

Essay

[Religion](#), [God](#)



Essay “ The Tyger” by William Blake is a lyric poem that depicts the nature of the creator and his creations. The poem is more about the creator of the tyger than it is about the tyger. In contemplating the terrible ferocity and awe-inspiring symmetry of the tyger, the speaker is at a loss to explain how the same God who made the meek, innocent lamb could create a horrifying creature such as the tyger. This essay will provide a detailed analysis of William Blake’s “ The Tyger” paying particular attention, firstly to the extended metaphor in stanza’s 2, 3 and 4, secondly, to the poetic significance of repetition, in particular to the phrase “ fearful symmetry”, thirdly, to the role that the rhythm and metre play in creating an urgent need to address the succession of the questions and lastly, the evocation of the sublime emotion of terror in Blake’s depiction of the Tyger. Firstly, the extended metaphor in stanza’s 2, 3 and 4, is comparing the creator and his creation of the Tyger to a blacksmith and his creations. A blacksmith that makes use of tools, such as the “ Hammer, ” “ chain, ” "furnace, " and “ anvil" in creating objects out of hot metal. The blacksmith represents a conventional image of artistic creation; here Blake applies it to the divine creation of the natural world. This is evident in Line 5:" In what distant deeps or skies", refers to an otherworldly (“ distant") place, perhaps a kind of hell (“ deeps") or Heaven (“ skies"). The “ distant deeps or skies" bring to mind the concept of hell being underground and heaven being in the sky. Since the Tyger may have been created in either hell (deeps) “ or" heaven (skies), it remains ambiguous as to whether the Tyger is good or bad. Blake was essentially an artist. His Tyger is therefore a painting in words. The tyger in this poem is rather a magical, mystical creature. This is an artist’s

impression of the animal, almost an alien creature with glowing eyes and stripes. Blake does not depict good and evil as opposites but rather different aspects of the nature of God. Good and evil are different and do matter in the natural world, especially in the way that men react with God's creation. The very first words expressed by Blake suggests that this tyger has been a "forged" creation "In the forests of the night" nevertheless describes the dark, mysterious, cloaking and hiding fiery figure of the tyger. The "forging" of the tiger suggests a very physical, painstaking, and intentional kind of making; it emphasizes the remarkable physical presence of the tiger and precludes the idea that such a creation could have been in any way accidentally or haphazardly produced. The word "forge" means to create or form is a smith term as well as another name for a smith's furnace. The smith reference also ties into all the fire imagery associated with the Tyger, and emphasizes the energy and danger in the design of the Tyger. However the third stanza depicts a parallelism of "shoulder" and "art," that it is not just the body but also the "heart" of the tiger that is being forged. Therefore, this is not merely a physical forgery but also a psychological. Hence "In what furnace was thy brain" moreover suggests that the mind of the tyger is also shaped and twisted under this extreme heat and energy the fire in the "furnace" kindles. In the process of constructing this tyger it therefore becomes the beast that it is thus is "framed" to be; both terrifying and similarly remarkably elegant. Therefore what this tiger symbolizes is not the typical, blood thirsty predator who possesses purely animalistic characteristics. Unfortunately Blake's "tyger" is a symbol of the darker side of life, the overwhelming struggle of mankind against the brute force of

reality. With this struggle comes growth and maturity. The lamb and tyger, although opposites, are nevertheless each synonymous with the struggle of life, from innocence to harsh experience. The tiger symbolizing nature red in tooth and claw, the tiger poses the question of the origin of evil and the nature of its creator. The perennial problem of believing in a benign Creator while viewing a malign universe has been the most agonising of all dilemmas. The tyger is seen the ultimate terror, just as the lamb is the final reassurance for the child of innocence that the universe and its Creator are benign. The rhythm throughout the poem is one of stressed followed by unstressed syllables, creating the effect of the blacksmith beating the “ hammer” onto the “ anvil” and thereby forging his creation out of steel. There are also references made to “ fire” throughout the poem: “ burning bright”, “ burnt the fire”, “ seize the fire” and “ furnace”. These words again are images of a supreme “ immortal” being that the speaker compares to a black smith. In romantic poetry poets often contrast aspects of nature with the inventions of mankind. Lastly, the evocation of the sublime emotion of terror in Blake’s depiction of the tyger is offering good instance of how Blake himself stands somewhere outside the perspectives of innocence and experience he projects. Another poem is “ The Lamb” which is by William Blake is a poem like child’s song, in the form of a question and answer. The first stanza of the poem is descriptive which makes it very easy to understand, while the second focuses on abstract spiritual matters and contains explanations and analogies. The poem connects religion with both the human and natural worlds, being associated with the rugged fields and valleys as well as livestock. The Lamb portrays three main themes: childhood

