

# The tyger by william blake



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ The Tyger” by William Blake Now seen as one of the most prominent figures of poetry and visual arts during the Romantic Age, William Blake was an outcast during his time and often thought to be crazy due to his radical views on religion and theology. Although he was Christian, his family rejected the generally accepted form of Christianity and going to church. While he was young, Blake claimed to have seen and interacted with the angel Gabriel, the Virgin Mary and the spirit of his deceased brother, Robert Blake.

Because of these divine experiences he had so early in his life, he believed that everyone could communicate with God through good deeds, imagination and prayer and that there was no need to go to church to reaffirm this relationship. He believed that the church was solely a political institution and that it acted as a middle-man that interfered with someone’s connection with God. Blake’s views on religion greatly influenced many of his works, including “ The Tyger” which was a part of his “ Songs of Innocence and Experience Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul. “ The Tyger” is composed of six stanzas and has a rhyme scheme of AABB, which makes it easy to read. The meter is regular and rhythmic and can be associated with the pounding and banging of a blacksmith and his tools, as described in stanza four of the poem. In “ The Tyger,” William Blake questions the nature of God and faith. He asks two important rhetorical questions in the poem; Does God create both good and evil? If so what right does God have to do this? The poem is a cycle of questioning the creator of the tiger, discussing how it could have been created, and back to questioning the creator.

The theme of the poem is the tiger and who created it. Was it the same God that created the gentle and innocent lamb? Or was it a much darker force, perhaps even Satan? For some Christians there is no need for such questioning; they believe God made Lucifer beautiful and perfect just as He made Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, but like Adam, Lucifer's own indiscretion were what changed him to what he has become. Other people, like William Blake, wonder, " If God is such a compassionate, loving, caring God, why would He make such a horrifying and wicked being who causes so much harm in the world? Through vivid imagery, symbolism, and metaphors William Blake explores the question of whether or not God creates evil as well as good in the world. Right from the beginning of the poem, readers are slammed with imagery that conjures a picture of a tiger with fur blazing like fire, lighting up a dark forest. The fact that the tiger can illuminate a forest in the dead of night gives the idea that the tiger is very powerful and not like other animals. Blake then goes on to describe the tiger's burning eyes, filled with an intense fire that should be feared by all of its prey.

The fire in the eyes of the tiger creates a negative image of the tiger, that it is a wicked and fearsome beast. Blake also illustrates a large furnace that was used to craft the tiger's brain. When reading this, you can feel the heat given off by the scorching fire and see the blacksmith reaching into the flames with his tongs and extract the brain that gives the tiger its life. Symbolism plays a huge part in how this poem portrays its message to readers. The tiger, having fire in its eyes and a brain created in a furnace, is the most obvious symbol that represents evil.

Blake is not merely looking at an animal and wondering how it was made, but he is using the animal allegorically. Blake speaks directly to the tiger, an animal that lives in dark, secret places; “ in the forests of the night. ” The fierceness and cunningness of the tiger that lurks in the darkness seeking out its prey is a metaphor that gives the reader a vivid mental picture of who believers call Satan. The lamb symbolizes good in the world and also refers one of Blake’s earlier poems, “ The Lamb,” which was included in the “ Songs of Innocence” collection.

Just as the tiger could represent Satan, the Lamb, which Blake capitalizes in his poem, could be a representation of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The last line of the fifth stanza actually states the central question that is explored throughout the poem; “ Did he who made the lamb make thee? ” This poses the question as to whether God, who has created everything good and beautiful in the world, could also be capable of making such an evil and frightening beast as the tiger. Up until the speaker poses this question, the poem has been pointing towards Satan being behind the creation of the tiger.

It is not until this question is asked that the idea that God is ultimately responsible for the creation of good as well as evil is presented. There is a reference to a hammer, chain, furnace and an anvil that is an extended metaphor comparing the creator of the tiger to a blacksmith. The idea that a blacksmith forged the tiger with his furnace and tools gives the reader the idea of the creator being very deliberate in fashioning every aspect of the creature. It also ties in with the fire references throughout the poem and

solidifies the notion that the speaker thinks the tiger may have been created within fire, possibly the fires of hell.

Blake compares the eyes of the tiger to a distant fire that only someone with wings could reach, someone such as an angel, either good or bad. It also asks who would “ dare seize the fire? ” The speaker is inquiring as to who would be so brave as to dare to put their hands in such a fire that the tiger surely has been created with. All of the questions that Blake poses in this poem are left unanswered only invoke more questions. Blake leaves it up to the reader to come to their own conclusions about good and evil as well as who is behind it.

To me, there is further depth than simply the creation of evil by God. I think the poem touches one of the most troubling issue that racks the brain of all theologians. How can God allow, for example, the death of an innocent child through famine in Niger? The change in the poem from simply a capable creator to a brave creator suggests that Blake saw and appreciated that a brave creator knew the need for misery in the world as well as job. Blake does a superb job stimulating the mind to go beyond what is known and to question the mysterious origins of the world and all that is in it.

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