

# London by william blake analysis

[Government](#), [Corruption](#)



This poem significantly conveys the idea of corruption – both physical and emotional. The writer makes it more personal by using the first person in the first two stanzas, thus the experience becomes more appealing to the reader. The writer also describes the street that he wanders through as ‘charter'd’ which are legal documents of some form. This suggests the idea that London is autocratic; therefore it is corrupted in that sense. He applies a sorrowful atmosphere. As he walks, he describes the negative emotions that he witnesses – ‘marks of weakness, marks of woe.’ He observes this in ‘every face’ that he sees, suggesting the idea that depression has taken over this society. This indicates that London is a corrupt place to live. In the next stanza, the writer's use of word ‘Infant’ could potentially be a personification of innocence, rather than a real child. This implies how it is impossible for the innocent to survive within an environment like this. He also capitalizes the word ‘Man’ to signify that he is not only referring to males, but to mankind. His constant use of the word ‘every’ in the first two stanzas emphasises how he strongly believes the entire society of London is corrupted. The writer also hints that he is not right in the brain: ‘mind-forg'd manacles I hear’. He is imprisoning himself with handcuffs. The writer focuses more on imagery in the third stanza. I believe that the ‘Chimney-sweeper's cry’ represents mankind itself trying to ‘sweep’ the despair and corruption in their society. However, it could also suggest how in London children worked as chimney-sweepers, and he is appalled at how his culture would allow this, as they get paid very little money and many of them die of lung diseases at a very young age. ‘Black'ning Church’ is also ambiguous – it could suggest impurity, lack of faith in society and how things that once seemed safe and

reassuring are now dangerous. This is because the Church is not speaking out for how society is being ruined, thus it becomes corrupted itself. However, it could also suggest the pollution at the time and how the church walls were stained with soot. ' Hapless soldier's sigh' suggests how many men were left with no choice but to become soldiers in the army and fight in the war, hence they become miserable. There is a greater feeling of anger and furiousness at his society than sadness - he is horrified with the way people are being treated. In the fourth and last stanza, the writer focuses on what there is to come and what the future has in store for this corrupted society. The ' youthful Harlot's curse' implies that the corrupted and sinning youth will consequently have a negative impact on the next generation - ' blasts the new born Infant's tear'. The next generation will have no choice but to pay the price for its previous generation's wronging and try to undo their faults.