

# **An Analysis of Intertextuality in William Blake's Companion Poems: The Lamb and The Tyger**

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## **Abstract:**

This study undertakes a thorough analysis of the aspects of intertextuality and their undertones in William Blake's companion poems: The Lamb (1789) from the Songs of Innocence and The Tyger (1794) from the Songs of Experience. These poems are often read side by side since they are described as counterparts to one another reflecting Blake's dualistic ideology on the conflicting states of the human soul (good vs. evil). The researchers adopted Charles Bazerman's (2004) theory in analyzing intertextuality within texts. The analysis of the poems revealed that there are 22 instances of religious and literary intertextual allusions within both poems and their type of textual integration was mainly description. In addition, a great percentage of those allusions consist of religious undertones which help reflect the dualistic approach that Blake adopted in his volumes of poetry.

**Keywords:** Dualistic, Intertextuality, Poetry, Religious.

## 1. Introduction

Language in literature whether poetry or prose, has always been distinguished from that of day-to-day speech. Usually in the latter, interlocutors have all the time that they need at their disposal to converse and exchange information. In addition, they can clarify certain aspects as well as mend misunderstandings. Yet, this is not the case in literature. Most of the time, the authors of renowned works no longer exist to interpret a certain passage or lay out an intended context. As a result, they refer to a variety of literary tools which enable them to provide the readers with constructive contexts that enable them to grasp the gist of the written text in a shorter time span. This is done as an alternative solution to explaining every bit of detail and building the context from scratch. In such cases, writers employ different forms of intertextuality so as to help the reader to predict certain events within literary works or refer to major underlying themes or concepts from neighboring texts.

Rhetorical devices like metaphors, similes, puns, allusions have a great influence in the text, and a big impact on both the listener and the reader. This paper focuses mainly on biblical allusions in William Blake's poetry. Allusions are one major form of intertextuality as they have enormous effects on the readers. It is impossible to study literature in isolation from an epoch's entire culture; it is even more fatal to encapsulate a literary phenomenon in the single epoch of its creation. Alawi (2010: 2440) states the following:

Intertextuality becomes one of the attractions of translation studies, literary criticism and linguistics since it responds to the contemporary understanding and treatment of texts. Intertextuality, thus, deems a text as a tissue of relations between signs that are influenced by space and time. He also says that allusions are made to significant events, place or people who have very well-known qualities that the speaker or writer wishes to highlight in his/her new text. Allusions are borrowed from history, from myth or from any previous text for the purpose of recalling the qualities of the alluded to text in the present moment of the speaker or writer.

Given this, analyzing allusions is of paramount importance when it comes to deciphering underlying bodies of knowledge that are interwoven into literary texts. An allusion is a writer's play on words; it is his/her style of twisting and incorporating direct and indirect references to events, people, or places to help the reader uncover the essence of the ideology that he/she wished to bring forth. Some allusions are straightforward and easily understood since authors rely on what is referred to as "shared" or common knowledge as the basis of their text enhancement strategy. Nevertheless, other writers prefer a more complicated play on words to convey ironic comments or reveal unspoken truths. For this very reason, allusions undergo thorough analysis in the fields of literary criticism and translation.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The term "intertextuality" was first coined by the Bulgarian-French philosopher, literary critic, linguist, and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva (1966) in her essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (Holy, 2008). Zengin (2016) states that although Kristeva coined the actual term to denote a literary theory, "the phenomenon itself dates back in practice, to antiquity when the first recorded human history and the discourses about texts began to exist" (p. 300). Nevertheless, Kristeva's essay was a reaction to Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics which deals with "the meaning of a sign as a whole of two components—the signifier (sound pattern) and the signified (the concept of what it signifies), within the structure of a text" (Halabi, 2016, p. 13; Holy, 2008, p. 18). Haberer (2007) and Zengin (2016) believe that Kristeva was inspired by the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian discourse theorist best known for the Dialogic Concept centering on the multiplicity of voices and perspectives present in signs and texts. In his theory, Bakhtin argued that communities function amidst various social realities which are often viewed as convergent and or divergent at the text level (Pintea, 2013). In turn, the converging and diverging nature of texts within different social realms give rise to contrasting meanings.

