

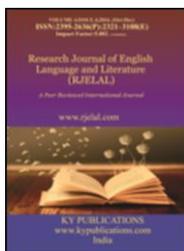


## SYMBOLISM IN BLAKE'S ANIMAL POEMS "LAMB AND TYGER" AN ANALYTICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are attempts to clarify animal symbolism in some of Blake's work in the "Songs of Innocence & Experience" especially The Lamb & "The Tiger." The study provides a general survey of Symbolism by tracing the early origins and precursors of Symbolism. In "The Songs of Innocence" William Blake tries to reflect the child's innocence and ignorance of worldliness through the innocent lamb in The Lamb poem. While "The Songs of Experience" According to Bowra (1969), The Songs of Experience are of a pessimistic view of life that has been conveyed through Blake's symbolic use of language.

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### INTRODUCTION

The word symbol is derived from "symbollein, meaning 'to throw together', from the Greek 'symbolon' and Latin 'symbolum', which meant token, sign" Webster (2003: 1190) 2 'Symbolism' is a technique used in literature when some things are not to be taken literally. As Perrine (1974) 3 states, "a literary symbol is something that means more than what it is. It is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story, but suggests or represents other meanings as well" The symbolism can be an objects, people, situation, events or actions that have a literary meaning in context. Symbolism is often used by writers to enhance their writing and give insight to their readers. Symbolism can give a literary work more richness, beauty and can make the meaning of the literary work deeper. Symbolism can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another to give it different meaning that is much deeper and more significant. Fadaee(2011) mentioned that (Farshidvard, 1373:

4) wrote that "Although the school of symbolism appeared in France in 1880, but one thousand year before appearing this school, people used symbols for expressing their feelings and thoughts about phenomena, life and death. "The founders of school of symbolism were three great poets, Stephan Mallarme, Poul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud, who used symbols for expressing their thoughts" Wellek, (1984) defines symbols as something "that it stands for or represents something that stands for or represent something else". Symbol has two levels of meaning , on the literal level is what denotes the actual meaning or direct meaning; on non-literal level it would represent a more "hidden' meaning. The symbolism, therefore, gives a comprehensive to a piece of literature. Symbolism in literature excite interest in readers as they find a chance to get an insight of the writer's mind on how he views the world and how he thinks of common objects and actions, having broader implications. In symbolism, ideas are presented indirectly through a variety of symbols. The poet awakes, in the readers, a

response or a reaction beyond the phase of normal awareness. According to Radhika Bai.(2011)<sup>6</sup> The Symbolist poets are convinced that the transient objective world is not a true reality but a reflection of the invisible absolute. It is on this account that they defied realism and naturalism, which are aimed at capturing the transient. They do not define or describe emotions or ideas directly through explicit metaphors and similes but by suggesting implicitly. Images and symbols used figures of speech which are potent tools in the hands of a poet to convey his meaning and message to his readers. Some examples of masters English language poets used symbols in their poetry such as, Emily Dickinson, "A light exists in spring" Morgan ( 2015)<sup>6-</sup> ), Robert Frost, "Directive," Lathem.(1975) William Wordsworth My Heart Leaps Up" Harold (2001)

William Blake (November 28, 1757–August 12, 1827) was an English poet, painter, and printmaker. William Blake was one of England's greatest poets. **Pettinger, (2012)** mentioned that Blake combined both a lofty mysticism and an uncompromising awareness of the harsh realities of life. As a young boy he had a most revealing vision of seeing angels in the trees. These mystical visions returned throughout his life, leaving a profound mark on his poetry and outlook. William Blake was also particularly sensitive to cruelty. His heart wept at the site of man's inhumanity to other men and children. In many ways he was also of radical temperament, rebelling against the prevailing orthodoxy of the day. Many of Blake's best poems are found in two collections: Songs of Innocence (1789) to which was added, in 1794, the Songs of Experience (unlike the earlier work, never published on its own). The complete 1794 collection was called Songs of Innocence and Experience Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul. Broadly speaking the collections look at human nature and society in optimistic and pessimistic terms, respectively and Blake thinks that person needs both sides to see the whole truth **Moore, (2004)** said that Blake as a poet and artist presented his deep spiritual meanings in Songs of Innocence and of Experience and it will be a fault not to consider the role of his engravings in presenting deep meanings. The 'experience' is often depicted as dark

forest in which mankind finds itself as lonely and lost. And The Paradise Bird is the symbol of freedom and innocence in Blake's poetry. Both of these symbols are present in his engravings. Symbolism in literature was a mid-19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century European literary phenomenon that employed symbols and evocative suggestion in place of direct statement. Symbolist poets tried to capture sensations and states of mind that lay beyond normal consciousness by disordering their sense, indulging in decadence occultism and opposition to sober bourgeois values. They rejected the pastoral tradition and took their themes and images from city life emphasizing its illicit aspect.

