

Willam blake london marxism assignment



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Communist Manifesto which was written some 50 years later. Living in London for most of his life, Blake was able to witness the growing industrialisation and institutionalisation of the city. In turn, Blake was also able to see the growing oppression of the proletariat that was inflicted upon them by the bourgeois classes. Blake illustrates the extent of the suffering on the streets of London well and also adopts an accusatory tone directing blame to the moneyed classes for such inhuman conditions and injustices.

The scale of the problems that the poor had to face is made very clear by Blake. First, the title: London was, at the time of writing, the economic capital of the world and was the heartland of the unparalleled British empire. The sheer size of London adequately demonstrates the fact that the issues Blake is addressing are most certainly widespread. If anything, London could be seen as a representation for all urban cities at the time. Second, there is an extensive use of the adjective 'every' through the poem which proves to be particularly striking.

Simply by repeating this all-encompassing adjective Blake is able to convey how he is not talking about a minority here. Unfortunately, it seems, children are not exempt from this underclass whose suffering Blake so vividly displays. It's clear that with lines such as 'every infant's cry of fear' Blake wishes to emphasise how those from less moneyed backgrounds had been in that situation from birth – this is typically Marxist as it complies with the notion that nobody is exempt from the despotism.

In fact, not even the most tender of beings, infants, and all the innocence they possess, is enough to loosen some of the restraints of the ruling hand.

Moreover, an infant crying in ‘fear is a very disturbing thought and one that we don’t often come across but Blake, with his hyperbolic ‘every(s)’, reiterates the intensity of the problems. Also, ‘fear’ is somewhat of a loaded word, forcing us to consider not only a particular infant’s distressing and discomfoting feelings but more so what there is in this crippled society to be so fearful of.

All we can infer is that a life of injustice and toiling will ensue. The language that Blake uses tellingly portrays how the working classes labour relentlessly – most likely to ensure the aristocrats Of their wealth. One can envisage malnourished and miserable people upon reading ‘marks of eakness, marks of woe’ and we are led to question who is responsible for these hardships. Blake, although explicit in detailing the extent of the poverty and misery, leaves much room for inference, particularly in regards to who is to blame; London is not purely a denunciation of the bourgeois classes.

What’s more, there appears to be a great irony in the sense that Britain (then of course a global and economic powerhouse with a vast empire) is home to millions who see none of her wealth and instead must live in ‘wo???. Not only does Blake show working class life as onerous and demanding, but Iso as a ticket to be tirelessly exploited. Again, there are noticeable signs of a repressive establishment which Marx himself duly SUMs up in his Communist Manifesto, ‘The proletariat have nothing to lose but their chains’. A separate restrictive aspect of society that Blake homes in on is the limitations on expression.

One notably compelling line reads ‘the mind forgd manacles’ which firstly supports this idea of arduous and tedious labour. When considering forging the work of blacksmiths comes to mind most prominently thus bringing images of sweated and filthy environments. Second, there lies another link between some of Blake’s ideas and indeed marxist ideology. By directly associating the mind with manacles, physical, imprisoning objects, Blake successfully demonstrates how society doesn’t want nor allow the impoverished to express themselves.

To again quote the communist manifesto, ‘They [the proletariat] are slaves of the bourgeois classes’, we can see how Blake’s ideas tie in directly with some of the core principles of marxism. Interestingly, Blake talks of how ‘every black’ning church appalls’ which too has relevance to the themes of expression. Although there is a more in depth argument regarding marxism and the role of religion, this solitary line effectively emphasises the crushing and restrictive ways of society.

The church ought to be a centre for religious expression and is widely regarded as a haven for more general expression – giving people the opportunity to confide with God. However, Blake gives the impression through the verb ‘appalls’ that the Church is complicit with the oppression imposed by the upper classes. In fact, by describing the church as ‘blackning’ we are led to believe that it is a source of dissatisfaction and ought to be avoided – it does nothing to serve the purposes of the working classes as it ought to.