

**SEPARATION AND UNION IN SELECTED POEMS
OF JALALUDDIN RUMI AND WILLIAM BLAKE IN
THE LIGHT OF HERMENEUTICS**

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vi
ABSTRAK.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	7
1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study.....	8
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	8
1.6 Research Methodology.....	10
1.7 Literature Review.....	12
1.7.1 Related Literature on Separation and Union.....	12
1.7.2 Related Literature on Rumi.....	16
1.7.3 Related Literature on Blake.....	23
1.7.4 Related Literature on Blake and Rumi.....	27
1.8 Organization of the Thesis.....	31
CHAPTER 2- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	32
2.1 Perennial Philosophy.....	32
2.2 Key Concepts.....	36
2.2.1 Separation, Pain, Evil, Reason.....	37
2.2.2 Love, Understanding and Intellect, and Imagination.....	42
2.2.3 Annihilation.....	45

2.2.4 Union.....	47
2.3 Comparative Literature	48
2.4 Hermeneutics.....	49
2.4.1 Traditional Hermeneutics	51
2.4.2 New Hermeneutics	53
2.4.3 Some Samples of <i>Ta'weel</i>	61
2.4.4 Types of <i>Ta'weel</i>	64
2.4.5 Understanding the Text	66
2.4.6 Natural and Artificial Understanding	68
2.4.7 The Author's Intention.....	68
CHAPTER 3-MYSTICAL BACKGROUND OF RUMI AND BLAKE.....	70
3.1 Mystical Background of Rumi	70
3.1.1 Rumi's Spiritual Inclination	71
3.1.2 Spiritual Love for Shams of Tabriz	72
3.1.3 Rumi's Use of Erotic Imagery and Symbols.....	73
3.1.4 Rumi and Other Mystics.....	74
3.1.5 Rumi as the Pioneer of Melevi Order.....	75
3.1.6 Rumi's View on Other Religions	76
3.2 William Blake's Mystical Background.....	77
3.2.1 Influential Figures on Blake	79
3.2.2 The Spiritual World of William Blake	82
3.2.3 Blake's Mystical Poetry	83
3.2.4 Blake's Mystical Idea about Sexuality	84
3.2.5 Rumi and Blake's School and Style	85
CHAPTER 4- SEPARATION AND UNION IN RUMI'S POETRY	91
4.1 General Idea of Separation in Rumi's Poetry.....	91
4.1.1 The Causes of Separation	95
4.1.1.1 Evil	95
4.1.1.2 Rationality.....	102
4.1.2 The process of Separation	106
4.1.2.1 Downswing	106
4.1.2.2 Pain and Pangs of Separation.....	108
4.2 Rumi's General View towards Union	111
4.2.1 Preconditions of Union.....	115

4.2.1.1 Love.....	115
4.2.1.2 Upswing.....	119
4.2.1.3 Understanding.....	120
4.2.1.3.1 The Senses	121
4.2.1.3.2 Universal Reason	123
4.2.1.4 Imagination	127
4.2.1.5 Annihilation	132
4.3 Conclusion.....	136
CHAPTER 5- SEPARATION AND UNION IN BLAKE’S POETRY	137
5.1 General Idea of Separation in Blake’s Poetry	137
5.1.1 Causes of Separation	151
5.1.1.1 Evil.....	151
5.1.1.2 Rationality.....	155
5.1.2 The Process of Separation	159
5.1.2.1 Downswing	159
5.1.2.2 Pains and Pangs of Separation	160
5.2 Union in Blake’s Poetry	163
5.2.1 Preconditions of Union.....	170
5.2.1.1 Love	170
5.2.1.2 Upswing	173
5.2.1.3 Understanding.....	174
5.2.1.4 Imagination	179
5.2.1.5 Annihilation	183
5.3 Conclusion	187
CHAPTER 6- CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	188
REFERENCES.....	193
PUBLICATION	200

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
1. Songs of Innocence and of Experience (Introduction).....	138
2. The First Book of Urizen.....	141
3. Los and his Spectre.....	154
4. The Clod and the Pebble.....	172
5. Milton and his Selfhood.....	185

**PERPISAHAN DAN KESATUAN DALAM PUISI PILIHAN
JALALUDDIN RUMI DAN WILLIAM BLAKE DALAM
SINARAN HERMENEUTIKA**

ABSTRAK

Kajian perbandingan ini diadakan untuk mengkaji dua sasterawan mistikal yang terulung iaitu Jalaluddin Rumi dan William Blake dari sudut sumbangan mereka dalam penulisan sajak dan pembangunan spiritual melalui sastera mistik. Tesis ini memberi penekanan terhadap tema penyatuan dan perpisahan dalam sajak terpilih yang dihasilkan oleh dua penyajak ini. Jalaluddin Rumi adalah penyajak Sufi dan William Blake adalah penyajak Rom. Kedua penyajak ini tidak mengkaji hasil kerja sesama sendiri dan hidup dalam persekitaran geografi, politik, social dan agama yang berbeza. Walau bagaimanapun, kedua penyajak ini menyentuh tentang tema yang sama, iaitu perpisahan dan penyatuan. Oleh itu, satu kajian perbandingan perlu diadakan untuk mengkaji tema perpisahan dan penyatuan dalam Sufisme sebagai bahagian yang sudah diintegrasikan dalam agama yang tersusun terutamanya dalam sajak Rumi, dengan Romantisisme yang tergolong dalam kategori bukan keagamaan dan merujuk kepada sajak hasil tulisan Blake. Tesis ini menganalisis dan menerangkan tentang persamaan dan perbezaan antara sajak Rumi dengan Blake melalui kefahaman yang mendalam, tentang dua tema iaitu perpisahan dan penyatuan. Kajian ini juga mendefinisikan dengan jelas tentang posisi spiritual dan pendapat dua penyajak ini tentang perpisahan dan penyatuan, tanpa mengira perbezaan budaya, bahasa dan kewujudan mereka dalam abad dan tempat yang berbeza. Kajian perbandingan ini diadakan ke atas doktrin falsafah keturunan yang diketuai oleh Aldous Huxley.