#### **William Blake's Symbolism**

One of the very important and known features of Blake's poetry is the use of symbols. In all of his poems there is the footprint of symbolism besides surface meaning. Though many believe that Blake's poems are written in a simple language, no one can deny the presence of deep meaning. However in order to catch deep meaning people should have knowledge about the use of symbols in Blake's poetry which have been classified into innocence symbols, energy symbols, sexual symbols, corruption symbols, oppression symbols and so on. Blake is one of the known figures in Romantic Period (1785-1830). According to Moinzadeh( 2013 ) Romantic poets had idealistic view about human's spirit which will be spoiled with worldliness. One of very important themes in that time was revolution which means replacing industrial with natural life style. Poets at that time were playing the role of profits who warned people against such happening. The Tiger and The Lamb were both poems by William Blake, there is a comparison of the two poems, Blake, as a child, was an outcast and didn't have many friends. He was educated at home by his parents and found sociability difficult. His family believed very strongly in God but did not agree with the teachings of the church. During his lonely hours, Blake often read the Bible. He had a lot of free time to think about ideas, reflect on life and to strengthen his imagination. Person could find a lot of biblical discourse in his poems. By the time he was an adult his imagination allowed him to create vivid poetry and paintings; which made him a

creative poet. Blake's two very famous books of poems called Songs of Experience and Songs of Innocence. The Lamb is from the Songs of Innocence and The Tiger from the Songs of Innocence. The Lamb is the contrasting poem to The Tiger. The main question that a person can feel Blake is asking in the two poems is, how can the same God make such a vicious creature but also make such an innocent animal? Many of the images used by Blake have their roots in bible. In "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" Blake tried to draw a picture of God's creation of meek and fierce creatures together. Blake believed in Transcendentalism which means God is present in all creatures. Romantic poets were considered as profit poets and their poems were considered as their prophecy.

#### Discussion and Results

Two of William Blake's poems typify this: The Lamb and Tiger. Both poems display Romanticism through the use of symbolism which glorifies the disparity of nature's aspects. In The Lamb, Blake uses pastoral symbolism to depict nature as innocent, meek and mild. The Lamb is representative of nature as a whole and is described as tender, soft, wooly and bright. Also, Blake draws on traditional biblical symbolism to present the Lamb as pure, innocent, and childlike. The words used in this poem combine to create the image of unsullied purity and simple delight. This imagery advances the Romantic view of nature and of God. The Romantics are inclined to believe that the society causes corruption and that nature is a cleaning force. The Lamb is the perfect representation of this view of nature. Blake relates the Lamb to God. The traditional image of Jesus as a lamb assures the Christian values of gentleness and peace. In this case, the naturalistic metaphor is more than figurative; it hints at a link between human and non-human nature. Blake's powerful visual imagery could provide the occasion for an extended discussion of precisely such a link. As his printed and illuminated texts remind us Blake's imagination constantly saw natural objects in terms of their interconnectedness rather than their discrete separateness. Jose (2014) mentioned The text of the Lamb poem is not very difficult to understand. Posing the question, which created

