness what transforms a spoken message into a work of art, an object of beauty, a text with its literary touch? These are questions that draw our attention.¹ The main idea of comparative literature is to broaden one's perspective by discovering



Prabhu

certain dominant trends in a literature and culture and to understand precise relations between two or more literatures. It is conceived today in a comprehensive sense. "As the brochure of the University of East Anglia, sum up, "comparative literature is the branch of literary study which concerns itself with the basic structure which underlie all literature of any kind. There is, therefore, in theory no limit to its scope²".



Spiritual life is the true genius of India. Those who make the greatest appeal to the Indian mind are not the military conquerors, not the rich merchants or the great diplomats but the holy sages, the rishis who embody spirituality at its finest and purest. India's pride is that almost in every generation and in every part of the country, from the beginnings of her recorded history, she has produced the holy men who embody for her all that the country holds most dear and sacred. Though they generally remain away from the mainstream of life, kings and commoners pay

reverent homage to them and take their advice in the problems of their personal lives as well as in public affairs. By their lives, they teach us that pride and power, wealth and glory are nothing in comparison with the power of spirit. It is those who scorn their own lives that raise life above our scorn”.

Allamaprabhu and William Blake, they are one of such rishis though not the only one of there kind. They are one of those rare being in whom the flame of spiritual life burns so brightly that all who come near him are able to share the illumination and see the world new-born as one the firm day.

The spiritual discourses held at Anubhava Mantapa (Now its place of Basavakalyana, Bidar District Karnataka State). Basaveshwara (mystic poet in 12th century, Karnataka) conducted this Anubhava Mantapa. The King Bijjal had approved it though the discourse affected the socio-political order later. Great mystic scholar Allamaprabhu presided over it authoritatively. Siddharama and Chennabasavanna (mystic poets) stayed there for long to guide the other minor mystic poets and form the bedrock of their thoughts.

The twelfth (12th) century in Karnataka is known for its intellectual enlightenment. The movement of this century made an earnest attempt to redesign the meaning of religion in order to reach the masses. The central object of the them of the movement was to awaken the spirit of the man in the righteous path. It aimed at inward progress, enlightenment. The twelfth century of Karnataka State on a different footing as it involved every common man to accelerate the pace of the movement. The movement was unique as it unfolded the creativity of hundreds of men and women displayed their intellectual creativity in the form of writing called “Vachana”. The movement revolutionary in its approach and staged a protest against the established norms of the society. The beauty of the revolution was in around development of human psyche as it aspired to bring a complete makeover in social, intellectual and spiritual arena. The Vachana Movement in social, intellectual and spiritual structure by bringing women and the downtrodden to the mainstream by spiritually reorienting them³.

The odyssey of this illumination was spearheaded by a mystic saint called, Allama or Allamaprabhu. He is often referred to as jewel of the Kannada literature and culture. “In the spiritual history of the Karnataka, Allama Prabhu is a very great name. A man of surpassing intellect, his impact was epoch-making. Few mystics have attained greater heights. Although his fame and influence have been mostly restricted to Karnataka, his message has an appeal and a dimension, which are universal”. He is respectfully called Prabhu, the Lord. He, in association with, Basaveshwara, influenced the society and the impact of epoch-making. Although his fame and influence have been mostly restricted to Karnataka, his message has an appeal and a dimension, which are universal.

Allama and other saints experimented with a new form of writing called, Vachana. Vachanas are brief compositions. Vachana literary means promise. They are epigrammatical, parallelistic and allusive. Allama’s Vachanas contain deep spiritual meaning which is rather better communicated by using such a symbolic language⁴.

In the sky was born a new parrot
And it built its house
In glorious pomp
Brahma was the parrot’s cage
Vishnu its victuals
And Rudra its perch
When it swallowed a child
The visible ceased to exist

How is this O, Guneshwara?

The above Vachana is marked by its poetic beauty, elegance or rhythm. This applies to other bedagu Vachanas also. Bedagu in Kannada literally means beauty or elegance. Bedagu is indicated by symbols. It is a symbolic language. Even though we may fail to understand the meaning of such Vachanas instantaneously, we are attracted by their poetic beauty, which makes us to read them again and again⁵.

The apparent meaning of this Vachana is that new parrot born in the sky means its abode with glory. Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are trinity, which do the cosmic duties of creation, sustenance and destruction. Brahma serves as a cage to parrot. Vishnu becomes food for it. Rudra becomes a perch for it. The child in front of these three was swallowed and its shape was wiped out⁶.

Consider mad by contemporaries for his idiosyncratic views, Blake is held in high regard by latter critics for his expressiveness and creativity and for philosophical within his works. Blake literary sources and inspiration range from the Bible and derived epic structures of Dante and Milton, to the moralizing children's poetry of Issac Watts the hymns of Charles Wesley, and the records of the accentric Swedish visionary and mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg. Blake approached more closely to the obscure mysticism of the seventeenth century German theosophist Jakob Boehme who had argued that God, the Father was the underfinable matter of the universe, neither good or evil, but containing the germs of both. This Godhead, according to Boehme, had two wills. One good, one evil, as integral to the nature of God, was necessary, human kind could conquer on Earth, and ultimately assume the empty places of the fallen angels is Heaven, by faith in Christ.

William Blake is one of the great mystic of the world; and he is by far the greatest and most profound who has spoken English. Like Henry More and Wordsworth, he lived in a world of glory, of the spirit and of vision, which, for him, was the only real world. At the age four he saw God looking in at the window, and from that time until he welcome the approach of death by singing songs of joy which made the rafters-ring, he lived in an atmosphere of divine illumination⁷.

Everything Blake created his poems, his engravings, his illuminated books were for the purpose of revealing to people the Higher Reality.

"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" ...

Blake followed in the artistic tradition of what is called illuminated art or illuminated art refers to the adornment of written or printed text or design with graphics, colors, gold, or silver. The original form of the verb "to illuminate" "was" "enlumine" and medieval craftsmen who practiced the art were called "enlumineurs"⁹.

Blake's masterful poem "The Tiger" seems to epitomize his recurring theme that "He who sees the infinite in all things sees God"¹⁰.

Tiger! Tiger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame they fearful symmetry?

.....
.....
..... fearful symmetry?"

Blake was a modern alchemical mystic. Through his art, poetry and writing he was able to distill sentience (mercury) within physical existence to a "point" where consciousness re-identifies with the golden light (Sun) of the soul.

Allama and Blake as a poets, artist, and mystics, created a vast multidimensional universe through his verses, Vachanas, and art. Spun from a fabric of symbolism and populated by a host of complex has provided endless inspiration to subsequent generation. For the reader of Allama and Blake, background – knowledge of these symbolism is a necessity.

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