Pendekatan secara hermeneutikal digunakan untuk menganalisis sajak Rumi dan Blake. Mengkaji perbezaan dan persamaan antara sajak hasil kedua penyajak ini melalui kefahaman yang mendalam tentang tema penyatuan dan perpisahan menunjukkan kajian ini adalah unik dari sudut kesusasteraan. Tidak mustahil, jurang kesusasteraan dapat diisi melalui kajian antara dua penyajak terulung ini dan hasil penulisan sajak mereka. Selain itu, posisi spiritual kedua-dua penyajak ini membuktikan mereka mempunyai persamaan dalam sebab dan proses perpisahan dan jalan penyatuan dengan unsur ketuhanan.

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ABSTRACT

In this comparative study of two great mystical literary figures, attention is directed at comparing Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake with regard to their contribution in the poetic and the spiritual development of mystical literature. The emphasis of the thesis is on the themes of separation and union in the selected poems of the two poets. Jalaluddin Rumi as Sufi poet and William Blake as a Romantic Poet did not study the works of each other and hailed from different geographical, political, social, and religious environment. However, they seem to speak about similar themes, namely separation and union. As such, there is really a need to conduct a comparative study on the themes of separation and union in Sufism as an integral part of an organized religion and specifically in the poems of Rumi and Romanticism as a non-religious category, specifically the poems of Blake. The thesis tries to analyze and explain the similarities and differences between the poetry of Rumi and Blake through an in-depth understanding of the themes of separation and union. The study also attempts to ascertain and define clearly the spiritual positions and views of the two poets based on separation and union and regardless of the differences in culture, language and their presence in different centuries and different places. This comparative study is constructed on the doctrine of perennial philosophy led by Aldous Huxley. A hermeneutical approach was employed to analyze the poetry of Rumi and Blake. Examining the similarities and differences between the poetry of the

two poets through an in-depth understanding of themes of separation and union indicated that the study is unique in a literary sense and it is possible to fill a literary gap via studying these two prominent figures and their literary mystical ideas. In addition, the spiritual position of the two poets proved that they have a lot of commonalities in causes and process of separation as well as the path to union with divinity.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations (Rumi).

Hear the voice of the Bard! Who Present, Past and Future sees (Blake).

1.1 Introduction

Affinities between the poetry of Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake have not been fully addressed by scholars. This thesis will examine the themes of separation and union in the poetry of Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake with regard to human endeavor towards union with God. The two poets exemplify mystical branches of Islam and Romanticism. The selection of the poets from East and West allows the researcher to compare different literary traditions. The present thesis is not only a comparative study of poets who come from diverse religious and literary backgrounds, but who indeed share deeply similar mystical insight. The thesis also endorses scrutiny of the crucial relationship between mystical experience and the construction of hermeneutical forms of writing.

Based on its etymology, mysticism refers to a certain kind of mystery, something concealed. In the field of philosophy, mysticism is defined either as a religious inclination and tendency towards a close union with the Divinity or a set of principles and ideas developing out of such a tendency. Based on the system of philosophy, mysticism is regarded as the quest for a direct union of the human soul with the Divine Ground via contemplation and love. According to mystical views,

contemplation is not only based on analogical knowledge of the Divine but as the direct intuition of the Divine.

As the mystical experiences of intuitional men in different nations with different culture indicate that the human being in this world has been far away from his true nature and has an ardent desire to regain it. The wish to go back to the original home is actually the wish to gain the spiritual unity that the human being has lost due to worldly affairs. The element is found not only in the mysticism of organized religions, such as that of Islam, but also in the mysticism of non-organized categories of spirituality, such as Romanticism.

Islamic mysticism or Sufism is described by adherers as the inner mystical aspect of Islam. A person who practices this tradition is generally known as a Sufi. Classical Sufi scholars believe that Sufism is a school the goal of which is the restoration of the heart to good condition and is distanced from everything but God. Over the time, Sufis have spanned different parts of the world and different cultures. At first, Sufism was expressed through Arabic language, then through Persian, Turkish and many other languages (Sells, 1995:1). However, wherever Sufism is, the objective remained the same, i.e., to attain union with Allah.

On the other hand, Romanticism was a literary, artistic and intellectual movement in Europe reaching its peak in the early part of the 19th century. It was, in a way, a reaction to the Industrial Revolution. Students of literature who approach Romanticism for the first time should not be surprised to find that this literary and cultural moment does not have a definite dating. Yet, based on the temporal frameworks made by the critics, some important and complex issues have been discovered from this extraordinary moment. Regardless of the particular dates in which

the events of this movement took place, Romantic age plays an important and controversial role in the history of English literature (Kalencher, 2009:1).