Furthermore, Bakhtin expands his ideas regarding dialogism in a book entitled *The Dialogical Imagination*. In his writing, Bakhtin explains the

generation of meanings through a primary concept which he referred to as “heteroglossia” or the dominance of context over text (Nesari, 2015). Bakhtin’s analysis was centered on the notion that every word used in a literary text is a combination of statements, styles, and an assemblage of perspectives. Hence, every text can be said to be a consumption and metamorphosis of another (Holy, 2008). In support of this claim, Nesari (2015) asserts that “Bakhtin proposes different distinct meanings for dialogism; according to him, any utterance, whether spoken or written, that people use in communication with each other is internally dialogic” (p. 643).

According to Kristeva (1966), intertextuality is a “mosaic of references to other texts, genres, and discourses” (as cited in Holy, 2008, p. 18). In other words, intertextuality can be considered a theory that equips the reader with numerous ways of decoding (interpreting) literary texts which are considered not as closed networks, but rather open products that constitute traces from other texts (Zengin, 2016). Bazerman (2004) commented on Kristeva’s use of the “textual mosaic” concept stating that she used it “to argue against the radical originality of any text and to locate common cultural experience in the sharing of text rather than any shared intersubjective state . . . [creating] the ongoing culture and [evoking] common objects of desire (p. 2). Thus, in Kristeva’s opinion intertextuality is an instrument where language users are shaped by the social text and the other way round (Bazerman, 2004).

Halabi (2016) elaborated on Kristeva’s (1980) expression “the text is a productivity” stating that the productivity (output) of the text simply implies the various shades of ideas and meanings that the text can signify when it is placed in different contexts within the same language” (p. 14). Interdependence is the primary focus of intertextuality. Zengin (2016) states that “texts are intertexts because they refer to, recycle, and draw from the pre-existing texts” (p. 300). Intertexts can be considered any form of literary works that interact with, rewrite, and transform other texts. Issa and Daragmeh (2018) attest the following:

Kristeva has demonstrated how texts are usually constructed from

already existing ones. Authors do not create their texts in a vacuum, but they often do so in relation to other authors and/or texts. As signs travel in the intertextual space, they enter into relationships with other signs, and, by virtue of these relationships, they gain new meanings. Thus, the text becomes a space where “several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (p. 23).

Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality sheds light on the way texts interconnect with one another and morph into new forms that reflect the author’s intentions and shape the interpretations of the reader. Writers sift through their internalized archives of texts in order to generate intertextualities that develop into meaning-rich backdrops for both poetry and prose. Therefore, when a reader comes across an instance of intertextuality, the evocation process begins. He/she will read the literary piece in the light of another text and will begin to recall built-in facts and or assumptions to broaden his/her conclusions.

## **2.1. Bazerman’s Analysis of Intertextuality**

Charles Bazerman (2004) affirms that “Intertextuality forms one of the crucial grounds for writing studies and writing practice. Texts do not appear in isolation, but in relation to other texts” (p. 1). Strictly speaking, writers write in response to previously existing works and thereby, utilize the resources provided by their predecessors. Thus, when readers approach any literary work, they draw upon their schemata (existing knowledge) and former textual experiences to better comprehend new texts. In that event, Bazerman confirms that the language within any text read or written by a reader is said to be in dialogue since “we write in direct and indirect response to what we have read before, and we read in relation to the ideas we have articulated in our own writing” (p. 1). According to Bazerman (2004: 83), “We create our texts out of the sea of former texts that surround us, the sea of language we live in”.

In her study, Wang (2006) declares that Bazerman discriminates between different levels where a text appeals to another text and relies on

it as a resource. Carrying this logic further, Bazerman pinpointed six levels of intertextuality that come forth from a text. Bazerman's levels include "(1) prior text as a source of meaning to be used at face value; (2) explicit social dramas of prior texts engaged in discussion; (3) background, support, and contrast; (4) beliefs, issues, ideas, statements generally circulated; (5) recognizable kinds of language, phrasing, and genre and (6) resources of language" (as cited in Wang, 2006, p. 131). Wang states that the proposed levels of intertextuality can be identified through definite techniques that mirror the utterances of others stating "these techniques start with the most explicit—'direct quotation' and 'indirect quotation'; to 'mentioning of a person, document, or statements' and 'comment or evaluation on a statement, text, or otherwise invoked voice'; to more implicit 'using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular document' and 'using language and forms that seem to echo certain ways of communicating, discussions among other people, types of documents'" (p. 131-132).

Bazerman (2004) suggests some procedures to be followed while performing intertextual analysis (as cited in Wang, 2006, p. 132). The steps for analyzing intertextualities found within texts include the following:

1. Create a list of all instances of intertextuality in the text, that is, to evaluate the material as relevant;
2. List how the instance is expressed, that is, to evaluate the degree of textual integration (i.e. whether it is through a direct quotation, indirect quotation, paraphrase or description);
3. Identify whether it is attributed to some person or source;
4. Interpret the intertextuality, that is, make comments on how or for what purpose the intertextual element is being used in the text.

