



# A Comparative Study of Emotions and Musicality in William Blake's *The Lamb* and *The Tyger*

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**Abstract:** The first generation of romantic poets initiated the romantic movement. The movement put emphasis on exploring emotions nature and imagination which led to breaking the neo-classical principles of being held back from imagining. The poets of the romantic era believed that words were the best means of expressing emotions which shows in the poetry of the era remarkably well. William Blake's *The Lamb* was included in the collection *Songs of Innocence* in 1789. The poem indulges to bring out the meekness and mildness of the Lamb which was created by God. William Blake's *The Tyger* was included in the collection *Songs of Experience* in 1794. The poem *The Tyger* travels through the nature of God and the questioning of God being able to create an organism like Lamb but also the Tyger. Blake can be admired for being able to question Christianity in a time when it was at its peak. The paper aims to compare and contrast the depiction of emotions and musicality in William Blake's *The Lamb* and *The Tyger*.

**Key Words:** Lamb, Tyger, nature, emotions, musicality and Christianity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

William Blake was a Romantic poet, who went mostly unnoticed during his lifetime. His works has emerged to become a key aspect in the development of Romantic poetry and visual art. Throughout his life he painted, and he illustrated many of his poems with etchings and engravings. Blake's ideas about visual art, have been difficult to understand partly because of the critical language he uses and partly because of the rhetoric he chose to express them in. As Blake grew older his writings became increasingly forthright about the arts in general and the value of his own work. His wife Catherine was illiterate when they married but after Blake had taught her to read and write she helped with his etching and book binding and developed a talent for drawing. A few people in his lifetime understood his value, but for many he remained little known, and his composite works of relief etching and poetry were read by very few and understood by even fewer. He published several collections of poems including the *Songs of Innocence* and the *Song of Experience*, both illustrated by his etchings and coloured individually by hand. These songs were admired by a group of artists. Among these were Coleridge, and Wordsworth who showed high regard for his songs *The Lamb* and *Fuseli*.

*The Lamb* was published in 1789 in the *Songs of Innocence*. The *Songs of Innocence* as the name suggests, present a world in which a child delights in life, protected from all danger by a parent figure which can be their mother father or even sometimes God or an angel. *The Tyger* was published in 1794 in the *Songs of Experience*. In the *Songs of Experience*, fear has replaced security. Relationships between parents and children or between lovers tend to be unhappy, spoilt by a lack of trust and understanding. All hope of protective love has disappeared, and authority figures condemn the sexual expression of love which has been seen in some of the *Songs of Innocence* as the natural expression of 'joy' of innocence. The two collections are a record of Blake's thinking and feeling as he was forced to give up the happy, joyful view of life presented in the *Songs of Innocence* for the more painful vision of the *Songs of Experience*. They



exist together as a statement of what life might or should be, what in fact it is, like. When Blake published these two collections in one volume, the title was followed by the words *showing the two contrary states of the human soul*.

According to Martin Myrone, one of the show directors, "Blake has come to represent the idea of inner vision, where the artist expresses this vision not in the service of a patron, and for this reason it remains important to think about him." Blake is the epitome of creative freedom. The fact that Blake was a talented musician is less well-known. He pursued the three careers of "poet, painter, and musician as the inspiration comes," as he phrased it, throughout his life. According to Myrone, he was among the first "trans-media" artists. It's interesting to note that Blake's home, which has since been destroyed and rebuilt with a "very un-Blakean tower block," was located on Broad (now Broadwick) Street, which is known for being the home of notable harpists and pianists in London, such as Frederick Beck and Christopher Ganer (Wakeling 2023).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW :

In 2014, Eliza Borkowska's essay entitled '*Did he who made The Lamb make... The tyger?*', this discusses how none of the "duets" Blake included in his *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* contains more questions than the pair of lyrics that will be the focus of this essay, "*The Lamb*" and "*The Tyger*" and none of these inquiries elicits more thought-provoking conjecture than the seasoned orator's "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?". Even though it is only one of the Tyger's unsolved mysteries, it grabs the reader's attention and piques their curiosity the most. This is the culmination of the poem's (or the poems') questioning, even though there are questions before and after it. This is suggested by critical intuition or just being aware of sense and structure.