Generally, the main aspiration of a Romantic poet was to give free expression to his imagination, to return to nature and to regain wholeness of body and spirit. Thus, Romantic poets felt it was necessary to have a deeper understanding of other cultures so that as poets they could free themselves from the national limitations. As Friedrich Schlegel states, through understanding other cultures the poet's works may become a "progressive universal Poetry". Romantics believed that spiritual and literary visions of people of different cultures all over the world might prepare them in advance with new ideas for the establishment of their own system. Thus, they looked to the East admirably since it was enriched spiritually and ethically. At the same time it was still organic and alive. Romantics discovered more or less a firm world order in the East which was based upon the teachings of various religions (Oueijan, 2001: 9-22).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Basically, in a mystical structure, there are always three distinct but related phases: eternal unity, separation, and reunion (Foulquie, 1370¹/1991: 193-7). Separation and union are important phases or themes in all mysticisms, including that of Islam. The spiritual journey begins when human being becomes aware of the Divine's eternal presence. The Divine pays attention to His lover and at this moment, the lover recognizes the secret of the divine union. In other words, the lover understands that the lover and the Beloved could be united. As a result, they could be one. The consciousness of the Divine's eternal presence is carried by one glance of His.

¹ Iranian Calendar

In Islam, the glance is called the moment of *tawba*. In this moment, due to the inner awareness of the Divine's presence, the lover's heart turns away from the world and goes back to God. He invites us to go back to Him with an instantaneous glance of His face. This glance is love's most influential poison that annihilates us from the worldly affairs and starts our journey back to God.

As this spiritual journey begins, the sense of separation and union are injected into the heart of the spiritual wayfarer. Our real Home is reminded as the consciousness of union changes into the agony of separation. The heart remembers its Beloved as the fire of longing flames. Human being longs for the One whom he loves. In Sufism, separation and union are also closely related to each other. As a mystical journey of love, Sufism is a platform in which the lover tries to experience God as the Beloved. The center of his or her journey is the relationship between the lover and the Beloved. Here man is united to God through love. The Sufi tries to find Truth in this life and God shows Himself to the people who love Him. The Sufi's purpose is to be united with God and to experience oneness with God. The Sufi starts the journey as he longs for being in the state of oneness. The longing is rooted from the soul's memory, which has come from God. The soul makes the seeker aware of this memory and tries to remember its real Home. Sufis believe that the spiritual journey is a journey from separation to union (Vaughan-Lee, 1995:1). As Allah declares in the Qur'an "we belong to Allah and to Him we shall return" (1: 156).

Islamic mysticism is like a sea overflowed by large and small rivers. In Islamic mysticism, one can study the themes of separation and union in an excellent relationship between human and the universal reality of the world, and between the human state of annihilation and his reunion with the Absolute (Izutsu, 1378/1999: 514). Many poets in Persian literature have discussed the themes of separation and

union. Sheikh Mahmood Shabistari (1288-1340) has many beautiful poems regarding the separation and union between man and God. The followings are some verses of his poems.

The traveller on the path,
'Tis he who knows from whence he cometh;
Then doth he journey hastily,
Becoming as pure from self as fire from smoke.
(Lederer, 1920: 40).

Kh ja Shamsu D n Muhammad H fez-e Sh r z known by his pen name Hafez (1325/1326–1389/1390) also refers to the real Home of human being as he states:

As a bird of Paradise, to parting I did agree
Fell in the trap of life and worldly tragedy.
I was an angel, I resided in the heavens;
Renovation of the world - the mission given to me.(*Ghazal* 317: 2-3)

For some people like Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273), the journey from separation to union takes place step by step, as he states: “(That) from the stations of asceticism to the passing away (from self-existence), /step by step up to union with God” (*Masnavi* III: 4235). There are many other Persian poets who are familiar with mystical secrets and all of them have some ideas regarding the themes of separation and union. However, the researcher believes that the most beautiful verses related to this topic can be found in *Masnavi Manavi*. Meanwhile the whole idea of *Masnavi* is summarized in its prologue as Rumi states: “Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations” (*Masnavi* I: 1).

Separation and union are also important in Romantic mysticism. Johann Christoph Friedrich Von Schiller (1759-1805), as one of the Romantic philosophers, proposes some influential ideas on the themes of separation and union. Schiller believes that history is like a circular journey that starts with the fall of Adam and ends when he returns to his real Home (Abrams, 1973:206-207). From Schiller's viewpoint,

the fall of Adam is a historical fall. Based on the fall of Adam, man can recognize his identity as he faces with the problems and difficulties. Thus, the goal of this fall was to pave the way for good deeds (Abrams, 1973:206-207).

Based on the idea of Schiller, it is concluded that Romantics also believed that human being has been separated from his true Home. Thus, his life is like a long journey with many difficulties, which is directed to the perfection of humanity. Man has to suffer and no one is an exception. The Romantics were actually looking for the original innocence. The theme of innocence is directly connected to the spiritual world. The theme is represented by the Romantics in three major archetypes, namely the child, the rustic, and the Noble Savage. Many Romantics believe that these characters are the symbols of purity provided that their states are untouched. For instance, in William Blake's poetry, the theme of the innocent child is noticeably perceived. In "The Lamb", a poem from *Songs of Innocence*, the speaker calls himself a child and compares himself with the lamb. The traditional color of purity (white) is used as "wooly bright". Over all, the speaker considers himself as an innocent child and compares himself with the innocent lamb. Thus, he concluded that the spiritual union cannot be reached if the state of innocence is not established.