This study is an attempt to present the findings of intertextual analysis. An analytical model adapted from Bazerman (2004) is used to carry out detailed analysis of William Blake's companion poems: The Lamb (1789) from the Songs of Innocence and The Tyger (1794) from the Songs of Experience.

### **3. Purpose of the Study**

Having introduced the notion of intertextuality coupled with Bazerman's approach to intertextual analysis, this study is an attempt to uncover the traces of intertextuality in two poems—The Lamb and The Tyger (see Appendix A & B) by the British poet, artist, and engraver, William Blake. The researchers' primary objective is to analyze the poems of William Blake based on Charles Bazerman's (2004) perspective on intertextuality in efforts to arrive at conclusions regarding the poet's use of intertextuality as a means of assisting the readers in their interpretation and comprehension of the major underlying theme of dualism. Aside from that, the researchers aim at analyzing the intertextual allusions found within Blake's poems to shed light on the source texts from which such intertextualities were extracted. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no previous research has addressed intertextuality in William Blake's poetry by adopting a theoretical framework for analysis. Such a gap was evident through searching the literature relevant to intertextuality analysis in poetry; hence, this study aims at filling this gap.

### **4. Research Questions**

The primary research question for this study is as follows: (1) What are the aspects of intertextuality in William Blake's companion poems The Lamb and The Tyger? A secondary focus of the study is to answer the following sub-question: (a) What are the main undertones of the allusions in Blake's poetry?

### **5. Literature Review**

In the words of William Hazlitt (1818)<sup>(1)</sup>, "[Poetry] is the natural impression of any object or event, by its vividness exciting and involuntary movement of imagination and passion, and producing, by sympathy, a certain modulation of the voice, or sounds, expressing it" (p.1). In other words, poetry is a form of literature which combines its writer's fantasies

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(1) See <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/hazlitts-lectures-on-the-english-poets>

and devotions. It is an integration of different concepts which “give immediate pleasure or pain to the human mind” and are expressed through different linguistic qualities (Hazlitt, 1818, p. 1). Another definition of poetry suggests that it is “literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm” (Nemerov, “Poetry Literature”).

### **a. William Blake's Poetry**

Numerous studies were carried out in relation to William Blake's poetry revealing his use of literary devices including similes, metaphors, symbolism, and allusions. Ibrahim and Babiker (2017) claim that literary devices are used by authors to add richness and beauty to their work. Additionally, such tools help bring about deeper meanings and interpretations of texts. As for William Blake, he is viewed as “a mystic par excellence and perhaps England's greatest poet in English literature”, expressing his thoughts with the use of literary devices (Mazumdar, 2014, p. 15). Mazumdar (2014) argues that, as a child, Blake experienced several visions associated with religious figures such as angels and prophets. These visions served as the foundation regarding his reference to religious aspects and figures in his poems. For instance, in his poem, *The Lamb*, the divine presence of God is portrayed through the lamb's gentle characteristics.

Jose (2015) claims that Blake out of all poets can transform an image into its verbal, visual and musical correspondents through his poetry. Blake's style in illustrating his poems through his very own engravings is what mainly distinguishes him from other poets of his time. Campe (2004) names Blake as the “misunderstood artist of the 19th century” as a result of not being appreciated for his distinct artistic and religious views. He expressed his religious beliefs in a rather unconventional manner; hence, challenging the traditions and norms of the established Church of England. Blake's dualistic approach in his poems is evident in the viewpoint that he brings forth—warring opposites. In his *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, Blake ridiculed the states of good and evil and the burden that



man carries in having to choose the better of the two. In Campe's point of view, "no satire seems implicit in the Songs of Innocence until it is read in conjunction with Songs of Experience, which makes it clear that the two contrary states of the human soul are parodies of each other" (p. 6).

