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William Blake used symbolism in his Poem “The Lamb and The Tyger” to represent the visions of optimism and pessimism

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Abstract:

The objective of this study is an attempt to clarify how William Blake used symbolism in his poems “*The Lamb and The Tyger*” to represent the dual visions of optimism and pessimism from Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience. The study used descriptive and analytical methods to reflect this view. The study provides a general survey of symbolism by tracing the early origins and precursors of symbolism and the optimistic and pessimistic views. In “The Songs of Innocence,” William Blake tries to

reflect the optimistic view through the innocent lamb in the poem “*The Lamb*.” While “The Songs of Experience” has a pessimistic view of life, that has been conveyed by using symbolic language in *The Tyger*. The study concluded that optimistic and pessimistic views are clear in the poems Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience, especially in the poems “*The Lamb*” and “*The Tyger*.”

Key words: Optimistic, pessimistic, symbolism “The Tyger” “The Lamb”

المستخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح كيفية استخدام ويليام بليك للرمزية في قصيدتيه “الحمل” و “النمر” لتمثيل الرؤيتين المزدوجتين للتفاؤل والتشاؤم في ديوانيّ “أغاني البراءة” و “أغاني التجربة”. استخدمت الدراسة منهجاً وصفي وتحليلي لعكس هذه الرؤية. تقدم الدراسة مسحاً عاماً للرمزية من خلال تتبع الأصول المبكرة وسلائف



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الرمزية والآراء المتفائلة والمتشائمة. في "أغاني البراءة"، يحاول ويليام بليك عكس الرؤية المتفائلة من خلال الحمل البريء في قصيدة "الحمل". بينما تحمل "أغاني التجربة" رؤية تشاؤمية للحياة، وقد تم نقلها باستخدام اللغة الرمزية في "النمر". وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن وجهات النظر المتفائلة والمتشائمة واضحة في قصيدتي أغاني البراءة وأغاني التجربة. وخاصة في قصيدتي "الحمل والنمر".

كلمات مفتاحية: متفائلة ، متشائمة ، رمزية ، الحمل والنمر

Introduction :

According to Online Dictionary (2014), the word 'symbolism' derives from the Greek 'symbolon,' meaning 'token' or 'watchword.' It is an amalgam of "sym"—"together"—and "bole," "a throwing, a casting, the stroke of a missile, bolt, and beam." The term "symbolism" was first used in 1645-55, as the World English Dictionary claims. In 1654, the application of symbolizing things with symbols was started. In 1892 a literary movement in France aimed at representing concepts and emotions by indirect proposal rather than direct expression; refusing realism and naturalism, it attached symbolic meaning to certain objects, words, etc. France's symbolism was stamped by poet

Paul Verlaine in 1885. Religious symbols have been used since the early days of the religion.

The word "symbol" is derived from "symballein," meaning "to throw together," from the Greek "symbolon" and Latin "symbolum," which meant "token" or "sign." Webster (2003: 1190) 'Symbolism is a style used in literature when some things are not to be taken literally. As Perrine (1974) states, "A literary symbol is something that means more than what it is. It is an object, an individual, a condition, 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 anything: an object, situation, event, or action that has a



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literary meaning in context. Symbolism is often used by Romantic poets, especially William Blake. They boost their messages and give the perception to their readers. Symbolism can add quality and be The symbolism can be anything: an object, situation, event, or action that holds a literary meaning within its context. Symbolism is often used by Romantic poets, especially William Blake. They boost their messages and give the perception to their readers. Symbolism can add quality and beauty, as shown in their literary works, and can provide a hidden meaning to their work. Fadaee (2011) mentioned that Farshidvard (1373: 4) wrote that “Although the school of symbolism appeared in France in 1880, one thousand years before this school, people used symbols for telling their feelings and thoughts about any phenomena, life, optimism and pessimism, and death.” What distinguished William Blake is using symbols to reflect optimistic and pessimistic visions.

Wellek and Warren (1984) defined symbols as something that "stands for something else." A symbol has two levels of meaning: one is superficial, meaning that it refers to direct meaning; the other is latent, meaning that it represents a "hidden" meaning. Symbolism attracts readers' attention as a means of understanding the writer's worldview and way of thinking about common matters, to broaden their horizons. Symbolism: things are presented indirectly through a variety of symbols. The poet evokes in readers a response that goes beyond normal perception. They do not define or describe ideas directly through explicit metaphors and similes, but rather through their implicit suggestions. Images and symbols used as rhetorical figures are effective means for the poet to communicate his meaning and message to his readers. Examples of great poets in the English language who used symbols in their poetry include Emily Dickinson (“There is light in spring,” Morgan, 2015), Robert Frost (“The Orientation”), Lathem (1975), and William



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Wordsworth ("My heart leaps up," Harold, 2001). Blake was a pioneer in using symbols to reflect his comparative perspective. Taken together, *The Lamb and The Tyger* exemplify Blake's vision of "the two contrary states, pessimism and optimism, of the human soul." The lamb represents innocence, beauty, and optimism, while the tiger symbolizes power, danger, and pessimism. Their symbolic contrast reflects Blake's conviction that both innocence and experience are essential to reflect the optimistic and pessimistic views.