Romantic poets were quiet preoccupied with the themes of separation and union. However, over time, Romantic poetry changed in many ways due to changing social conditions. Yet, the traces of the themes of separation and union could still be found in the works of many poets such as William Blake (1757-1827), William Wordsworth (1770-1850), and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). The father of Romantic Movement, William Wordsworth, was one of the first Romantics who believed in the source of indefinite divine imagination. Abrams (1973:32) states that the great source of his imagination is the prophetic and lyrical parts of Bible and

Milton's works. In the background of Wordsworth's poetic design is Milton's *Paradise Lost* and in the background of *Paradise Lost* is the Bible.

With regard to the above-mentioned explanations, the present study focuses on the themes of separation and union in the selected poems of Jalaluddin Rumi and William Blake. As far as the researcher is concerned, the study is unique in a literary sense and it is possible to fill a literary gap via studying these two prominent figures and their literary mystical ideas. Jalaluddin Rumi as a Sufi poet and William Blake as a Romantic Poet have not studied the works of each other and hailed from different geographical, political, social, and religious environments. However, they seem to speak about similar themes, namely separation and union. As such, there is really a need to conduct a comparative study on the themes of separation and union in Sufism as an integral part of an organized religion and specifically in the poems of Rumi and Romanticism as a non-religious category, specifically the poems of Blake.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

There are three objectives in this study regarding the themes of separation and union in the selected poems of Rumi and Blake. These objectives are as follows:

1. To analyze, interpret, and gain an in-depth understanding of the themes of separation and union in the poetry of Rumi and Blake
2. To analyze and explain, in a comparative manner, the similarities and differences between the poetry of Rumi and Blake, especially with regard to the themes of separation and union
3. To ascertain and define clearly the spiritual positions and views of the two poets based on separation and union regardless of the differences in culture, language and their presence in different centuries and different places

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study will focus on the excerpts from Rumi's *Masnavi* on one hand, and Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, as well as his prophetic books on the other hand. As the thematic approach will be employed in the present thesis, some subthemes such as evil, reason, downswing and upswing, pain and pangs of separation, love, annihilation, understanding, and imagination will be discussed, and these subthemes will be related to the themes of separation and union.

As far as the researcher is concerned the only limitation in this study is the use of the English translated versions of Rumi's poems. Translations of Rumi's *Masnavi* in some cases cannot convey the meaning of the text completely. However, the researcher believes that the major themes in Rumi's poetry could be meaningfully discussed. In fact, it is based on translations that the ideas of Rumi have been circulating around the globe for ages.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is significant, both in terms of literary and social context. In a literary sense, as far as the researcher is concerned, there has been no comparative study on Rumi and Blake based on the themes of separation and union. Thus, the researcher believes it will be a useful contribution to the field of literature if one scrutinizes the ideas of these two prominent figures and find the commonalities and differences in their literary and mystical perspectives.

To understand human's common cultural expressions, the comparative study of Rumi and Blake specially based on the themes of separation and union seems

unique. Sometimes, there are some similarities between literary works of different nations due to the spiritual commonalities and not because of literary adoptions. Religious and mystical experiences belong to this type of commonalities. In this regard, Blake and Rumi as two great mystics may project the same ideas regardless of the differences they possess.

To understand human societies with different cultures, and the relationship between different civilizations, it is really necessary to have a common language. The researcher believes that through studying literature and more specifically mystical literature, it is possible to find this common language. Based on mystical experiences expressed by the intuitional humans in different nations, it has become clear that human being has been far removed from his real nature and has an ardent desire to regain it. The desire for a homecoming is actually the desire to have spiritual unity. Thus, separation and union seem to be important concepts in human life. To prove that these concepts are universally significant, the researcher has selected these two prominent figures from the East and the West who have conveyed their mystical and spiritual messages via the medium of literature, more specifically poetry.

Modern philosophy gives no answer to our important questions, especially questions concerning our own selves, our plans, and our inner conditions as human beings within the universe. In today's world of technology, the cultural and spiritual meanings that are the basis of meaning in our lives have been lost. The only thing that we have is information and not knowledge. The economical, technological, global systems under which we live have made us slaves of technological civilization, and as a result, we have problems in getting any meaning out of our lives. Thus, the whole idea about mystical separation and union has been lost, and it is our duty to find a way to regain this idea. As such, one of the ways to regain this idea is to study the literary

figures whose works are rich in mystical and spiritual expressions. Hopefully, this will free the Self who is under siege and guide him back to his true Home.

1.6 Research Methodology

The foreground theory in the present thesis is Aldous Huxley's Perennial philosophy. Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) in his eminent book *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945), captures overview of the mystical and metaphysical world via presenting and amalgamating literary extracts from mystical traditions. In his Introduction to the Bhagavad-Gita's *The Song of God* (1951), Huxley shed light to this connection. He called this doctrine "The Minimum Working Hypothesis". According to Huxley, the perennial philosophy consists of four fundamental doctrines as follows:

First: the phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness--the world of things and animals and men and even gods--is the manifestation of a Divine Ground within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be non-existent.

Second: human beings are capable not merely of knowing about the Divine Ground by inference; they can also realize its existence by a direct intuition, superior to discursive reasoning. This immediate knowledge unites the knower with that which is known.

Third: man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal Self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul. It is possible for a man, if he so desires, to identify himself with the spirit and therefore with the Divine Ground, which is of the same or like nature with the spirit.

Fourth: man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal Self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground. (p.13).