To showcase the ongoing struggle between good and evil, Blake heavily relied on Biblical concepts as a backdrop for his poetry. Jose (2015) believes that Blake's emphasis on the Bible as "the Great Code of Art" must not be ignored when approaching his literary works. In support of Jose's belief, Campe (2004) puts forward Blake's juxtaposition of the pastoral world against the societal repression in his comparable songs of poems making it evident that Blake intended for his poems to be read in conjunction to one another. For instance, his poems *The Lamb* and *The Tyger* are categorized into a deuce through his use of contrasting animals (lamb vs. tiger) to reflect the same notion—the presence of an omnipotent creator. "Many of the poems [in Blake's collection] fall into pairs to allow for the same situation or problem to be seen through the lens of Innocence and then through Experience" (Campe, 2004, p. 6). Once Blake's poems on innocence are read, the society's hypocrisies become crystal clear. Moreover, when paired with a reading on experience, the reader awakens into a sense of degradation towards such bigotries.

Ibrahim and Babiker (2017) highlight Blake's romantic view of nature and God's being through his use of Biblical symbolism in portraying the lamb as the utmost manifestation of God.

On the contrary, Blake demonstrates how man's spirit is destructed by his worldly blindness and vulnerability to rage and sin through the tiger's fear-instilling characteristics and predatory nature. In doing so, Blake unfurls the idea that Romanticists are bound by the belief that society is a corrupting force that seeks to cast destruction on the world; yet, nature in its sublime and tranquil disposition is the best fit solution to rid of such calamities (Ibrahim & Babiker, 2017, p. 64).

To sum up, the research aim of this paper is to examine how Blake draws on other sources for the writing of his own texts, how he includes

other sources in his poems, what types of sources he uses, what he uses these sources for, and how he position himself as a poet in relation to other sources to develop his own ideas. In fact, the originality and craft of Blake come from how he puts words together in new ways to fit a specific situation, needs, and purposes, but he always relies on the common stock of language he shares with others. Therefore, the source of the words may have great authority.

## **2. Material and Method**

In this section, the researchers will expose the materials selected for analysis as well as lay out the methodology for carrying out the analysis.

### **6.1. Material**

Two poems by William Blake were chosen as the material for this study. The first poem is titled *The Lamb* (see Appendix A) which was obtained from Blake's poetry volume *Songs of Innocence* (1789). The second poem titled *The Tyger* (see Appendix B) was retrieved from the second volume *Songs of Experience* (1794). The researchers' selection of the aforementioned poems is attributed to Blake's publishing of both volumes in a collection of poems titled *Songs of Innocence and of Experience: Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul*.

In his compilation of both volumes, Blake reflected on the never-ending struggle between good and evil. The core of the first volume *Songs of Innocence* rests on the concepts of happiness, purity, and social tranquility; whereas, the second volume *Songs of Experience* unfolds the clashing realities of social and political corruption, impoverishment, and turmoil. Moreover, Blake was known for his dualistic philosophy which translates to the division of any system into two contrasting parts; thus, yielding a whole. Blake was a firm believer in the notion that the human race will never reach progression in the absence of the warring states of the contraries (good vs. evil). Since *The Lamb* and *The Tyger* are viewed as counterparts and were published as poetic companions to one another,

the researchers found interest in tracing Blake's usage of intertextuality to depict the contrasting nature of both poems.

## **6.2. Method**

The researcher aimed at answering the research questions by employing Bazerman's (2004) procedures for analyzing intertextuality found in *The Lamb* and *The Tyger* (see Appendix A & B). The researcher created a list of all noted instances of intertextuality in both texts; evaluated the degree of textual integration (how the intertextuality was expressed i.e. direct quotation, indirect quotation, paraphrase, or description); identified areas of attribution to other authors and or sources; and finally interpreted each instance of intertextuality in addition to stating its purpose. The researcher sent the analysis to a fellow expert in the fields of language and literature to ensure the validity of the findings. The qualitative interpretations were quantified and represented in tables and charts using Microsoft Office Excel 2010.

## **7. Data Analysis**

When we read to others, we do not often wonder where their words come from, but sometimes we start to sense, or even taste, the significance of them echoing words and thoughts from one place or another. Analyzing those connections helps us understand the meanings of the texts more deeply.

This section presents the findings of the study. It is divided into two parts since it is concerned with (1) the analysis of the intertextualities found in Blake's poems, *The Lamb* and *The Tyger* and (2) the discussion of the results in comparison with the findings of other researchers in the sense of the major themes in Blake's poetry. The poems were analyzed in accordance to their existing couplets (two lines of verse with similar rhyme). All the instances of intertextuality were highlighted with regard to their degrees of textual integration and their interpretations starting with the ones found in *The Lamb* from the *Songs of Innocence* then moving on to *The Tyger* from

the Songs of Experience. It is worth noting that only the couplets which contain traces of intertextuality were highlighted. The ones which did not mirror any signs of allusions were left unmentioned.