Stated differently, he draws attention to the self-referential nature of his own poem and essentially provides a solution, or at least a partial response, to the poem's central issue. Was it he who created "The Lamb" and "Tyger Tyger flaming bright" as well? Naturally, he did, as the two pieces were created by the same person, William Blake, who included them in his artistic program with the intention of "rouzing the faculties to act" and was fully aware of the provocative nature of his work. The self-referential aspect of "The Tyger" is undoubtedly Blake's attempt to fan the flames of experience even further and make them burn hotter. Nevertheless, this self-referential turn is not a stand-alone performance but rather a component of the entire program, and it cannot be delivered successfully on an unprepared stage, in front of an unprepared audience (Borkowska 2014).

In 2019, Serenah Minasian wrote her Thesis entitled *A Psychoanalytic Reading of William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience* which cited Coleridge, Hunt, Burdett and many other papers that have covered the writing of Blake. This work focusses on infancy, adulthood, religion, sexuality, dreams, and imagination in order to fully explore Blake from a psychoanalytic perspective. She analysed Blake's concentration on childhood vs adulthood makes his *Songs of Innocence* and *Song of Experience* amenable to a psychological analysis. By applying psychoanalytic theory to the examination of Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, the readers might obtain fresh perspectives on the works. All of childhood turns out to be full of encounters that shape people's minds. Blake's early years ultimately influenced the man whom most literary critics either adored or despised. He might not have had the same influence on the canon of literature if he had grown up in a different environment or society. Blake's early years shaped who he is and emphasize the value of family and life before adulthood.

Another important component of life is mindset. Prior to becoming adults, people have a simple perspective when they are growing up. Blake took great care to fully convey the idea of innocence in the human mind. He shares this naive perspective with his audience in his poetry "Infant Joy." It has been observed and demonstrated that if a child's innocence is violated, it will mentally affect them for the rest of their life. Psychoanalysis has also demonstrated the value of imagination and the way in which an individual's imagination may actually reflect their intended and desired ideal of what life ought to be like. Dreams also contributed to illustrating the significance of psychoanalysis as well as the distinction between and existence of consciousness and unconsciousness. Seeing religion has, at last, demonstrated the influence that beliefs have on a person and the real impact that religion had on Blake's poetry. For many people, adulthood can be an extremely hard and undeveloped stage of life at times. Humans must labour, experience heartache, deal with loss, overcome daily obstacles, and grow independent. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, a reader can now appreciate the significance of losing one's imagination, dreams, religion, sexuality, and language (Minasian 2019).



### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

This research paper discusses the comparison of musicality and emotions in two poems by William Blake, *The Lamb* and *The Tyger*. Noticing that there is more research needed on how the same poet could think so differently in such a short span of time in two very famous poems, the method of research has solely been qualitative. Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. This type of research is usually subjective, as in this case, since interpretation of poetry is highly dependent on who is interpreting it. This research does not focus on numbers rather on the text, behaviour, reasoning etc. This paper has tried to achieve a gap in finding out how and why William Blake had this change from an innocent Lamb to a raging Tiger. This could only be found out by reading other research papers and finding that gap in which this paper fits. Numbers and data as such would do no benefit in this type of study. There are possibly hardly any ways in which emotions and musicality can be measured by means of numbers which is why the method of research was best suited to be qualitative. The content and inferential analysis has been used to deepen this qualitative research. The content analysis aims to pick and choose the content that is being covered in the research. In this paper content analysis has been used to refer to the original texts, which are both the poems. The content analysis helped in focusing on specific areas and the research gap was found. The inferential analysis in qualitative research involves making inferences or drawing conclusions from the data beyond just describing the observed phenomena.

#### *The Lamb*

William Blake's *The Lamb* embraces innocence, recognizes the divine in the ordinary, and appreciates the delicate threads that connect us to something greater. Blake's poetic style allows the readers to glimpse eternity through the eyes of a child, reminding us that wonder and spirituality reside in the simplest moments of existence. Through this poem, Blake skillfully portrays the lamb's innocence. The poem's title indicates that the lamb, who represents the unselfish innocence and kindness, is the central character. It has come to symbolize the innate virtues of innocence, trust, and vulnerability. Blake offers the reader the opportunity to go further into the meaning by using the lamb as a metaphor. The lamb transforms from a physical representation into a vehicle for spiritual truths.