Thus, in this thesis, the researcher will analyze the poems of Rumi and Blake based on Huxley's the four fundamental doctrines with the important key concepts. The key concepts in this research are defined in accordance with Huxley's perennial philosophy and his four fundamental doctrines. Accordingly, the key concepts of this thesis are divided into four categories. In the first part, the researcher will elaborate on the concepts related to the individual consciousness specifically, separation and the related subthemes including, pain, evil and reason. In the second section, the concepts of love, understanding and imagination that are associated with direct intuition will be discussed. The third part will discuss annihilation as the way for dominating the eternal Self over the phenomenal ego. Finally, the fourth category discusses union as man's "only and one purpose".

The present thesis is in a comparative manner with thematic approach. Thus the researcher applies the themes of separation and union accompanied by the related concepts symmetrically in the selected poems of Rumi and Blake. A hermeneutical approach will also be used in this thesis as a literary tool. Both traditional and new hermeneutics will be applied in this research. As hermeneutics plays an important role in the analysis of the poems in the present study and there are different types of hermeneutics, the researcher will deeply discuss this approach in the next chapter.

The analysis of the poems will be in chapter four and five. In chapter four, the researcher will discuss critically the themes of separation and union in Rumi's poetry. In chapter five, the themes of separation and union will be critically discussed in Blake's poetry. It is noteworthy to mention that as Blake's paintings are also important in analyzing the poems, some of the supplementary artworks will also be illustrated to analyze the poems appropriately.

For the purposes of this study, a library research methodology has been used to indicate the importance of placing the research within a particular literary context. The researcher has spent some time in order to formulate a logical topic from an area of comparative studies. After the topic was chosen, exploration for more information was started via collecting articles and publications. The researcher tried to get background information and become familiar with the notions, important concepts, and basic terminology in the selected research area. This will hopefully pave the way for the topic to be discussed in a wider context. Thus, understanding becomes deeper in order to help the researcher feel more comfortable. It was really a risk not to find enough materials concerning Rumi and Persian literature in Malaysia. Thus, many printed books and softcopies were secured from Iran. Fortunately, the library of university is also very much enriched and the researcher has been able to collect a lot of useful information from this library.

1.7 Literature Review

Directly or indirectly, many critics have discussed mystical separation and union in Rumi and Blake either in their books or articles. The following books and article on the two literary giants are discussed briefly with a short commentary after each. The related literature has been divided into four different categories namely related literature on separation and union, related literature on Rumi, related literature on Blake, and related literature on both Rumi and Blake simultaneously

1.7.1 Related Literature on Separation and Union

Several writers have written on the themes of separation and union which are related to the current thesis. However, there is still a gap that could be filled through the

present study, although the works are really worth to study. In the subsequent paragraphs, the researcher will focus on some of these books and articles.

Henry Bayman in a book titled *The Black Pearl: Spiritual Illumination in Sufism and East Asian Philosophies* (2000: 98-100) has discussed the themes of separation and union. In this book, the author mentions that the philosophy behind creating the universe was to create human being, and the philosophy behind creating human being was to make them wise creatures by keeping to the straight path back to Him. To elaborate on this idea, the author gives an example. He says parents send their beloved children to university and when they come back home doing their assignments, they are very happy. This world is like a faraway university and human's goal is to learn about God (*marifat Allah*), come back to Him and find the hidden treasure. Thus, ultimately the goal of creation is reuniting with God. Although Rumi and Blake's names have not been mentioned in this study, the researcher believes that the ideas that the author brought up are considerably related to the ideas of Rumi as a Muslim and Sufi poet and Blake as a Romantic one. Hence, it is possible to say that this book is somehow related to the topic being discussed in this thesis.

Aglis Uzdavinys (2011) in a book called *Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism* discusses the concept of separation and union. In this innovative book, the researcher compares different religions and takes the readers profoundly into the supremely favored gardens of myth. The author shows the significance of many types of ascents to heaven to the readers. In this book, the reader will be familiar with the literature of Judaism and Christianity, magic way of platonic and hermetic literature and the holy place of Islamic revelation in Mecca as well. The readers are clearly presented with the holy effect of transcendence to the scope of heavenly principles. As the book is involved in Christian and Islamic ideas based on the themes

of separation and union, it is believed that in this book, like the previous book, one indirectly gets familiar with the ideas of Rumi and Blake.

Fran Grace (2011), has written an article titled “Beyond Reason: The Certitude of the Mystics from Al-Hallaj to David R. Hawkins”. In this article, the author evaluates the ideas of some Christian and Sufi mystics from the view point of reason in the spiritual life. Many mystics are of the opinion that reason can be considered as the ladder of spiritual achievement. However, according to Grace, reason alone is not a suitable instrument to reach to the realm of the Divine. Love can play a more important role in reaching to the Divine. The author in this article discusses the differences between the two ways of reaching Reality or God – one through reason and the other through love.

Although reason will be discussed in the present thesis as one of the causes of separation, however it is not supposed to be the main theme rather it is a subtheme. As pointed out in this article, not only that reason is not enough but it is also rejected by some mystics as the criteria of understanding God and as way to be united with the Divine. That is why some people at the time of William Blake called him mad. Perhaps they did not understand him or judged him based on their own reasons.