**Research Question (1) What are the aspects of intertextuality in William Blake's companion poems The Lamb and The Tyger?**

To answer the main research question of the present study, all the aspects of intertextuality were traced within the poems and explained. The number of intertextuality aspects in both poems is shown in Table (1) below in relation to their distribution into the 4 categories of textual integration as suggested by Bazerman (2004): direct quotation, indirect quotation, paraphrase, and description.

**Table (1): Traces of Intertextuality and their Degree of Textual Integration in William Blake's Companion Poems The Lamb and The Tyger**

Degree of Textual Integration	Number of Intertextual Instances in <i>The Lamb</i>	Number of Intertextual Instances in <i>The Tyger</i>
Direct Quotation	1	0
Indirect Quotation	0	0
Paraphrase	0	3
Description	11	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>

Table (1) shows that each poem has several aspects of intertextuality. It is evident from the table above that there are 12 instances of intertextuality in Blake's *The Lamb* and 11 out of the 12 aspects of intertextuality (92%) are regarded as descriptions. The remaining intertextuality (8%) is categorized

as a direct quotation. In the second couplet, 3 instances of intertextuality become visible.

**Gave thee life & bid thee feed.**

**By the stream & o'er the mead;**

In the first, Blake's use of "Gave thee life" refers to the Biblical verse in 1 Timothy 6:13 "In the sight of God, who gives life to everything . . .". He explains that the creator is the only one that possesses the power to give life. In the second and third instances of intertextuality "bid thee feed", "By the stream & o'er the mead", Blake hints at Jesus as "the Good Shepherd" who keeps an eye for his sheep. The second intertextuality can be traced to an Old Testament verse from the Book of Isaiah chapter 40 verse 11 which states, "He tends (feeds) his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart . . .". This verse represents the caring nature of the Lord as he watches over his flock. As for the third intertextuality "By the stream & o'er the mead", it refers to "David's psalm (song)" in the Book of Psalms chapter 23 verses 1-3 which reads "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams". With that mentioned, it safe to say that Blake used words from Biblical scriptures in the description of the characteristics of the Lord as a shepherd (guide) to his sheep (people).

The third couplet in Blake's poem, addresses the physical appearance of lambs and sheep given to them by the creator.

**Gave thee clothing of delight,**

**Softest clothing wooly bright;**

In these lines, Blake exposes his take on innocence by representing it as the bright clothing worn by Jesus (the lamb). Additionally, it could be argued that Blake was signaling two Biblical verses in order to reflect the heavenly clothing and salvation garments in pure white which were fit for those entering the Kingdom of Heaven. The first verse is from Daniel

7:9 which says, "His clothing was white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool" and the second is from Revelations 3:4 which reads "They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy". There are no traces of direct and indirect quotations or paraphrasing. Therefore, Blake's intertextuality can be categorized as a description.

In the seventh couplet, Blake's intertextuality is centered on the notion that Jesus Christ referred to himself as the "Lamb of God" or the ultimate sacrifice that would be slain to wash away the sins of the world.

**He is called by thy name,**

**For he calls himself a Lamb:**

The referenced verse is John 1:29 where John the Baptist professes that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world". Even though Blake's choice of words signals a Biblical verse, it can be inferred that there are no nuances of paraphrasing or quotations. Therefore, it is simply an explication of Christ's name.

Three intertextualities were found in the eight couplets resembling the "meekness" (gentleness) and "mildness" (tenderness) of the Lamb of God in comparison with the innocence that little children resemble.

**He is meek & he is mild,**

**He became a little child:**

In his reference to the meek and little child, Blake was referring to Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" and Matthew 18:2 "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven". What Blake intends to say was Jesus Christ is tender and gentle on his people if they become as innocent as children since Heaven's gates only open for the pure. In addition, Blake describes Christ as the perfect picture of innocence since

he was born into the world as a little child lying in a manger in Bethlehem (Luke 2:16).

In the ninth couplet, Blake asserts that he and the lamb are addressed by the same names that Christ was referred to by—child and lamb.

**I a child & thou a lamb,**

**We are called by his name.**

Revelations 17:14 says “They will make war against the Lamb” and Luke 2:43 “And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned the child Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem”. By referring to the aforementioned verses it becomes clear that Jesus was described as a lamb and child- both symbols of innocence.

