

Sample essay on the tyger and the lamb

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



The Tyger and The Lamb found in the songs of experience and songs of innocence respectively are two notable poems by William Blake. The poems were inspired by the years he lived 1757-1827 which heralded the inception of the Romantic movement in the western civilization. The Romantic movement was founded on human expressiveness and spirituality with enhanced focus on nature. The society then had a profound impact on Blake's perception and convictions regarding various issues he tackled in his poems. His two works, The Lamb, and The Tyger are much centered on the poet's expression regarding religion with much focus on the Bible as a reference to morality-good and evil. Despite the divine similarities, the two poems have varied meanings and interpretations.

The two poems dwell on Christianity with much focus on the actions of the creator. The two further have a lyric aspect that enable the poet to express his emotions with ease as well as ensuring the melodic effect is enhanced (Blake and Lincoln 148). Additionally, the poems are dramatic with more than one persona involved. Blake, in both cases, does not wholly identify himself with either perception held by the two works. He stands outside experience and innocence, with the core aim of positioning himself from a distanced point in order to identify and correct the misconceptions of the two. The lamb and The Tyger advance their arguments through symbolism and abstract concepts. They primarily use animals as symbols. The Lamb symbolizes Jesus where the traditional image of Jesus in the Christian context which highlights the values of meekness, gentleness, and peace. The child persona in the poem is also associated with Jesus based on the biblical depiction of Jesus's childhood pitting him as a vulnerable and guileless child.

The Tyger, on the other hand, symbolizes evil, fear and mystery in the world. In the same poem, God or the creator is symbolized as the blacksmith who forged the “ Tyger”.

As for the themes, the two poems dwell on religion as a central theme. In The Lamb, the persona connects nature to Christianity through a child-like simplified attitude to represent his faith. The questions raised by the child regarding the lamb show a sense of a simple faith that need not be justified. A simple faith that defines how religion works. The poem fuses the Christian theological symbols of the lamb and the innocent child to further accentuate the religion theme in the poem. In The Tyger, Blake dwells on the theme by questioning God’s role in creating or “ forging” the Tyger as well as allowing evil to thrive in the world. The poet is not focused on the revising of the Christian teachings but rather he approaches this religion by questioning its assumptions (Gardner and Blake 245).

Awe and amazement is another theme that is shared by both poems. In The Lamb, the curious questions raised by the innocent child rouses awe on the unknown aspects of nature and divinity. The revelations in the poem are amazingly simple but at the same underscore very pertinent religious issues. The Tyger on the other hand dwells on its fearful symmetry to highlight awe and amazement. The poet’s description of the Tyger as “ scary” fearful” and lurking “ in the forests of the night” and the inclusion of over thirteen question marks in the poem elicit mystery (Blake and Lincoln 108). It is this mystery that inspires awe and amazement regarding the Tyger. The experience perspective incorporates an acknowledgment of the unexplainable phenomena in the universe. It presents the presence of evil as

an undeniable yet unexplainable fact.

The two poems also have contrasting aspects that manifest themselves in the form of subject matter, themes, and structure. The two poems represent conflicting notions and perspective that the poet seeks to put across to the audience. The Lamb dramatizes the naive queries and hopes that characterize the lives of young children drawing positive aspects of natural human understanding. The Tyger on the other hand dwells on the mature and pragmatic perspective issues. The poem is laden with an experienced approach that does not fail to question assumptions based on Christian religion. Blake uses the poem to accentuate duality of creator, the contraries of experience and innocence. In short, The Tyger is an embodiment of similar ideas reflected in The Lamb, but from a different perspective (Gardner and Blake 245). The former represents an experienced outlook while the latter brings attention to virtuousness and naivety.

The two poems differently approach the theme of religion. The Lamb dwells on the basic tenets of Christian theology dwelling on the creation question. In the first stanza, the innocent child asks “ Little Lamb, who made thee?/Dost thou know who made thee?” (Blake and Lincoln 40). This is one of the most asked philosophical, religious queries regarding man’s origin which in turn translates to his understanding of his eternal destiny. The innocent child answers this rhetorical question by asserting “ Little Lamb, I’ll tell thee/ He is called by thy name/ For He calls Himself a Lamb” (Blake and Lincoln 40). This happens to be a simple answer to the alluded question touching on human creation. The Tyger, on the other hand, approaches the religion theme differently by focussing on the source of evil in the religious context.

The poet in the poem wonders whether the same creator that made the lamb was capable of creating a totally “scary” fearful creature that lurks “in the forest of the night” (Gardner and Blake 234). This is a theological question that seeks to pinpoint the role of the God in nature. The poem, unlike *The Lamb*, does not offer answers but leaves a trail of unanswered questions.

The two poems contrast further when it comes to their structure. In *The Tyger*, William Blake uses rhymed couplets in six quatrains that correctly point to rhythmic hammering of smithy injecting a sense of power and urgency. The stanzas have four lines with every pair of lines rhyming at the end i. e. “Tyger Tyger, burning bright/In the forests of the night;” (Blake and Lincoln 108) It has a regular structure that incorporates simplicity with a string of questions linking up to articulate one central idea. *The Lamb*, on the other hand, has two quatrains or stanzas each constituting of five rhyming couplets. It employs the AABB rhyme scheme that accentuates the lyric element in it. The simplified rhyme system further betrays a childlike curiosity and the innocent singsong voice associated with children. The repetition observed in the first and last two lines provides the poem a melody like quality. The soft vowel sounds and flowing l’s enhance this effect and also to convey the lamb’s bleating. The poem has a trochaic rhythm which entails a pattern of an unstressed beat succeeded by an unstressed one. For instance in the first stanza line five “Gave thee life& bid thee feed/By the stream &o’er the mead” (Blake and Lincoln 108).

In conclusion, the two poems are complementary works by William Blake. *The Tyger* is a response to *The Lamb* in that it reflects similar ideas but from

a different angle or perspective. The two approach the religion theme through the innocence and experience lens. The Lamb presents a naïve and innocent outlook on its religious subject matter while The Tyger highlights harsh experiences regarding the subject matter by further pinpointing the weaknesses held by an innocent or naïve perspective. The two poems further have differences that manifest from the perspectives held by their distinctly assigned classes i. e., songs of innocence and songs of experience.

Works Cited

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Gardner, Stanley, and William Blake. The Tyger, the Lamb, and the Terrible Desart: Songs of Innocence and of Experience in Its Times and Circumstance : Including Facsimiles of Two Copies. London: Cygnus Arts, 1998. Print.