Dehghan, A., Farzi, H., & Astamal, R. A. (2013), have written an article entitled “Survey on the Nostalgia for “Return to Origin” in Mystical Poetry (Sanaei, Attar and Mowlavi= Rumi)”. The authors believe that one of the styles of composition in literature is using the theme of nostalgia by the poet in order to symbolize his memories in regretful and painful ways. The nostalgic ideas could be found in many mystical poems. However, return to origin is the dominant element of nostalgia that is considered to be the subject of the Persian mystical poetry. The mystics believe that human soul is trapped in this world and wishes to return to its origin. The researcher

believes that Sanaei, Attar and Rumi are the prominent figures of mystical poetry. These literary giants have paid due attention to nostalgic moods such as love, eternal life, the past memories, and pain of separation of human from eternal beloved and their original home in their poetry.

This article is related to the present study regarding the theme of separation and union. However, in this article the literary figures that have been discussed are from one language, and one country. Thus, it limits the scope of the study and consequently it is impossible to have different view from different parts of the world on the theme of separation and union.

Md. Salleh Yappar (1995) in his book *Mysticism and Poetry: A Hermeneutical Reading of the Poems of Amir Hamzah* has tried to evaluate and understand Amir Hamzah's poetry as carried out in his original works, *Buah Rindu* (Fruits of Longing) and *Nyani Sunyi*. The researcher argues that the main objective of this study is to comprehend fully the literary and mystical characteristics of the poems and to appraise their successes, therefore determining the true figure of the poet. The study has been conducted in an integral and comprehensive manner by examining the structures and contents of the poems concerning the poet's literary, cultural, and biographical backgrounds along with the foreign literary works which he translated into the Indonesian language. Although this study is not comparative, the themes of separation, union and love make the work related to the present thesis. Besides, the author of this book has employed a hermeneutical approach similar to the present study. Moreover, the study is based on mystical inclination like the present study.

Lalita Sinha (2008) in her thesis entitled *Unveiling the Garden of Love: Mystical Symbolism in Layla Majnun & Gita Govinda* directed her attention at comparing the Persian poet Nizami and Jayadeva, the Sanskrit poet. The thesis is using

the theoretical framework of hermeneutics directed by traditional standards and treaties of Persian and Sanskrit literature. Although the texts apparently originate from two different geographical and cultural milieus, there is a comparatively high level of correspondence and equivalence at the level of literary occurrences as well as mystical dimensions conveyed.

This thesis is related to the present thesis because the themes of love, separation and union have been discussed thoroughly. However, in this thesis, love is considered to be the main theme and separation and union are the subthemes whereas in the present study separation and union are the main themes. Similar to the present study the researcher has employed hermeneutical approach.

1.7.2 Related Literature on Rumi

There are a lot of literary and mystical books on Rumi related to the present thesis. However, regardless of the valuable contents of these literary books and articles, they do not meet all the necessary requirements for the present study. In the following paragraphs, the researcher will point to some of these literary works.

Annemarie Schimmel (1978) who was a really great scholar of Rumi's works composed a masterpiece entitled *Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi*. This book reflects Rumi's thoughts and ideas with reference to his poetry and life. Schimmel portrays Rumi in this book as a spiritual master and a perfect man who is well-grounded in Islamic mysticism. According to her, the Divine sun and its beauty revealed itself for Rumi via his intimate friend Shams of Tabriz. In this manner, the world was shown to Rumi in a new light. From thence on, he could perceive God's grace everywhere. The book also focuses on the theological premises and Rumi's

mystical stages and stations. It also illustrates medieval Konya the features of which were transformed by the mystical poet. Schimmel believes that:

The true dervish has to cut the neck of egotism, of selfishness, of I-ness so that he may experience one day the mystery of God's action through him, similar to the Prophet, who was addressed in the battle of Badr 'Thou didst not cast when thou cast' (Sura 8/17). So long as the self is still conscious, it is comparable to a cloud which covers the moon, but selflessness is cloudlessness. Wonderful is Rumi's simple line which I am so submerged in not-being (*nisti*), that my beloved keeps saying: 'Come, sit a moment with me!' Even that I cannot do. (1978:309-10)

The masterpiece of Schimmel is only research on Rumi. Thus, this is the gap the researcher will fill by comparing Rumi and William Blake.

Furthermore, Mehrdad Golkhosravi (2004) from the university of Barcelona has composed an article entitled "Pantheistic view of Divine Love in Man and Nature: A Comparative Study in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Moulana Jalal al-Din Rumi's *Mathnavi*". This article, which is part of the author's thesis, is related to mysticism. The author has tried to dig up the common mystical and transcendental attributes of Walt Whitman and Rumi regardless of the difference they have in time, place, culture, and historical backgrounds. The author has chosen Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Rumi's *Masnavi* as his main focus. He looks at the poets' mystical ideas about human beings and the image of the supernatural being. Thus, two concepts were examined in this article: Man's divinity in love and God and the Nature-Mystics. There are also some subtopics like pantheism and panentheism and some Sufi terms like *wahdat al-Wujud* (unity of existence) which have been discussed on both poets.

Although there are some similarities between Rumi and Whitman, and it is possible to compare these two poets, the present writer does not think of Rumi as a natural mystic. Panentheism and pantheism are two types of natural mysticism. However, Rumi's mysticism is monistic. Regarding this issue, Ali Movahedian Attar (1388/2010:123) states that pantheism is mistakenly attributed to Sufism and Sufis. In

fact, none of the Sufis or even Christian and Jewish mystics can be considered as a perfect example of this view.