In his final couplet, Blake repeats the same line twice addressing the lamb by stating the following:

**Little Lamb God bless thee.**

**Little Lamb God bless thee.**

It can be said that the intertextuality in these lines is a direct quotation from a verse in Genesis chapter 28 verse 3 which says, “May God bless thee and make thee fruitful”. In this situation, Blake supports his idea that the state of innocence in little children is a quality that pleases the Lord; therefore, they are showered by His blessing.

As for the companion poem *The Tyger*, Table (1) revealed that there are 10 instances of intertextuality found within its lines and 70% (7 out of 10) were used as descriptions of the main ideas of the poem. While the remaining three instances (30%) are signs of Blake’s paraphrasing of tragic events in Greek mythology and *Paradise Lost*. In the first couplet, Blake refers to the tiger’s fierce and mesmerizing grandeur as it roams the forest of the night.

**Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;**

Within these lines, it can be said that Blake was referring to God's power that is manifested in His creation of darkness where all the beasts of the forest creep. The similar idea is expressed in Psalms chapter 104 verse 20 "You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beast of the forest prowl".

The second trace of intertextuality can be seen in the second couplet of the first quatrain (stanza consisting of four lines) where Blake asks the central question of the poem.

**What immortal hand or eye,  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?**

In these lines the poet is addressing another animal, not the mild and tender lamb, but the fierce tiger with regard to his creator. The intertextuality found in Blake's questioning of the divinity of an unknown, yet immortal creator of the beast can be traced to a Biblical verse in 1 Timothy 6:16 "who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see."

The fourth couplet brings about several intertextualities that can be interpreted as allusions to Greek mythology.

**On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?**

The first line of the couplet is a reference to Icarus the son of the craftsman Daedalus (Berens, 2009, p.179). Icarus aspired to reach the sun with a pair of wings made by his father with wax and feathers (Riverlea, 2016, p. 65-66). He flew ambitiously ignoring his father's advice of not



flying too high or too low. The sun's blazing rays melted his wax wings and Icarus drowned in the sea. The second line of the couplet is Blake's reference to another character in Greek mythology known as Prometheus. Prometheus is renowned for his theft of sparks (fire) from the chariot of the sun. He brought back the sparks from the sun in a hollow tube and gave it to mankind which angered the Greek gods. As a result of his actions, he was punished by Zeus for his disobedience (Johnston, 2012, p. 8; Berens, 2009, p. 15-16). Blake paraphrases the two major events in Greek mythology within both instances intertextuality to convey the message that man's sin (disobedience) is punishable by a greater and more powerful force.

The fifth couplet reveals Blake's reference to the Book of Job in the Old Testament where God makes the consequence of questioning God's power clear to Job. Chapter 40 in the Book of Job speaks of a large behemoth (a monstrous beast similar to the hippopotamus or elephant capable of inflicting chaos on mankind).

**And what shoulder, & what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?**

The lines above are a reference to Job 40:17 where God tells Job about the monster He created "Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit". God intended for Job to understand that it is only He who has the power to create and destroy such a fierce animal. Blake used this reference to unmask his dualistic mindset that God can create meek creatures like the lamb (good) and monstrous predators such as the tiger (evil).

The seventh and eighth couplets in the fourth stanza could possibly be a reference to another figure of Greek mythology known as Hephaestus.

What the hammer? what the chain,

**In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp,**

### **Dare its deadly terrors clasp!**

Hephaestus was the god of fire and a skilled blacksmith (Fagles, *The Odyssey*, p. 125). He was known for making weapons for the gods. Blake used this reference to describe God's skilled creation of the tiger similar to a blacksmith's use of hammers, chains, furnaces, and anvils to shape metal.

The ninth couplet could be a reference to John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Book of Revelations in the New Testament which speak of the apocalyptic wars.

### **When the stars threw down their spears**

#### **And water'd heaven with their tears:**

As a Biblical allusion, this kind of intertextuality refers to Revelations 12:3-4 which states, "Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and then horns and seven crowns on its heads. Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. This refers to rebel angels' descent from Heaven. As a Miltonic allusion, it refers to Blake's paraphrasing of Milton's depiction of the fall of the angels in *Paradise Lost*: "Plagues; they astonish all resistance lost, All courage; down thir idle weapons drop'd" (p. 127).

The tenth couplet is where the last two forms of intertextuality of Blake are found. Blake questions the Creator's reaction to his work and asks the tiger if his creator could possibly be the same creator of the lamb?