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 them 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. Also, Cambridge

Dictionary defines optimism as the quality of being full of hope and emphasizing the good parts of a situation or a belief that something good will happen while pessimism is the tendency of viewing, and prospecting, the gloomy and blacker aspects of a situation or the evil and negative results, events, troubles, etc. It is also believed that the situation of the world is horrible, terrifying, and horrendous, and everything tends to be wicked. In addition, it can be defined as the principle that the evilness and hurt in life are not recompensed by righteousness and gladness

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Therefore, optimism, broadly defined, is one's tendency to expect positive outcomes, whereas pessimism is one's tendency to expect negative outcomes. A large body of research points to positive relationships between optimism and both psychological and physical health. William According Pettinger ,(2006) Blake was a romantic and symbolist poet born in London on November 28, 1757, to James, a hosier, and



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Catherine Blake. Two of his six siblings died in infancy. From early childhood, Blake spoke of having visions at four he saw God "put his head to the window"; around age nine, while walking through the countryside, he saw a tree filled with angels. Although his parents tried to discourage him from "lying," they did not observe that he was different from his peers and did not force him to attend a conventional school. Instead, he learned to read and write at home. At age ten, Blake expressed a wish to become a painter, so his parents sent him to drawing school. Two years later, Blake began writing poetry. When he turned fourteen, he apprenticed with an engraver because art school proved too costly. One of Blake's assignments as an apprentice was to sketch the tombs at Westminster Abbey, exposing him to a variety of Gothic styles from which he would draw inspiration throughout his career. After his seven-year term ended, he studied briefly at the Royal Academy. 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) asserts 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 a dark forest in which mankind finds itself 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-19th- to early 20th-century European literary phenomenon that employed symbols and evocative suggestions in place of direct



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statements. Symbolist poets attempted to catch feelings and situations of the mind that were set beyond normal consciousness by disturbing their senses. One of the most striking and prominent features of Blake's poetry is the use of symbols. In all of his poems, there is a footprint of symbolism besides surface meaning. Though many believe that Blake's poems are written in simple language, no one can deny the presence of deep meaning. People should have the knowledge to catch the deep meaning of 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 the Romantic Period (1785-1830). According to Moinzadeh (2013), Romantic poets had an idealistic view of the human spirit, which will be spoiled with worldliness. One of the very important themes at that time was a revolution, which means replacing industrial

with a natural lifestyle. Poets at that time were playing the role of prophets who warned people against such happenings. Blake's two very famous books of poems are called Songs of Experience and Songs of Innocence. *The Lamb* is from the Songs of Innocence, and *The Tyger* is from the Songs of Experience. *The Lamb* is a contrasting poem to The Tiger. The main objective is that William Blake had the ability through symbolism to show the two perspectives of optimism & pessimism in his poems The Tyger and The Lamb. This study focuses on Blake's two most famous animal poems, "*The Lamb*" and "*The Tyger*," as contrasting symbolic expressions of innocence and experience. By examining these poems, the paper demonstrates how Blake used symbolism to reflect the dual nature of the human soul: one-part gentle, innocent, and hopeful that leads to optimism, and the other fierce, mysterious, and fearful, which leads to pessimism.



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Methodology

A literature review, of this paper primarily relies on existing data for analysis and to draw vital conclusions. The sources of data are journals, articles, and organizational and private web pages. This research adopts a descriptive and analytical approach that examines Blake's symbolism. The method is

appropriate because Blake's works have been widely analyzed, and the study's objective is to synthesize existing interpretations to clarify how symbolism in *The Lamb* and *The Tyger* reflects optimism and pessimism.

Discussion and Results:

The Lamb

William Blake

1757 –1827

Little lamb, who made thee?

Dost thou know who made thee,

Gave thee life, and bid thee feed

By the stream and o'er the mead;

Gave thee clothing of delight,

Softest clothing, woolly, bright;

Gave thee such a tender voice,

Making all the vales rejoice?

Little lamb, who made thee?

Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;

Little lamb, I'll tell thee:



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*He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!*

The Tyger

William Blake

1757 –1827

*Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare sieze the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?*



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What the hammer? what the chain?

In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? what dread grasp

Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,

And water'd heaven with their tears,

Did he smile his work to see?

Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright

In the forests of the night,

What immortal hand or eye

Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Two of William Blake's poems, "The Lamb" and "The Tyger," employ symbolism to emphasize various aspects of people's nature. They are optimism and pessimism. In "The Lamb," Blake utilizes pastoral symbolism to depict nature as innocent, meek, and gentle. The words used in this poem combine to create an image of unsullied purity and simple delight, reflecting an optimistic view. Ibrahim and Omer (2017) mentioned that Jose (2014) said the poem "The Lamb" is not very difficult to understand. Posing the question

of what created such a gentle and mild creature, Blake is all praise for the sheer beauty and meekness of the lamb. In Blake's imaginative universe, being in "Nature" incorporates the optimistic perspective. According to Mukherjee (2016), the adjectives "meek" and "mild" symbolize love and tenderness in the world of innocence, which also represents an optimistic view. Romantic poets frequently expressed their emotions and ideas through symbolism and natural imagery. "The Tyger" also hints at a natural unity that



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transcends species variation. The lyric implies that the same force (natural or supernatural?) lies behind *The Tyger* and *The Lamb*: "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" Optimism, according to Carver et al. (2010), is an individual difference variable; optimism measures how much people have positive, generalized expectations for the future. Improved subjective well-being during challenging circumstances has been prospectively linked to higher levels of optimism. These discoveries have associated optimism with lower levels of avoidance, or disengagement coping, and higher levels of engagement coping. Pessimism is the tendency to notice, anticipate, or accept the unpleasant and awful outcomes, events, problems, etc., or the darker parts of a situation. Additionally, it maintains that evil permeates everything and that the contemporary world is the worst. It is explained that happiness and goodness are unable to compensate for suffering and evil in life. The belief is that everything has a natural tendency toward

evil, that things are typically terrible, that the world is the worst of all possible worlds, and that evil outweighs welfare. This tendency involves seeing, anticipating, or confirming only unfavorable events, situations, and problems.

Pessimism can be described as the expectation of challenges, adverse outcomes, or unfavorable results. It can also include the most negative elements of life. William Blake's poetry embodies a sense of pessimism and reflects the rationale behind his use of symbols to convey his somber viewpoint. Blake's *The Tyger* exhibits an intriguing beauty ("burning bright") in spite of, or maybe due to, its capacity for destruction. . Animals in Blake's poetry are mostly traditional metaphors through which William Blake showed a pessimistic perspective. "*The Lamb*" and "*The Tyger*" are two opposing poems. The former symbolizes humanity and optimism, while the latter symbolizes pessimism. The Lamb signifies hopefulness, while *The Tyger*



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conveys negativity and individuality. The lamb, unlike The Tyger, represents innocence, beauty, and hope, while The Tyger embodies arrogance, negativity, and a wish to oppose others. The 'Tyger' symbolizes enigma and insight for Blake. It is a reflection of the natural animal energy and an exquisite soul that has been suppressed and controlled by the logical thinking of modern man. The caged animal symbolizes predatory nature, ferocity, rage, blindness, and deafness in human nature. Hughes used 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 Hughes and Blake succeeded in reflecting the face of romanticism by using animal symbols. Mukherjee (2016) mentioned that Blake, in his poem The Tyger, presents a symbolic animal that resists the 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 that is

associated with the picture of the tiger in the poem. It is debatable whether "The Tyger" represents good or evil. One certain thing is the sense of impenetrable mystery, its resistance to any categorization, that makes the figure of the tiger supremely amazing to Blake. A pessimistic viewpoint is represented by the combination of panic and awe, which arises when one realizes that the reaction to the Tyger could have been reduced to simple terror. The universe of creation is characterized as a far-off, flaming blaze, and the verbs "twist," "dare," "burnt," and "seize" highlight the risk and audacity of the creative process. And the "hammer," "anvil," and "furnace" are images of an industrial revolution that Blake would have seen approaching in his lifetime. Could it be a tangible shell of sorts? We are reminded of the power of this duality in the phrase "fearful symmetry." The state of The Tyger reflects the pessimistic vision. Taken together, The Lamb and The Tyger exemplify Blake's vision of "the two contrary states of the human soul." The



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Lamb represents innocence, beauty, and hope, while The Tyger symbolizes power, danger, and existential mystery. Their symbolic contrast reflects Blake's

Conclusion:

According to the study's findings, William Blake represents optimism and pessimism as opposing perspectives on human existence in his poems "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" through symbolism. The Lamb poem symbolizes innocence, tenderness, and purity, representing an optimistic outlook rooted in harmony and divine love. The Tyger, by contrast, embodies destructive power, mystery, and terror, reflecting a pessimistic perspective on existence. Blake's dual vision resonates with Romantic ideals, particularly the tension between nature and industrialization, spirituality and materialism, and innocence and corruption. By uniting these two perspectives, Blake demonstrates that both optimism and pessimism are necessary for a complete understanding of the human soul. The study concluded that most romantic poets have an

conviction that both innocence and experience are essential to understanding the human condition.

idealistic vision of the human spirit, which is optimism; unfortunately, they believed that the soul was spoiled by the corrupted world, which is characterized by pessimism. William Blake was one of these poets who reflected optimism through symbols in his poem "The Lamb" from Songs of Innocence, which symbolized gentleness, sensitivity, and innocence. On the other hand, the poem "The Tyger," from The Songs of Experience, symbolizes the wild, horrible, and dark side of people's lives, which reflects pessimism. 'The Lamb' and 'The Tyger' are complementary poems in that William Blake explained the two states of the human soul, which reflect optimistic and pessimistic perspectives through symbols. As evidenced by his two poems, Blake shows that optimism and pessimism are both rooted in the human soul and are reflected in nature.



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