In this regard, Fazel Asadi Amjad (2007), has written an article entitled "The Reed and the Aeolian Harp: Coleridge's "The Aeolian Harp", Rumi's "The Song of the Reed" and Jubran's Al-Mawakib and Imaginal Perception". In this article, the author refers to the universal language of poetry. He believes that the discourse of language of poetry deals with the imagination rather than a special linguistic competence. The root of this universal language is archetypal imagery, music, and philosophical and mystical concepts, which is metaphorically called the language of the soul. This language of the soul tries to find an answer in human being's imagination. The language of literature shows the profound closeness between different cultures and stresses the common artistic appreciation that originates in imaginal perception. The author believes that the reed and Aeolian harp are two archetypal images in this universal language. These wind instruments appropriately symbolize the epistemological notions of mysticism, both for Eastern Sufis, Christians, and Western Romantic poets. The author in this article tries to focus on the epistemological concepts of these images as they are utilized in the poetry of Rumi, Jubran Khalil Jubran, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The works discussed in this article are Rumi's "The Song of the Reed" which begins the Persian poet's mighty *Masnawi*, Jubran's finest ode, Al-Mawakib ('Procession'), and Coleridge's "The Aeolian Harp". These three interesting poems reflect the common sense of perception in the three traditions and indicate the fundamental elements of the Sufi, Romantic, and Christian epistemology. The author believes that these elements do not threaten the existence of truth nor reject the possibility of true perception. Regardless of some basic differences between Sufis and Romantics, for both of them, truth is not

transcendent within the system of changing signs and relations. In other words, truth is understood in the frame of mind or logic that makes the opposites united in a way that they are in accordance with the principle of non-contradiction.

The researcher believes that this article is related to the present thesis in the case of a comparison between Romantics and Sufis. In this article, three different writers have been compared so that the reader can get acquainted with the ideas of three different traditions namely, Sufism, Christianity, and Romanticism. However, in the present thesis, Blake could transmit the notions of Christianity and Romanticism simultaneously.

Based on Rumi's mystical ideas, Firooze Papan-Matin (2003) from the University of California has written an article under the title of “The Crisis of Identity in Rumi’s Tale of the Reed”. In this article, the author believes that Rumi's achievement in poetry and mysticism and his fascinating relationship with Shams al-Din of Tabriz is exceptional. Rumi's exceptional relationship with Shams had a great influence on his life and poetry. He thought of Shams as a perfect image of the beloved, and a transcendental comrade he had been looking for in his spiritual life. Rumi considered Shams as a spiritual mirror for his own interconnected mystical experiences. The author in this article examines an example of such intricacies in a reading of the “Tale of the Reed” .It is believed that “Tale of the Reed” is narrating separation of the lover that is personified as the reed from the Fatherland which is the reed-bed. The author asserts that the “Tale of the Reed” encompasses major themes that can be found in most of the couplets of *Masnavi*. Although this article is not a comparative one, it examines the prologue of *Masnavi* based on the themes of separation and union between the Lover and the Divine Beloved. The article shows how this relationship is connected to Rumi's spirituality in his relationship with Shams.

Based on the religious and philosophical ideas, Masoume Bahram (2011) from the University of Leeds has written an article under the title of "A Comparative Study of Faith from Kierkegaard and Rumi's Perspective". In this article, the researcher analyzes the views of Kierkegaard and Rumi on faith and love. The author accounts that these two thinkers posited their ideas in very different contexts and adds some secondary concepts related to the notions of faith and love. It is concluded that these two thinkers are different in their life style, contexts and way of thinking. However, the concepts of love and faith are amenable to all people in all ages.

To the present writer, although it is possible to compare Rumi and Kierkegaard thematically, their ways of thinking is very different. While Kierkegaard is an existential religious philosopher, Rumi is a mystic poet. Although Rumi has some philosophical ideas, he is in some cases against the philosophers as he says "The leg of the syllogisers is of wood: a wooden leg is very infirm (*Masnavi I*: 20128).

Begum Ayesha Sultana Laskar (2012) in her book *Maulana Rumi and Kabir: A Comparative Study* tries to highlight the core of two great Sufi poets and mystics, Kabir and Jalaluddin Rumi. The researcher believes that Kabir's poetry could be considered as a reproduction of his philosophy towards life. The Kabir's mystical preaching elevated the oppressed people. The ideas strengthened them to be independent and fight against all political and social inequalities. Thus, they formed a new culture and universalism founded on oneness and unity of ultimate reality, and union of mankind regardless of their ethnic, racial, cultural, and linguistic differences. On the other hand, Jalaluddin Rumi is one of the greatest mystical poets throughout the world. He employed his poetic talent to spread his spiritual experiences as well as his theosophical ideas. When the Mongol gangs had caused chaos in Asia and societies were groping in the obscure world and striving painstakingly in search of realization

and truth, Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi foreshadowed the source of Sufism. This study is related to the present thesis in a sense that it is a comparative study in mysticism comparing Rumi with Kabir. However, the selected mystics are both from the east and consequently the reader can get nothing of the western mystics.

Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh (2013) in his thesis *Practical Mysticism: Jalal al-Din Rumi and Meister Eckhart* attempts to classify the practical mysticism of Jalaluddin Rumi as the eminent Sufi of the thirteenth century based on his own mystical doctrines and through comparative approach. Practical mysticism as a field of study has a double meaning that copes with: a) the phases of the path of spiritual perfection, and b) the practices that should be accomplished during these phases. The study compares Rumi's practical mysticism with the practical mysticism that belongs to another kind of mysticism having different significant elements. Such methodology focuses on both similarities and differences and employs comparison as the means of comprehension and clarification. The mirror selected for this study is Meister Eckhart (c.1260–1327/8) the German Dominican who, unlike Rumi, fits in the speculative mysticism. Eckhart's mystical organization, though sharing substantial resemblances with Rumi's one, focuses on the concepts of knowledge and intellect rather than love in its focal point.