### **Did he smile his work to see?**

#### **Did he who made the Lamb make thee?**

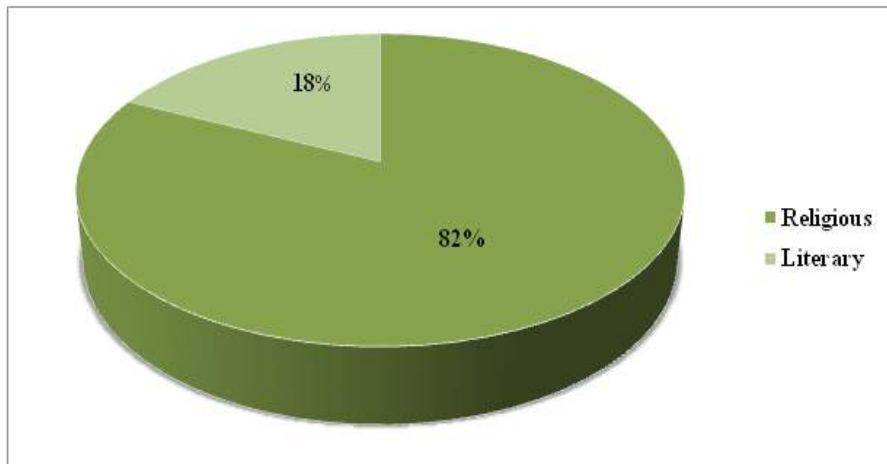
The first intertextuality is a Biblical allusion from the Book of Creation Genesis where God reflected on his creation of mankind and smiled. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). The second instance of intertextuality is from Blake's former complementary

poem *The Lamb* in the *Songs of Innocence*. He is addressing the tiger in terms of who its creator truly is; hence, Blake is indirectly suggesting that the creator of the evil, ferocious tiger is possibly the same creator of the innocent *Little Lamb*. This becomes evident from the last quatrain in the poem where Blake repeats the first two couplets changing the word *could* to *dare*. In doing so, the poet confirms that a weak creator would not even attempt the creation of such a monstrous beast. It is only the workings of a powerful Creator that such creature can be made, and this Creator is the same maker of Heaven and Hell.

**Research Sub-question (a): What are the main undertones of the allusions in Blake's poetry?**

To answer this sub-question, the researchers went through all the instances of intertextuality in Blake's poems and categorized them into two main categories: (1) religious and (2) literary. The reason behind the researchers' selection of both categories can be attributed to the fact that all the aspects of intertextuality found within both poems were traced back to either religious sources from the Holy Bible or literary sources from Greek mythology or other forms of poetry. The total number of intertextualities in both poems was calculated. Since, the researchers found a total of 22 instances of intertextuality—12 in *The Lamb* and 10 in *The Tyger*, they were categorized accordingly to their sources. Chart 1 illustrates the percentages of such forms of intertextuality within the poems in relation to their original sources whether religious or literary texts.

**Chart (1): Percentages of Religious and Literary Instances of Intertextuality**



It can be seen from Chart 1 above that the total percentage of religious undertones found within Blake's intertextualities marks 82% which is equivalent to the numerical proportion (18 out of 22). That is true since the majority of the intertextual aspects were references of Biblical verses from the Old and New Testaments. On the other hand, the percentage of literary undertones in the instances of intertextuality was 18% which amounts to 4 instances out of the total 22. These instances were only found in the The Tyger referencing literary works relevant to Greek Mythology, Paradise Lost, and The Lamb.

## **8. Discussion of Results**

The analysis aimed to explore how Blake includes other sources in his poems, what types of sources he uses, what he uses these sources for, and how he position himself in relation to other sources to make his own statements. The researchers found that Blake places a great deal of emphasis on Biblical allusions which throw into relief the central theme of innocence through Christ as a shepherd-like figure in his poem The Lamb. This finding is in line with that of Ibrahim and Babiker (2017) and Jose (2014) who state

that most of Blake's works are influenced by Biblical passages to create a backdrop of purity and vulnerability. Moreover, the researchers found that the reason behind Blake's selection of Biblical texts in order to support his underlying message of an omnipotent creator who is responsible for the contrary states found in nature (good and evil), is due to the fact that Biblical verses, whether in the Old or New Testaments, have their unique way of hinting the dualistic approach (complementary opposites) that Blake embarked on in his writings. For instance, in the Book of Creation, Genesis, God created light and darkness which make up one day. Similarly, in Isaiah 45:7, God mentions the same notion of opposites stating, "I form the light, and create darkness: I bring prosperity and create disaster".

