

William blake's poem "the little black boy" essay sample

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William Blake's "The Little Black Boy" revolves around the theme of slavery and the ideal slave's mentality. Blake wrote about a black African-American and his experience with slavery. Blake probably expressed his own feelings towards the whites' racism and suppression acts towards African-Americans through the black boy, which is the speaker of the poem.

The poem is about an African-American, who is the speaker of the poem, who remembers his childhood with his mother where she used to teach him about religion and equality. The setting of the poem is somewhere in the Southern United States before the civil war since slaves are still not free. The black boy has a dream, that all humans will be equal, and that his master would love him. The diction in the poem is very simple because Blake is writing the poem in a slave's point of view. Also, the rhyming scheme, which is ABAB, is also very simple emphasizing the same point.

In the first stanza, the boy says " And I am black, but O! my soul is white". Here exists a metaphor where the boy relates goodness and decency to the color white. He says that even though his color is black, which in this case symbolizes ruthlessness, his heart is decent and white. He goes on saying, " White as an angel" which is a simile comparing his heart with the pureness of an angel. He tries to say that the outside color doesn't determine if a person is good or evil and inferior. There is also several instances of imagery in the second stanza where the mother kisses him, and teaches him " underneath a tree" which symbolizes the nature and the open where they

live in. The third to the fifth stanza exists a change in the speaker where the mother now is the speaker. She teaches the black boy that in the east and with the rising sun is where God lives.

She says, " And gives his light, and gives his heat away" which is a metaphor comparing how god's love is like the heat and light given off by the sun. She explains to the boy that because he is used to working in the sun and heat, he will be able to bear the ' beams of love' given off by God. She further explains that after death, the black slaves will be able to bear the ' heat and light' and so win the final treasure before the whites, who will have to adapt to the ' light and heat'. Also, in the last two lines of the fifth stanza a metaphor exists where God is referred to as the shepherd and people are his lambs. This can also be considered an allusion since this metaphor originally exists in the Bible. In the sixth stanza, the boy refers to the outside looks of people and who people view each other based on looks as clouds, which is a metaphor. He then says that when the clouds vanish, whites and blacks will be equal. Finally, in the last stanza, the boy says that he will provide a shade from God's ' light' until his master can bear that light and enjoy God's prize. Then, the black boy says, his master will love him and the conflict between blacks and whites will be erased.

Blake was very successful in showing the reader the points of view of African-Americans during their slavery period. He used many literary forms to emphasize his ideas such as metaphors and allusion. He was able to make the reader sense the situations and conflicts African-Americans were facing.