*The Lamb* is written in trochee meter, which is a meter that in literature is considered to be not gentle, though the poem has themes of mildness, innocence and meekness. There is a sense of drama in the poem due to the usage of the trochee meter. The poem is a Lyric, which are kinds of poems that usually have strong emotional content. The form of the poem flows with rhyming couplets in two stanzas and is set in an ideal pastoral green, which is an open land or meadow, with biblical traits. The poem talks about the question of who made the Lamb. Who provided its wool or gave the Lamb this soft voice. The first stanza states all questions related to the creation of the animal. The second stanza begins with repetition which mimics a way in old times when in churches certain prayers were repeated for children to memorize. This is a commentary on how state of innocence can be tampered with. The poetic voice mimics the innocence of the lamb, as a child. The rhetorical questions from the previous stanza are answered with a firm answer of it was Jesus who made the Lamb. Blake talks about how Jesus was called The Lamb. The Holy trinity, in terms of the child narrator, the Lamb and Jesus is also mentioned. This poem reaffirms Christian belief.

Blake opens the poem with a young person speaking to the lamb. The reader is brought to a state of openness and surprise by the child's point of view. Blake has attempted to illustrate the purity of perception, how a child views the world without doubt and has an unfiltered, unbiased connection to it, through the child speaking. Dina Lulić affirms that it is natural to assume that the youngster possesses innocence because he is depicted in his most natural state (19).

“Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!” (*The Lamb*)

The child asks, "Little Lamb, who made thee?" which prompts the readers to reflect on the beginnings of creation. It reflects the universal human search for the origin of existence. The direct query highlights the tremendous mystique of creation. The humble and innocent lamb serves as a vehicle for reflecting on the works of heavenly artistry. Serenah Minasian mentioned that Blake might just be expressing his religious convictions or pushing the reader to consider ideas outside of their own and attempt to interpret the pictures in a different way (12).



Blake celebrates the gentle and meek quality of the lamb in order to highlight the humility and meekness of Christ. This is a reflection of Christ's humility, which is a major idea in Christian doctrine. Jesus Christ is frequently referred to as the "Lamb of God" because of his selflessness and unselfish compassion. This characteristic is similar to lamb's innocence. By associating Christ with the lamb, he implies that rather than being perceived as remote, the divine presence is visible in our daily life. Serenah Minasian claims that Blake portrays purity using "Godly" allusions and symbols that are commonly associated with religion and God (12).

The Lamb's last words emphasize the connection that exists between the Lamb and the Creator. Blake says in his writing:  
"He is called by thy name, for he calls himself a lamb." (*The Lamb*)

The circularity of this line reinforces the idea that all creation is part of a harmonious whole. The lamb's name echoes the divine name, emphasizing their shared essence. Blake remarkably uses the lamb as a medium to express God's will and the beauty of creation, as he calls "little lamb" to establish an intimate connection with the divine. The repetition use of this address emphasizes the childlike wonder and reverence. This demonstrates God's creation and intimacy. Dina Lulić mentions that it is inevitable to assume that they are related to God when he is placed next to the lamb, the animal that frightens God (19).

### *The Tyger*

*The Tyger* is among the most anthologized works in the English literary. It is written in the trochaic tetrameter, and in some places using catalectic foot, was written as a stance against organised religion and the teachings of the church. The Tiger (originally spelled as 'Tyger') was not a very common animal in Europe at the time in which the poem was written. The poem shows themes of darkness and fear. The poem reflects respect for craftsmen and refers to many Greek Mythologies. The six stanzas question the capability of God and how could the same one, make the Lamb but also the Tyger, or how could the same God make Christ but also Satan. The physicality of the tiger is talked about in detail. According to the poem, innocence is a voice of faith, confidence and peace. Blake was one of the only poets who had the courage to question Christianity and its beliefs in a time when there was nothing higher than religion in Europe. The poet was disappointed to see the state of the world at the time and questioned all motives behind all God's creations and decisions.