(innocents), human nature and spiritual truth. The Lamb begins with a child asking a little lamb a question. One must understand the innocents of the boy when reading, because at first when reading one could think that the boy's question is naïve. Especially when the child is talking to a lamb as if he could understand him. But the child who narrates this poem clearly belongs to the world of innocence. The child is excited about everything around him. Which one can see together when one reads: Gave thee clothing of delight, Softest clothing woolly bright; Gave thee such a tender voice, Making all the vales rejoice (5-8). The boy finds joy in natural creation. It does not matter that he is talking to a lamb. The child's question is of the Lamb's origins. William Blake makes it clear about this question when the child says: " Little Lamb, who made thee / Dost thou know who made thee" (1-2). Blake leaves no room for speculation in this poem. The question expands open the timeless questions that all human beings have about their own origins. The story of the lamb's making is probably a distant illustration to the creation of the world talked about in the Book of Genesis in the Bible. After one takes the idea of human origin into account, it takes the child's somewhat naïve question and makes it profound per se. Who made thee is a question that many have asked. The question, of course, has taken different forms and has been the subject of philosophy. Blake would answer that a creature could only exist because a creator has made them. In this poem, Blake leaves no other answer but that somebody made everything. This is a great analogy to the Jesus Christ of the New Testament. Blake agrees with the church, that the God of the universe and everything in it, and who gave one life, food, and clothing is the Lamb. Christ was called the

Lamb many times in the New Testament, one example is in Revelation 5: 8-13: " Worthy is the Lamb who was slain . . . Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever (Rev. 5: 8-13)." One can now see the connection of the Lamb to Jesus Christ. The Lamb is also a prominent figure in the church, not only representing Jesus but God's human children. One should also see the correlation of the Lamb, Jesus and the child. The child also says Jesus calls himself a lamb and how he came to earth as a child. The Boy points that out to the lamb on line 17 " He became a child. " Biblically Jesus who is part of the trinity of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, is sent as a part of God to be a child. In this poem as well, the Lamb becomes a child, to show purity and innocence from a child-like heart essentially the same as the innocence of Jesus. Blake makes the poem of The Lamb very descriptive and made a beautiful analogy of the lamb and Jesus Christ. Blake was able to connect religion in a way with humanity that made it very easy to understand. The Lamb is a great poem by William Blake with its themes of childhood (innocence), human nature and spiritual truth. A third poem is The Chimney Sweeper (Innocence), The speaker of this poem is a small boy who was sold into the chimney-sweeping business when his mother died. He recounts the story of a fellow chimney sweeper, Tom Dacre, who cried when his hair was shaved to prevent vermin and soot from infesting it. " The Chimney Sweeper" comprises six quatrains, each following the AABB rhyme scheme, with two rhyming couplets per quatrain. The first stanza introduces the speaker, a young boy who has been forced by circumstances into the hazardous occupation of chimney sweeper. The second stanza introduces Tom Dacre, a fellow chimney sweep who acts as a

foil to the speaker. Tom is upset about his lot in life, so the speaker comforts him until he falls asleep. The next three stanzas recount Tom Dacre's somewhat apocalyptic dream of the chimney sweepers' "heaven." However, the final stanza finds Tom waking up the following morning, with him and the speaker still trapped in their dangerous line of work. There is a hint of criticism here in Tom Dacre's dream and in the boys' subsequent actions, however. Blake decries the use of promised future happiness as a way of subduing the oppressed. The boys carry on with their terrible, probably fatal work because of their hope in a future where their circumstances will be set right. This same promise was often used by those in power to maintain the status quo so that workers and the weak would not unite to stand against the inhuman conditions forced upon them. As becomes more clear in Blake's *Songs of Experience*, the poet had little patience with palliative measures that did nothing to alter the present suffering of impoverished families. What on the surface appears to be a condescending moral to lazy boys is in fact a sharp criticism of a culture that would perpetuate the inhuman conditions of chimney sweeping on children. Tom Dacre (whose name may derive from "Tom Dark," reflecting the sooty countenance of most chimney sweeps) is comforted by the promise of a future outside the "coffin" that is his life's lot. Clearly, his present state is terrible and only made bearable by the two-edged hope of a happy afterlife following a quick death. Blake here critiques not just the deplorable conditions of the children sold into chimney sweeping, but also the society, and particularly its religious aspect, that would offer these children palliatives rather than aid. That the speaker and Tom Dacre get up from the

vision to head back into their dangerous drudgery suggests that these children cannot help themselves, so it is left to responsible, sensitive adults to do something for them. The last poem is Chimney sweeper (Experience), When compared structurally to the companion piece from Songs of Innocence, it is obvious that this poem is half as long as its counterpart is. In addition, many lines are much shorter by one or two syllables. The voice of the young chimney sweeper is similar to that of Innocence, but he clearly has little time for the questions put to him (hence the shorter lines). This poem starts with the AABB rhyme scheme characteristic of innocence and childhood, but as it delves deeper into the experience of the Chimney Sweeper, it switches to CDCD EFEF for the last two stanzas. The final stanza, in fact, has only a near rhyme between "injury" (line 10) and "misery" (line 12), suggesting an increasing breakdown in the chimney sweeper's world, or the social order in general. The entire system, God included, colludes to build its own vision of paradise upon the labors of children who are unlikely to live to see adulthood. Blake castigates the government (the "King") and religious leaders (God's "Priest") in similar fashion to his two "Holy Thursday" poems, decrying the use of otherwise innocent children to prop up the moral consciences of adults both rich and poor. The use of the phrase "make up a Heaven" carries the double meaning of creating a Heaven and lying about the existence of Heaven, casting even more disparagement in the direction of the Priest and King.