Taking into account the Bible's way of presenting a dualistic approach to creation, Blake saw that it was best fit for the depiction of Innocence versus Experience. Not to mention, the traces of literary texts such as Paradise Lost portray how the benevolent angels who once ruled the gates of Heaven became vulnerable to sin. As for the figures of Greek mythology, at some point in their lives they were regarded as innocent; yet, suffered the dire consequences of their disobedience to the gods. These findings are in agreement with that of Campe (2004) and Mazumdar (2014) who assert that Blake integrated various forms of intertextuality in his poems to draw the reader's attention to the never-ending tension between good and evil which is necessary for the universe to function.

Looking back at Kristeva's claim on the fact that "authors do not create their texts in a vacuum", Blake's dependence on the Bible can be traced to the fact that he was a Biblical scholar inspired by the teachings of the Apostle Paul. In his summary of Blake's religious ideology, Jose (2017) asserts the following:

Blake took the Pauline dichotomies, guiltlessness and sin which have eschatological and legalistic rather than psychological implications, and transformed them into the largely perceptual categories "childlike naïveté" and "adult sophistication" which he calls "Innocence" and "Experience" respectively, showing the two contrary states of the human soul ... In composing the Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Blake is definitely

influenced by the Bible; and often is he interpreting and transvaluating themes from the Bible in these lyrics and designs(p. 48).

Therefore, Blake takes the sources he draws on as something that is widely circulated or accepted as support for the ideas and arguments put forward in the poems. In fact, Blake often does not attribute sources, taking them as widely accepted discourses. He uses these allusions for establishing basic background and support for the claims he makes. He makes full use of the intertextual sources to construct his own arguments.

## 9. Conclusion

Intertextuality plays an important role in assisting readers in their interpretations of poetry. Numerous poets borrow words, phrases, and ideas from neighboring texts for bringing the reader's attention to important concepts which poems serve to address. In adopting Bazerman's approach in tracing intertextuality within texts, the researchers confirm that the integration of religious and literary allusions in poetry assists in portraying the main theme while adding an adequate sum of details to serve the aesthetic, historical, and emotional dimensions of poetry in general. In his poems, William Blake made reference to a large portion of Biblical verses to address his dualistic ideology, reflecting the contradicting states of the human soul. Having mentioned that William Blake was one of the Romanticists, he managed to integrate nature's elements into his poem through his intertextualities.

Furthermore, since Blake's main concept was dualism, it can be argued that borrowing keywords from religious and literary texts that mirror the conflicting struggle between good and evil was a suitable choice. Not to mention, Blake was a firm believer that the Church of England, during his period, was enveloped with hypocrisy, political corruption, and false interpretations of religion. Therefore, in his disputes through poetry, Blake alleges that the salvation of mankind on this earth can only be achieved by knowledge and belief in God and not by the moralities preached by priests and the church. In conclusion, Blake's reliance on Biblical scripture

for intertextuality seems to be the most persuasive argument in conveying his message of contrary opposites and his reference to the decline of great figures in Greek mythology highlight the consequences of their sinful actions.

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## Appendix A

### **The Lamb (1789) by William Blake**

Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee  
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.  
By the stream & o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing wooly 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!  
He is called by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb:  
He is meek & he is mild,  
He became a little child:  
I a child & thou a lamb,  
We are called by his name.  
Little Lamb God bless thee.

Little Lamb God bless thee.

## **Appendix B**

### **The Tyger (1794) by William Blake**

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 seize 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?  
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?

## تحليل التناس اللغوي في قصيدتي وليام بليك: الحمل والنمر

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### ملخص البحث:

تقوم هذه الدراسة بتحليل نواحي التناس اللغوي ومدلولاته في قصيدتي وليام بليك: الحمل (1789) ضمن قصائد البراءة، والنمر (1794) من قصائد الخبرة. غالباً ما تتم قراءة هذه القصائد جنباً إلى جنب لأنها تتميز بأنها نظائر لبعضها البعض والتي تعكس عقيدة بليك المزدوجة في الحالات المتضاربة من النفس البشرية (الخير مقابل الشر).

اعتمد الباحثون على نظرية تشارلز بازرمان في تحليل التناس اللغوي وبعد تحليل القصائد تبين بأن هناك 22 حالة من التناس الديني والأدبي في كلتا القصيدتين، وتم بيان درجة تكاملها النصي بشكل وصفي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كشفت النتائج أن نسبة كبيرة من تلك التلميحات النصية تتكون من إشارات دينية تساعد على عكس النهج المزدوج الذي بدأه بليك في مجلداته الشعرية.

**الكلمات الدالة:** الازدواجية، التناس اللغوي، الشعر، ديني.