Blake contemplates the phrase "fearful symmetry," which suggests that both beauty and beauty are intricate designs that inspire wonder and dread. As he says that the creator should be responsible for shaping such a creature, he asks whether it was forged by a divine force or a mortal craftsman. Hazard Adams affirms that despite the tiger's inherent viciousness, it is shown in an ambiguous way that simultaneously seems to convey vitality and clarity (21). The poet delves deeper into the tiger's creation. He uses imagery of fire, hammer, and anvil to evoke both artistic creation and industrial labor. The tiger emerges from this intense process, which embodies raw power and primal energy. The poet puts forward the central question—

"Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (*The Tyger*)

This makes a comparison between the tiger and the innocent lamb from Blake's "*The Lamb*". The lamb symbolizes purity, gentleness, and divine creation. By juxtaposing the two animals, Blake highlights the paradox of existence on how the same creator fashion can both innocence and ferocity. He has used vivid sensory details, in which he continues to describe the tiger's eyes. The word "dare" is used repetitively, which emphasizes the requirement to create such a creature. As the tiger's heart described as "burning bright," which suggests both vitality and danger. John E Grant as mentioned that it should be noted that "dare" is most likely the verb's present subjunctive tense, which tends to bring these supposedly past events into the questioner's current imagination as they are thought about (25).

In the final stanza, Blake returns to the questions he has raised in the beginning of the poem. by emphasizing the mystery of creation. He wonders whether the same creator who made the stars and the lamb also made the tiger. As the poem concludes with the haunting refrain:

"Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?" (*The Tyger*)



Harold Pagliaro promotes the poem's visual representation as it uses a variety of techniques to expand on its linguistic connotations (27). In this sense, some of the image's components are significant. Firstly, the Tyger is a cat with human traits rather than being ferocious or fundamentally like a cat. Secondly, in certain versions, particularly in the places where they blend, his stripes and the stripes of the tree, the tree of Death, are nearly identical. Ultimately, the tree, possibly emerging from the Tyger or connected to it in some other way takes center stage in the image; although, with less force than it could have (Pagliaro 27). Martin Price affirms that *The Tyger* portrays the fears of the startled skeptic, yet it confidently advances to an affirmation of faith (39).

*The Tyger* makes the reader contemplate the dualities within themselves and the world. Like the light and dark, innocence and experience. Stewart Crehan talks about the wild passions in dark woods inevitably carry social as well as psychological implications (33). The dark recesses of the soul can often be traced to their social locations. Blake's exploration of creation, artistry, and divine power resonates across centuries, leaving lingering questions about existence and the enigmatic forces that shape our reality. The meaning of *The Tyger* has remained a source of endless speculation; commentaries upon it have been general, fragmentary, or specialized (Adams 20).

#### 4. CONCLUSION :

William Blake is exceptional at capturing the complexity of human emotions and psychological states. Even if experience and innocence are incompatible, there are a wide range of feelings and conditions in between. The poet emphasizes that the innocence cannot exist without experience, just as virtue and evil cannot exist without one another, and vice-versa. Although, the youngsters possess an inherent innocence, it is indisputable that their experiences will mold, sway, and control them.

*The Lamb* evokes a sense of compassion, purity, and divine communion. The poem addresses themes of creation and purity while evoking sentiments of coziness and warmth through its straightforward yet profound language. It has a lullaby-like effect because of the rhythmic flow and recurring structure, which give it a melody that deepens its emotional impact. The poem's central theme of connection between the Creator and His creation is emphasised by Blake's depiction of the lamb as both a natural creature and a representation of heavenly love, which gives readers a sense of serenity and spiritual fulfilment. Blake depicts religion in his *Songs of Experience*, particularly in the poem *The Tyger*. In this poetry, the speaker questions God all the time. The incessant questioning that occurs in an individual's mind is indicative of both the potential shift in perspective that may accompany adulthood and the way that adults frequently see religion in terms of either having a childlike mindset or expecting all inquiries to have answers.

Blake is a renowned for his ability to skillfully combine deep emotion and melody into his poetry, which enables it to speak to readers on both an intellectual and emotional level. Whether his subjects deal with experience, the holy or innocence, his use of rhythmic patterns, repetition, and poetic language all combine to create a musical quality that heightens the emotional effect of his topics. Blake's poetry speaks to the heart and the intellect because of his ability to combine straightforward, melodic verse with deep spiritual insights. His compositions are still praised today for their timeless quality, rich emotional content, and tasteful use of sound and meaning.

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