Based on this comparative study, the practical mysticism of Rumi is categorized, according to his metaphysics of creation, domination of *nafs*, power of intellect and heart, and the concepts of *fan* and sublime *fan*. These themes are compared in different ontological, moral, cognitive and emotional aspects, with Eckhart's creaturely features (*eigenschaft*). The mystical stages such as birth of the Son, identity in the ground, *abgescheidenheit* (seclusion) and breakthrough are related to Eckhart's metaphysics of *exitus* (departure). The study indicated that, instead of the one-to-one correspondence between Rumi and Eckhart's mystical practices, these

practices enjoy just a partial correspondence. However, it is also helpful in identifying and scrutinizing the practical aspect of both mystics. Moreover, whereas Eckhart's philosophical mysticism thinks through an essential association between mystical practices and achieving mystical stages, Rumi's Sufism believes at most a preliminary role for practices in attaining mystical perfection. This study also clarifies that the importance of love in Rumi's mysticism forms his complete practical approach. Love is efficiently emphasized while being compared with the key role of intellect in Eckhartian pathway. In conclusion, the study recommends that Rumi's practical mysticism could be called "mysticism of loving annihilation" and Eckhart's practical mysticism could be entitled "mysticism of intellectual detachment". Although this thesis is comparative similar to the present thesis; however, Jalaluddin Rumi has been compared with Eckhart. The author in this thesis has mostly paid attention to the differences of the two mystics and believes that while Rumi pays more attention to heart, Eckhart focuses on head.

Manijeh Mannani (2007) has written an article entitled "The philosophical fundamentals of belief in the mystical poetry of Rumi and Donne". The central attention of this article is a comparative study of Jalaluddin Rumi, and John Donne the English Metaphysical poet. In this article, the researcher has scrutinized the poet's schools of thought along with their individual worldviews in order to explain the different aspects of the shared attitude leading to their poetry. The researcher tries to compare two literary monarchs who seem to be geographically, chronologically, and culturally different. His adjacent and comparative study has exemplified the basic ideologies that inspired Rumi and Donne's metaphysical poems. In a yet more broad sense, this article has spread more knowledge on the relationship between the two systems of mysticism and literature. Thus, this article has studied not only the mutually

dependent concerns in the two systems but also the imperceptible and yet highly amazing intimacy that exists in the symbolic works of the two religious and literary traditions.

1.7.3 Related Literature on Blake

Similar to works on Rumi, there are several related literary works on William Blake and his mystical and literary ideas. However, the researcher believes that there is still a gap as Blake may have been compared with writers other than Rumi. Furthermore, the authors may have focused on Blake alone without comparing him with other literary figures while the themes are related to the present thesis. In the following paragraphs, the researcher will discuss some of these works.

Swaty Samantaray (2013), in her article “Demystifying Mysticism: A Comparative Study of the Poetry of William Blake and Rabindranath Tagore” compares William Blake with Rabindranath Tagore. Accordingly, the author states that Mysticism is over and over again believed to be as a spiritual journey for the veiled truth or perception, the aim of which is union with the superior dominion. Mystical experiences are believed to be distinctive for each mystic. However, the researcher believes that there is a noticeable similarity between the mystics’ experiences, not only of the identical cult or race, but also of different religions and social orders. In this article, the researcher talks over the notion of mysticism in the poetry of the English Romantic poet William Blake and the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. Although, the two poets were born in different geographical regions, they apparently share a mystical affinity. A thorough study of Tagore and Blake’s works indicates that the poetic ideas of Tagore and Blake grow together into one body regardless of the kaleidoscopic differences by studying their craft and poetic art. The two poets casted off nationalistic

pretensions and cultural tensions aside. One of the most important themes in Tagore and Blake's poetic works is on transcendentalism and mysticism. Although their methods of representing mysticism is very diverse and different as well as their symbolism, their poems follow a comparable thematic goal. Even though the comparison in this study is on the mysticism of east and west, the figure of eastern mysticism is different from the one that is going to be studied in this study that is Rumi.

Jacob Henry Leveton (2012) in his thesis for the degree of master of art entitled *William Blake's Enoch Lithograph: Self-annihilation &/as Artistic and Ecological Inspiration* claims that William Blake, the British Romantic poet/ poet in his lithograph Enoch (1806/7) demonstrates the mysterious Genesis 5:24 fragment². The passage inscribes a moment of personal transformation and revolution. Blake uses this biblical passage where someone is annihilated to develop his own idea of self-annihilation. This theme appears in the lithograph to some extent that unites with and notifies Blake's climaxing illuminated poems "Milton" and "Jerusalem". The thesis develops opinions that highlight thematic communications between poetry and visual art within distinct illuminated books. In this thesis, the researcher shows that Blake promotes major themes across apparently minor works of art. The themes are also discussed in the illuminated books which are better-known regarding his art historical framework.

Although the thesis is to some extent related to the present thesis, there are major differences between this thesis and the present thesis. While the present thesis is comparative, this thesis focuses only on William Blake. The theme of self-annihilation is the major theme in this thesis; however, in the present thesis, annihilation is just a subtheme to the major theme of union. In this thesis, the researcher

² Enoch walked with God; then was no more, because God took him away.