

What is this divinity  
that surrounds us?



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What is this divinity that surrounds us? Should we embrace it or fear it's intelligent design? In the poems, "The Tyger" by William Blake and "Design" by Robert Frost they marvel and fear this design, ultimately leaving the reader with more questions than answers. Each poet portrays irony, figurative language, imagery, and intelligent design while trying to understand God and his creations. Let's explore the similarities between each poet's poem, first beginning with imagery.

The use of this particular animal and insects provides a vivid in depth analysis. This appeals to the reader's senses to help them understand what the writer is trying to convey. Blake's statement, "Burnt the fire of thine eyes", illustrates a sense of fear of the tiger. He wants to know by whom such a creature was created. Surely God would have not created something so feared. In the third stanza Blake asks, "In what distant deep or skies." Deep in this sense we assume is being applied to the underworld.

Frost states something similar to this, "What but design of darkness to appall?" The "designer" or "immortal hand" must have bad intentions because he seems to be associated with some sort of darkness. The imagery both poets left in my mind was the use of nature to illustrate their point. I could not help but to think the animals were a metaphor for humans. Some people live nice quiet lives while others are murderers and rapists.

How can both sets of people come from one God who is purely full of goodness? They are seeking to see if in some way God's design is flawed; but how can that be coming from a divine being? The imagery can be seen as frightful yet beautifully realistic, and the language used to describe the

animals are simplistic and powerful. There's an emphasis on the animals power but at the same time this could be seen as God's power being conveyed through this animal and insects. Ultimately, the violence and ferocity of the tiger and spider are vivid, terrifying, and has a deep, dark undertone to them.

Figurative language is used by both poets as well. According to Webster's dictionary, figurative language is a language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation. We see examples of this all throughout both poems. Starting with Blake's poem, it reads "Tyger! Tyger! burning bright in the forest of the night." Here the tiger is not actually boring, it's more so used as a metaphor to demonstrate its ferociousness, or it can also be seen as the tiger's appearance. The yellowness of its eyes mixed with its orange fur in the night could remind one of fire.

In design the word white is mentioned several times. This is unique because white is usually associated with good and purity, yet all throughout this poem it alludes to something dark and evil. "Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth", the spider holds up the moth as in some sort of victory it has obtained. The spider who is seen as evil has now triumphed over the moth who is viewed as good. This ties back into that design is either flawed or has a dark side to it. Another place we see an example of this in the poem is when Frost states, "On a white heal-all, holding up a moth." After doing some research I discovered a heal-all is actually blue in appearance and is known for its medicinal use.

This demonstrates irony because the spider is preparing the moth for its death on something that is meant to heal. Later on in the poem, line ten, the heal-all is now blue. "The wayside blue and innocent heal-all." Initially the poet just describes the flower, here he proclaims its innocence, implying the flower had nothing to do with it being white. Therefore this was the work of its designer. Figurative language as well as irony is seen throughout both poems as a way to hyperbole and understand the poets outlook more vividly.

Lastly, we come to intelligent design, which seems to be the overall theme of both poets. Each questions God's purpose from a Christian's viewpoint. They ask a series of questions seeking to find or understand this divine design seen in nature. To the readers dismay though, the questions go unanswered. The questions are only presented, I believe it was left up to the reader to truly seek, in a philosophical way, the answers to the questions. The real philosophical question seems to be, "Why?" Did all these events happen by chance or did a complex entity bring it all about? We get the sense from each poet that there is a higher being behind the spider and the tiger, be he deems to be far too complex for our understanding.

In conclusion, I leave you with a quote from Hamlet that draws into what I feel both poets were fundamentally trying to get at. "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." Just perhaps it is not our creator and his design who is flawed, but us from our outlook on nature that is flawed.