such a gentle and mild creature, Blake is all praise for the sheer beauty and meekness of the lamb. His caterpillars and butterflies have human faces. His human figures often sprout roots and branches. His bird's tails and wings echo flower stalks and vines, while his mythic figures often connect the human form with the botanic or the bestial. In Blake's imaginative universe, to be in "Nature" is to be always fallen, but that does not prevent him from suggesting a powerful connectedness that unites all living things. Blake's "Tyger" also hints at a natural unity that transcends species variation. The lyric clearly implies that the same force (natural or supernatural?) lies behind the tiger and the lamb: "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?"(20). Blake's tiger is presented with a beauty that is fascinating ("burning bright") in spite of, or perhaps because of, its destructiveness.. According to Perkin (2011) the animals in Blake's poetry are mostly traditional metaphors— the lark of joy, the wolf of ferocity, the grave's hungry worm, the gentle lamb. Such images are unrelated to the protest on behalf of animals. But a few passages voice, as it seems, utmost sympathy and compassion for animals, and indignation at their treatment, and some of these passages are still quoted as oracles of animal rights. The same Hughes made use of striking symbols and images everywhere in his poetry. He brought into play a few predatory animals and birds like hawks, pikes, jaguars, ghost crabs thrushes, skylarks to serve his symbolic purpose According to Mukherjee (2016) said the adjectives "meek" (15) and "mild"(15) symbolize love and tenderness in the world of innocence, in the world of experience they refer to subservience of the non-human to human. In Hughes's poem 'Jaguar' is a potent symbol for illustrating the poet's theme. What the 'tiger' is for Blake, is 'Jaguar' for Hughes. It serves him as a mystical and visionary symbol. It is an evocation of a beautiful nature spirit and embodiment of primitive animal energy which is subjected suppression and controlled by the rational attitude of modern man. The caged animal symbolizes the predatory, ferocity, rage, blindness and deafness in human nature. Hughes' makes frequent use of imagery and symbols to create a sense of living power which, even at his most nihilistic, produces a note of urgency and

command. I think that the two poets were succeeded to reflect the face of romanticism using the animal's symbols. While Mukherjee (2016) asserted that " Blake in his poem Tyger presents a symbolic animal which resists as human-centered criteria required for being categorized as a lamb-like nice animal. Its resistance to the human-centered framework is reflected in the fundamental sense of mystery which is associated with the picture of the tiger in the poem. It is debatable whether the tiger represents good or evil, but one thing is certain that it is the sense of impenetrable mystery, its resistance to any categorization or any explainable meaning in human terms that makes the figure of the tiger supremely amazing to Blake. In Blake's poem the radical nature is reflected in his creation of the "fearful symmetry"(4) between ferociousness and beauty. Many of the images used by Blake have their roots in bible. In "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" Blake tried to draw a picture of God's creation of meek and fierce creatures together. Blake believed in Transcendentalism which means God is present in all creatures. Romantic poets were considered as profit poets and their poems were considered as their prophecy. Bentley (2001 ) mentioned animal poems by Hughes underscored how his poems visualize archetypal energy and spontaneous vitality, and how they reflect the contemporary issues of his time and the present issues of our time. In his poem "The Jaguar" Hughes is a watcher, mesmerized with the violent stride of the jaguar though endangered in a zoo. "The poem echoes Blake's "Tyger" as the big cat is elevated—with the aid of the speaker's awed imagination—to universal proportions. Hughes dramatizes the intense energy of the jaguar, showing his mesmerizing effect on the beholders in the zoo I think that both poets agree in presenting the energy two animals.

#### Conclusion

Moinzadeh (2013) mentioned that Blake is one of the known figures in Romantic Period (1785-1830). Romantic poets had idealistic view about human's sprit which will be spoiled with worldliness. One of very important themes in that time was revolution which means replacing industrial with natural life style. Many of the images used by Blake have their roots in bible. In "The Lamb" and "The

Tyger" Blake tried to draw a picture of God's creation of meek and fierce creatures together. Blake believed in Transcendentalism which means God is present in all creatures. Romantic poets were considered as profit poets and their poems were considered as their prophecy. The symbolism in the poem "The Tiger" it presents another face of Romanticism, the wild, uninhibited view of nature and of God. Blake describes the tiger as a fearful, burning, and deadly. In Back in (1810) Henry Crabb Robinson wrote about "The Tyger," it symbolizes the dreadful forces in the world just as "The Lamb" symbolized gentleness, vulnerability and innocence in the circle of Innocence. (trans. from German by G.E. Bentley, Jr., 1975, p. 163). "William Blake takes the opposite position he did in "The Lamb." In "The Tyger," Blake shows the God has created a sort of evil creature in the tiger. Blake compares God to a blacksmith when he made the tiger. He does this by using lines like "What the hammer," "What the chain," "In what furnace was thy brain," "What the anvil"(Blake 539). Hilton (1980) has highlighted that just as the lamb and the tiger have one common creator. Blake really put the rhetorical question in his poem 'The Tyger' with the clear presupposition of the answer to be in the positive. 'The Lamb' and 'The Tyger' are complimentary and explaining the two contrary states of human soul, and analyzing the lines and pictures together in the context of the Bible, no better solution can be rendered for understanding these two poems, and through that reach to the core of the mystery of God's creation.

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